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A
LETTER

TO THE
EARL OF LIVERPOOL,
SHEWING, THAT
A REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS

WILL BE
ATTENDED WITH GREAT INJURY AND INJUSTICE
TO THE LAND-OWNERS AND FARMERS,

UNLESS
ACCOMPANIED, EITHER BY A REDUCTION OF THEIR TAXES AND
OTHER BURTHENS,

OR BY
MEASURES TO KEEP UP THE PRICES OF ENGLISH-GROWN CORN:

AND SHEWING,
THAT AN IMPORT, OR PROTECTING DUTY, WILL NOT HAVE THE
SLIGHTEST EFFECT IN THIS RESPECT.

BY
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TO THE
 RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL, K. G.

FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY, &c. &c.

MY LORD,

IN a Letter which I, some months ago, had the honour of addressing to your Lordship, I endeavoured to develop the *cause* of the distress which the country was suffering; and to prove, that it arose from *an insufficiency of food in the country for the proper support of the WHOLE of the people*: and I endeavoured to prove, that a repeal of the corn laws, and the removal of all restrictions on commerce, would not only be a remedy for the distress (*a*), but would, in an eminent degree, advance the prosperity and increase the power and resources of the country. I also endeavoured to prove, that a repeal of the corn laws, or rather the admission of foreign corn and other articles of human sustenance, *to the extent of supplying the deficiency of our own*, would not occasion the slightest injury to the English land-owner; or, at least, that their admission to this extent, would not *necessarily*, or *unavoidably* be productive of injury to him, but rather the reverse; *provided, either*

(*a*) A remedy vastly preferable to that of emigration; which, it may be safely predicted, will be no remedy at all.

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the present prices of his own corn and other agricultural produce were kept up; or if not, then provided his taxes and other burdens were reduced in the same proportion in which prices might be reduced.

In another Letter, more recently addressed to your Lordship, I noticed the different objections which had been urged against the admission of foreign corn, and endeavoured to prove, that not one of them was possessed of the least weight; or, at least, that every one of them would be entirely removed, *either by keeping up the prices of English-grown corn, or if they were allowed to be depressed by the admission of foreign corn, then by reducing the land-owner's taxes and other burthens in the same proportion in which prices might be reduced.*

Whilst, therefore, I advocated the interests of the distressed part of the community, I was anxious that every thing like injury and injustice to the land-owner should be carefully guarded against. If, however, the land-owners, influenced by the indecent clamours which have been lately raised against them, or by the erroneous representations, so industriously promulgated, as to the effect which a repeal of the corn laws would have upon their interests;—if thus influenced, they should allow the importation of foreign corn without taking measures, either to prevent its depressing the prices of their own, or to have their taxes and other burdens reduced in the same proportion in which prices may be reduced, they will find they have made a most grievous sacrifice of their interests; and

when it is considered, that every possible benefit which can arise to the distressed part of the community from a repeal of the corn laws, may easily be obtained without any such sacrifice, it is clear, there is no reason why the land-owners should make it.

The object of my present Letter to your Lordship, is to shew;—that the admission of foreign corn, to an extent sufficient to supply the deficiency in that of our own growth, will (if measures are not taken to prevent it), *occasion a depression in the prices of our own, to an extent far beyond what is generally supposed;* and would, consequently, affect the interests of the English land-owner to an extent not hitherto contemplated.

The extent of such depression, and its effect upon the interests of the land-owner, are points upon which a tolerably accurate opinion may be formed, provided we can come at something like correct information, on the following points;—viz., first, as to the average quantity of corn grown in Great Britain and Ireland; and next, as to the amount of our population; for we shall then be able to determine, with some degree of accuracy, *how much foreign corn we stand in need of to supply the deficiency of our own;* and consequently shall be enabled to ascertain, with something like accuracy, what depression the importation of this quantity will produce in the prices of our own; that is, assuming the amount of our currency to receive no augmentation.

I am not aware of the existence of any public document,

of an authentic nature, which shews the average quantity of corn, (wheat, rye, oats, and barley), which has of late years been produced in Great Britain and Ireland. In order, therefore, to form an opinion as to the *probable* quantity, the most satisfactory course would seem to be the following; viz., first, to ascertain, as nearly as may be, *the total number of acres contained in Great Britain and Ireland*; then, to determine, *what proportion may be considered as arable*; then, *how much of the arable land may be considered, on the average, to be actually under corn crop*; and lastly, to determine, *what may be considered as the average produce by the acre*.

With respect to the total number of acres contained in Great Britain and Ireland, the number in tillage, &c., geographers, and writers on statistics, materially differ from each other. Having consulted good maps, and having availed myself of other sources of information, I think the total number of acres,—the number which are arable, the number actually under corn crops, and the average produce of such crops, may be estimated as follows:—

England, taking the mesne of the southern coast, and measuring from thence, longitudinally, extends from a little below the 51st to the 55th degree of north latitude, exclusive of the narrow strip which constitutes part of the county of Northumberland. The length, therefore, of England (exclusive of this part of Northumberland), is about 255 miles; and, supposing that Northumberland, instead

of running so far northwards, extended entirely across the island (from sea to sea), the length of England might be taken at about 270 miles; and considering, that the whole northern part is very narrow, and that in the broader parts it is deeply indented by the Bristol Channel, and by Carnarvon and Cardigan Bays; the average breadth of England and Wales cannot be taken at more than 170 miles. England and Wales, may, therefore, be taken to contain about 46,000 square miles; and a square mile containing 640 statute acres, England and Wales may be considered to contain about 36 millions of statute acres (*a*).

Scotland extends, in length, from a little below the 55th degree north latitude, to nearly 58 and $\frac{2}{3}$ degrees north latitude, being in length about 220 miles; and the average breadth may be taken at about 115 miles. Scotland may, therefore, be considered to contain rather more than 25,000 square miles; or about 17 millions of statute acres (*b*).

Ireland extends, in length, from about 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, to

(*a*) I am aware, both Pinkerton's Geography and the Trigonometrical Survey make England and Wales to contain a greater number of acres than 36 millions; but their statements are self-evidently incorrect; inasmuch as England must be nearly 300 miles in length, by the average breadth of nearly 200, (and it is clearly neither the one nor the other), in order to contain the number of acres they make it to contain. Even allowing for the inequalities of surface, their statements must clearly be erroneous.

(*b*) Sir John Sinclair says, 18 millions; and states that not more than 5 millions are fit for cultivation.

about 55½ degrees north latitude; being in length about 230 miles; and the average breadth may be taken at about 120 miles (a). Ireland may therefore be considered to contain rather more than 27,000 square miles, or about 18 millions of statute acres.

The number of acres, therefore, in Great Britain and Ireland, would appear to be as follows; viz. :—

England and Wales	36 millions
Scotland	17 millions
Ireland	18 millions
Total	71 millions.

Of the 36 millions in England and Wales, there is probably not less than 8 millions (b), in rivers, canals, lakes, roads, hedges, scites of towns and buildings, and mountains and other lands incapable of cultivation; leaving 28 millions fit for cultivation.

In Scotland, more than two-thirds are considered to consist of rivers, lakes, roads, hedges, bogs, scites of towns and buildings, and mountains and other lands incapable of cultivation; leaving only about 5 millions fit for cultivation (c).

(a) This is more than the average breadth of Ireland, supposing what Pinkerton says, in his Geography, to be correct; viz., that "there is not a spot in the island 60 miles from sea to sea."

(b) Pinkerton says, 8 millions of acres are unfit for cultivation.

(c) Sir John Sinclair says, 5 millions of acres constitute the proportion of land in Scotland which is fit for cultivation.

Ireland is considered to contain about 5 millions of acres, in rivers, lakes, roads, hedges, bogs, scites of towns and buildings, and mountains and other lands incapable of cultivation; leaving about 13 millions of acres fit for cultivation.

The total number of acres, therefore, in Great Britain and Ireland, fit for cultivation, would appear to be as follows; viz.

England and Wales	28 millions.
Scotland	5 millions.
Ireland	13 millions.
Total	46 millions.

It may be observed, that of these 46 millions of acres, several millions are lands of inferior quality, and therefore only capable of producing light crops; and it may be further observed, that of the 46 millions of acres fit for cultivation, not much more than one-fourth part (or, probably, about thirteen millions of acres) (a), can be con-

(a) Sir John Sinclair (Code of Agriculture) considers 8 millions of acres to be the quantity of land annually in corn crop in Great Britain; and Middleton (view of Middlesex) computes the quantity under corn crop in England and Wales, at 6 millions of acres; and supposing the quantity under corn crop in Scotland to be two millions of acres (Sir John Sinclair says, 1,600,000 only) Middleton's statement and Sir John Sinclair's pretty nearly accord with each other: and assuming them to be correct, then 13 millions of acres (the quantity of land in Great Britain and Ireland, which I have supposed to be annually under corn crop) probably exceeds the real quantity; and if so, the deficiency in the quantity of corn required for the consumption of the people, is

sidered as actually appropriated to the growing of *corn*; the remainder being wood-lands, parks, gardens, pastures, meadows, hop-grounds, green-crop, and fallow;—the quantity of fallow alone being nearly equal to what is under wheat crop.

What proportion of the thirteen millions of acres under corn crop, may be in wheat, what proportion in barley, what proportion in rye, and what proportion in oats, is a point upon which I have not been able to obtain any information that can be deemed accurate (*a*); but taking the different kinds of grain, one with another, and supposing the average produce to be three and a half quarters per acre; (which, considering how large a portion there is of inferior lands, and of lands ill-cultivated, may be regarded as a full average), the quantity of all kinds of corn produced in Great Britain and Ireland will amount to about forty-six millions of quarters. Of this quantity,

greater than I afterwards set it down at; and, consequently, we require a still greater quantity of foreign corn than I have supposed us to stand in need of. When, indeed, we consider that many counties, both in England and Ireland, are almost entirely appropriated to grazing, the probability, perhaps, is, that 13 millions of acres, are in fact, more than are actually under corn crop.

(*a*) Middleton says, that 2,750,000 acres, in England and Wales, are in wheat; Sir John Sinclair states the quantity under wheat crop in Scotland at 140,000;—and supposing the quantity in Ireland to be 1,500,000, the total quantity of land, in Great Britain and Ireland, under wheat crop does not amount to 4½ millions of acres. The quantity, however, is probably greater; if not, the utmost quantity of wheat grown in Great Britain and Ireland, and consumed by the people, cannot be much more than 10 millions of quarters.

nearly seven millions of quarters are used for seed; one-seventh of the whole quantity produced being the quantity considered to be used for this purpose: and, following Mr. Colquhoun's calculations (*a*) as to the quantities consumed by horses and other animals, and made use of in breweries and distilleries, (and taking into account, the increase both in the population and in the number of horses since Mr. Colquhoun's calculation was made), eighteen millions of quarters may be considered as used in these different ways. Deducting, therefore, the seven millions of quarters used as seed, and the eighteen millions of quarters used in distilleries and breweries, and consumed by horses and other animals, from the total amount raised in Great Britain and Ireland, the quantity left for the consumption of the people of Great Britain and Ireland amounts to twenty-one millions of quarters.

We now come to inquire, amongst what number of people these twenty-one millions of quarters are distributed. By the census of 1821 it appears, that the population of Great Britain and Ireland amounted, at that time, to nearly twenty-two millions. Assuming it to have since increased (and I think we may), in the same proportion in which it increased between the taking of the census of 1811 and that of 1821 (*b*); in that case, three millions,

(*a*) Mr. Colquhoun's calculation is confined to England, but I have taken Mr. Colquhoun's *scale* of calculation.

(*b*) The increase in Great Britain was nearly 18 in every 100, or nearly one-fifth. In Ireland, the increase was not ascertained, but was probably still larger than in Great Britain.

(which has ever been added to the number of 1821; consequently, the present population of Great Britain and Ireland may be considered to amount to 25 millions.

Taking, therefore, the quantity of corn produced in Great Britain and Ireland and consumed by the people, at 21 millions of quarters, and taking the population of Great Britain and Ireland at 25 millions, the 21 millions of quarters get distributed amongst 25 millions of people;

or, in other words, 25 millions of people have amongst them, 21 millions of quarters of bread-corn. Of these 21 millions of quarters, probably about 12 millions are wheat (a), and the remaining 9 millions principally oats; very little rye being produced, and the barley being chiefly used in breweries and distilleries.

A quarter of wheat, of average quality, is considered to produce a quantity of bread (including what is used in pastry, &c.) sufficient for the yearly consumption of one person; taking adults and children together. The 12 millions of quarters of wheat made use of as human sustenance, would, therefore, be sufficient for the yearly consumption of 12 millions of people. Of oats, a quarter and a half, or something more, are considered sufficient for the yearly consumption of one person. The 9 millions of quarters of oats, made use of as human sustenance, would, therefore, be sufficient for the consumption of about 5 millions of people. The result of the above statement is, that the

(a) From the statement in the note at page 10, 12 millions of quarters of wheat would seem to exceed the real quantity.

wheat and oats (with some small portion of rye and barley) grown in Great Britain and Ireland and used as human sustenance, are sufficient to provide 17 millions of people with bread. But the population of Great Britain and Ireland consists of 25 millions; consequently there is an excess of population beyond the means of subsistence (at least, so far as the article of bread is concerned), to the extent of 8 millions (a). To supply these 8

(a) This statement may be calculated to startle; but when we consider the numbers of wretched objects we meet at every step, and the still greater number who, though not quite so wretched in appearance, yet whose sunken cheeks and dejected looks clearly prove the privations they are suffering; and when, too, we look at the state of nearly the whole of the people of Ireland, we shall see reason to think, that it is more than probable, that there is a deficiency of bread-corn to the full extent I have mentioned: And also a deficiency of all other kinds of wholesome food to an equal extent; and I take it to be clear, that in ascribing the distress of the country to a deficiency of human sustenance, I ascribe to its true and real cause. In my first Letter to your Lordship I endeavoured to prove this; and adduced such reasons in support of my opinion, as, I trust, left little or no doubt of its correctness: At any rate, to ascribe the distress to an insufficiency of human sustenance for the proper support of the whole of the people, is to ascribe it to a cause, at once probable and easy to comprehend; but, certainly, this cannot be said of any other cause to which it has been ascribed. Whenever, indeed, a large portion of the people of any country experience, for many years, a great want of food and of the other necessaries of life, it may be safely asserted, that their privations must arise from the country not possessing a sufficiency of food for their proper support; and, in fact, cannot possibly arise from any other cause. If, however, any doubt can still exist, as to the cause of the distress which this country has so long experienced (*), it is certainly time

* In my first Letter to your Lordship (page 105), I made some observations respecting the periods which have been deemed flourishing or prosperous; and shewed, that at these very periods the great bulk of the people were experiencing great privations.

millions of people with bread, would require eight millions of quarters of wheat (a). And when we consider, that from the improvement which will take place in the condition of the people, they will consume more malt liquor than at present; (though it is to be hoped, less of spirituous liquors); and that a greater number of horses will be kept by merchants, manufacturers and others, than are now kept; 3 millions of quarters of foreign barley and oats will probably be required for these purposes. Eight millions of quarters of foreign wheat, and 3 millions of quarters of foreign oats and barley, (in all 11 millions), are therefore the probable quantity we require, or at least soon should require, in addition to our own.

We therefore now come to inquire, (and which is the principal object of my present letter to your Lordship), *what effect* the importation of 11 millions of quarters of foreign wheat, oats, and barley, will have upon the prices of our own corn and other agricultural produce, *supposing no addition should be made to the amount of the circulating medium?* Eleven millions of quarters of foreign corn are

that every possible means should be taken to remove the doubt; and supposing the cause should be ascertained to be that which I have contended for, viz. a deficiency of human sustenance, but it should be doubtful to what extent such deficiency exists; then steps should be taken to ascertain the extent; and both the general interests of the country and the dictates of humanity require, that no time should be lost in doing so.

(a) I mention *wheat*, because, as this quantity of wheat can no doubt be easily obtained from abroad, why should the people be satisfied with bread of a less wholesome and nutritious kind than wheaten bread?

in the proportion of nearly *one to four*, of corn of our own growth. Now, supposing foreign corn should be imported to the extent of 11 millions of quarters, and supposing no addition to be made to the present amount of our circulating medium, we may regard it as tolerably certain, that the prices of English-grown corn will be depressed, at least *one-fourth*; and consequently, that the present price of English-grown wheat, (viz. 55s. a quarter), will be brought down to about 42s.; and oats, and all other kinds of agricultural produce in the same proportion. This depression will be produced by causing our circulating medium (which, it will be remembered, is supposed to receive no augmentation), *to be the means of putting a greater quantity of corn, &c., into circulation, than it does at present.* It is THIS which will occasion a fall in the prices of English-grown corn. The importation, in fact, of foreign corn, without any increase of our circulating medium, would depress the price of our own corn, exactly in the proportion, which the quantity of foreign (imported) corn bore to our own (a). If, for instance, foreign corn was

(a) Perhaps, it would be more correct to say, that the depression would be in the proportion which the foreign (imported) corn, bore to *that part* of our own which was actually brought into the market; for that part of our own which is never brought into the market, (and which is the case with the greatest part of the seed corn, and what is consumed in farm houses and by farm horses), can have no effect upon the price of that part which comes into the market. Under the above view of the subject, the importation of 11 millions of quarters of foreign corn (there being no increase in the currency), would probably depress the prices of our own corn to 30s. a quarter.

brought into the market equal in quantity to the corn of our own growth, (supposing there could be a demand for so much), the price of our own (whatever the foreign corn might cost the importer), would soon be reduced to *half* its former price; for there being only the same quantity of money employed in putting twice the quantity of corn into circulation (and along with twice the quantity of corn, twice the quantity, though perhaps not immediately, of all other things), the inevitable consequence would be, that the price of English-grown corn would be reduced one-half; and so in the like proportion, whatever proportion the corn imported might bear to the English-grown corn. The price, in fact, of an article in universal use, like that of corn, depends solely upon two things—viz., *the quantity in the market, and the amount of the circulating medium.* If the quantity in the market is *increased*, but there is no increase in the amount of the circulating medium, *prices fall*; and if the quantity in the market is *lessened*, but the amount of the circulating medium remains what it previously was, *prices rise*. So, on the other hand, if the quantity of corn remains stationary, but the amount of the currency is increased, *prices rise*; and if the amount of the currency is lessened, but there is no alteration in the quantity of corn, *prices fall*:—In short, any change in the amount, either of corn or the currency, will always affect the price of the former; but if corn and money should both increase, or both decrease in the same proportion, in either case, there will be no alteration in the

price of the former. (If, however, there should be an increase or decrease in both, but not in the same proportion, in that case, a rise or fall will take place, according as the one or the other is increased or decreased in a greater proportion than the other (a).) Supposing the correctness of the above doctrine should not be too apparent, upon principle, to admit of doubt, perhaps the great changes which have taken place during the last thirty years (a period of paper money) in the prices of our corn and other agricultural produce, may be regarded as affording sufficient *practical evidences* of its correctness. During the period just mentioned, the variations in price were, no doubt, principally ascribable to alterations in the

(a) In the present year, our corn and currency are both less in quantity than they were last year, but the currency has been lessened in a greater proportion than the corn; and the consequence is, that the prices of our corn are at least 10s. a quarter less than they were last year; whereas had the amount of the currency been equal to what it was last year, prices, from the smaller quantity of corn in the country, owing to the scantiness of the late harvest, must clearly have been higher than they were last year; and this would have been the case notwithstanding the bringing out of the bonded corn, and the recent importations. That a great reduction in the amount of our currency has lately taken place cannot be doubted, when we consider the convulsion, which, not many months ago, took place among the bankers, or issuers of paper money. Nearly 100 of them (or about one sixth part of the whole number), became bankrupts. Their bankruptcy occasioned a great destruction of paper money; and the alarm felt by the remaining 500, caused most of them to greatly reduce their issues of paper. The present amount of our currency, must clearly be much less than it was twelve months ago. This will account for the prices of our corn being lower than they were last year, notwithstanding the lessened quantity of corn in the market.

amount of the currency; and, in no great degree, to greater or smaller quantities of corn in the market. But whether the alteration is in the quantity of money or in the quantity of corn, just the same effect results from the alteration. But to advance any thing further, in order to prove that the price of corn depends JOINTLY upon the quantity in the market, and the amount of the circulating medium; or, to prove that the importation of foreign corn must depress the price of our own, in case no addition is made to the amount of our currency, may, perhaps, be superfluous. If, however, any doubt can still be entertained upon either point, let any one ask himself, whether an uncommonly abundant crop, one we will suppose, which doubled the usual quantity of our corn, would not greatly reduce its previous price; that is, supposing the circulating medium received no increase?—and if a greatly increased quantity of corn of our own growth would reduce prices, is it not clear, that exactly the same effect would be produced, supposing the quantity to be increased to an equal extent by means of importation? Nor could the circumstance of such foreign corn having cost the importer a large sum in original price, freight, duty, &c., prevent its having such an effect; consequently, an import, or protecting duty would have no effect whatever in preventing a depression in the prices of our corn. If it should be supposed, that the circumstance of the foreign corn having cost the importer a large price, would make him sell it for a large one, no opinion could possibly be worse founded. Is not

the merchant frequently obliged to sell his merchandize for less than what it cost him?—and might not this be the case with the corn-merchant as well as with any other merchant? Probably, a case may be put which will enable us to take such a view of the important subject under consideration (viz. the effect of an import or protecting duty), as no longer to leave any doubt upon it. Suppose a Prussian corn merchant bought a quantity of English corn at its present price, (55s. a quarter), and took it to Prussia; and that freight, port charges, &c. brought it altogether to 70s. a quarter. Would he, we may ask, obtain this price for it when he took it into the Prussian market? On the contrary, is it not clear, that he must take the price at which corn was selling in such market; and if the quantity he thus took into the market was considerable, is it not equally clear, that it would bring down the price of Prussian corn? If, then, it is clear that our high-priced corn taken into the Prussian market, could not be sold at a higher price than the price at which Prussian corn was selling; and if it is equally clear that a large quantity taken into such market would make the present low price of Prussian corn still lower;—can it be doubted, if foreign corn was brought into our market at a high price (either by means of duties, or otherwise), that the effect would be precisely the same? I have dwelt the longer upon the subject we have just been considering, as it is of great importance to the land-owner, the farmer, and all others, that a correct opinion should be entertained

upon it; and I think we may take it to be quite clear, that a duty, however heavy, will have no effect what-
even in preventing foreign corn, when brought into our market, from depressing the prices of our own (*a*): and assuming that foreign corn, if the corn laws are repealed, will be brought into our markets to the extent I have mentioned, viz., to the extent of 11 millions of quarters, I think we may, pretty safely, say, that it will depress the prices of our own (unless the amount of our currency is increased), at least 13s. a quarter.

Now a reduction in the price of English-grown wheat of 13s. a quarter, and in the prices of all other kinds of agricultural produce in the same proportions, would reduce the land-owner's income about one-fourth; and such a reduction, without a proportionable reduction in his taxes and other burthens, would most probably be productive of *abso-*

absolute ruin to numbers. Suppose a land-owner has at present a rental or income of 4,000l. a year; and suppose jointures, interest of mortgages and portions, and other outgoings, amount to 3,000l. a year: Though his estates are heavily burthened, yet the 1,000l. a year he has left in them, enables him to live at least comfortably: But reduce his income, by the importation of foreign corn, to 3,000l. a year, or less (and which would be the case, if importation took place to the extent to which it is required, and no addition should be made to the amount of our currency), and he would not have a single farthing of income left. The case put, is, it is admitted, a strong one; and probably would not occur in numerous instances. But although so extreme a case might not occur in many instances, yet it is clear, that a reduction of one-fourth, or probably more, in the amount of every land-owner's income, whilst his taxes and other burthens were left at their former amount, would be attended with positive ruin to some; with serious loss and inconvenience to great numbers; and with injustice to all: And the farmer, bound by lease, at a fixed rent, would be greatly injured as well as the land-owner; in many instances, probably, ruined; for having rent and taxes to pay equal in amount to what he at present pays, he would be obliged to sell at least one-fourth more of the produce of his farm, in order to raise his rent and taxes than he now sells in order to raise them; and the same would be the case with respect to any debts he might owe. The consequence would, therefore, be, that instead

2. (a) An import duty may stop the importation of foreign corn, and if it was a heavy one, would, no doubt, have that effect; by reason, not only that it would leave no profit to the importer, but would be taking a large portion of the foreign land-owner's corn, *without giving him any thing for it in return*. To the land-owners and farmers, an import duty will, clearly, be of no use; and if a heavy import duty should be imposed, it would operate prejudicially to the interests of the merchant and manufacturer. The land-owners are, therefore, in no wise interested in *having* such a duty, and the merchants and manufacturers are greatly interested in *opposing* it. Indeed, even the land-owners would be *better* without it; for the greater the quantity of foreign corn there is imported, the more of their poor's rates and taxes will they get quit of. Until the deficiency of our own corn is fully supplied, no impediment should be thrown in the way of importation.

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of having sufficient of the produce of his farm left for the support of himself and family, he would have little or nothing left. Every land-owner, and every farmer bound by lease at a fixed rent, is, therefore, most deeply interested in opposing the importation of foreign corn, unless its importation is either accompanied by measures to prevent its depressing the prices of English corn; or if not, then unless his taxes and other burthens are reduced in the same proportion in which prices may be reduced.

Great pains are, however, taken in the newspapers, and other periodical publications, and in pamphlets and speeches, to persuade the land-owners and farmers, that they would sustain little or no injury from the importation of foreign corn. Much stress is laid upon an import duty, as a measure which will effectually protect them against injury. But that it will do no such thing, is too clear to admit of doubt or question: At any rate, the land-owners and farmers should be quite sure that it will operate as a protection, and as an effectual one too, before they venture to rely upon it.

Attempts are also made to reconcile the land-owners and farmers to the importation of foreign corn, by endeavouring to persuade them, that no great quantity is required, not more than five or six hundred thousand quarters; or that if the country even does stand in need of more, yet that we should not be able to procure more; and that such a quantity as this, could cause no great depression in the prices of our own

The opinion, that the country does not require the importation of foreign corn to any greater extent than five or six hundred thousand quarters is founded upon the circumstance, of this being about the average quantity imported during former periods when the ports were open. It may, however, be observed, that at the periods alluded to, the quantity imported was probably not so great as the people stood in need of. Besides, at those periods the population of the country was not so large, as at present, by perhaps five or six millions; and yet, perhaps, the quantity of English-grown corn, was then nearly, if not quite as great as it is now; for though the science of agriculture may have advanced a little, yet the greatly increased consumption of animal food since those periods, (owing to the great increase, of late years, in the number of people of fortune), and the greatly increased number of horses, cause a much larger quantity of land to be in pasture and hay than formerly; and the consumption of corn by horses, is much greater now than at the periods above spoken of; and the crippled condition of many farmers has prevented their working and managing their farms as well as they once did; which has caused their produce to be greatly lessened. Therefore, the average quantity of corn imported at those periods, would seem to afford no criterion whatever, by which to determine the quantity which would be imported in future, in case the ports were thrown open. One thing, however, may be regarded as certain; which is, that the quantity would, in a very little time,

be *vastly greater* than is generally supposed; and, perhaps, I do not exceed the limits of probability in saying, that the annual importation, after two or three years, would not be less than 11 millions of quarters,

As to our not being able to procure more than five or six hundred thousand quarters from abroad; this opinion is so completely founded in error, as scarcely to require refutation. In a very little time (as three or four years), I have no doubt, fifty times the quantity, or even more, should we stand in need of it, might be easily procured. The difficulties which are supposed to stand in the way of our obtaining large supplies from abroad, would soon be removed. Bad systems of agriculture would soon give place to good ones. Situations remote from the sea or navigable rivers would, in effect, soon be brought nearer by means of rail-roads and canals; and who, looking at America, with her immense extent of sea coast, her canals, her numerous navigable rivers (many of them navigable for thousands of miles), the extent of her territory, the fertility of her soil, and the comparative scantiness of her population, (consequently, her population requiring but a small part of the corn she could raise)—who, looking at America, can doubt, but that America *alone* could soon supply us, if we required so much, with fifty times five or six hundred thousand quarters?

Let, therefore, the land-owners and farmers not be deceived, by any such notions, as—that we do not stand in need of more than five or six hundred thousand quarters—

or that if we do, we shall not be able to procure more; for such notions are entirely founded in error. The land-owners and farmers may regard it as tolerably clear, that the quantity we stand in need of, or at least soon shall stand in need of, is not much, if at all, short of 11 millions of quarters; and they may regard it as equally clear, that this quantity may be easily obtained; and that the importation of such a quantity will send down the present prices of our own wheat, not less than 13s. a quarter; that is, *supposing our currency should receive no addition to its present amount*,—and they may likewise regard it as clear, that a depression of prices to this extent will be attended with absolute ruin to many, and with injury and injustice to all; *unless their taxes, and other burthens, should be reduced in the same proportion in which prices may be reduced.*

If, therefore, the corn laws should be repealed, (and who can doubt but they ought to be repealed?) the landlords and farmers will have an undoubted right to expect, either that their taxes and other burthens should be reduced *in the same proportion* in which prices may be reduced; or that measures should be taken to keep up the present (a) prices of their own corn and other agricul-

(a) Looking at the prices of agricultural produce at the time the greatest part of the national debt was contracted, present prices are scarcely so high as they ought to be. *The fund-holders are at present clearly gaining an advantage at the expense of the land-owners.* The greatest part of the national debt having been contracted when the prices of agricultural produce were *very high*, and numbers of land-

tural produce; for unless either the one or the other is done (though it is no matter which), a repeal of the corn laws would be an act of the highest injustice to the owners having charged their estates with jointures, portions, and mortgages when prices were high; they had a clear right, when the corn bill was passed (and they have still the same right), to guard against an increase of those burthens. But in obtaining the corn bill, they mistook the means of effecting their object. They, and the framers and supporters of the bill, appear to have supposed, that the price of corn depends solely upon the quantity in the market; whereas, it depends jointly upon the quantity in the market, and the amount of the circulating medium. Since the passing of the corn bill, the currency having greatly decreased in quantity, the object of the bill, viz. to keep up the price of corn, has completely failed.

In order to have maintained high prices, an act to keep a certain quantity of money in circulation, was clearly the measure which ought to have been resorted to. By means of a large amount of currency, the price of wheat might have been easily kept at that intended by the corn bill, viz. 80s. a quarter. This price might have been maintained even with the free importation of foreign corn.

But, perhaps, 80s. a quarter is a higher average price, than in justice to the public creditor and to those who may have claims upon the land-owners' estates, it ought to be. At the present price, however, (55s. a quarter), the public creditor is no doubt gaining at the expense of the land-owner. If, therefore, measures should be taken to secure the land-owner in future, a certain, steady price for his corn; the price, it is conceived, ought to be higher than at present. To secure steady prices, is a matter of the highest importance.—Prices should BE NO LONGER LEFT IN THE HANDS OF THE BANKERS. So long as they are, no man can know the value of his property; nor can any man, much in debt, know how soon he may be ruined by the amount of the currency being lessened; nor can any man to whom money is owing, know how soon he may, in effect, be deprived of one half of it, by an increase of the currency.—It is certainly high time to put the currency upon an entirely new footing.

A further observation or two may be made on the corn bill. It

both to the one and the other; indeed, to land-owners, with heavy mortgages on other charges upon their estates, with nothing less than absolute ruin; and the same would be the case with respect to farmers bound by lease at a fixed rent.—But I will not enlarge upon this subject: Measures, it is to be hoped, will soon be taken to protect and promote the interests of all; and the time is no doubt near at hand when the millions of people who are at present in a state of poverty, distress, and degradation, will be placed in a situation of comfort and happiness.

contemplated the possibility of a deficiency or scarcity in the home-supply of corn, from bad seasons or short crops; and regarded a rise in the price to a certain sum, as an evidence of such deficiency;—not considering, that a deficiency might be occasioned by an increase of population; nor considering, that an increased amount of our paper money might so raise prices, as to make them reach the scarcity-price, even though the quantity of corn might in fact be greater than it was before it reached such price; nor considering, that a great diminution in the amount of the currency might so depress prices as to make them much lower, even in years of scarcity (as is the case in the present year), than they had been in years of abundance. With a paper-money circulation, constantly liable to variation in its amount, certainly nothing could have been worse judged, than to make price the criterion by which to determine whether the country possessed a sufficiency of human sustenance or not (a). But, in short, the bill was utterly unsuited to the attainment of any one of its objects; whilst it has been the means of bringing the country into a situation of danger and distress, such as, it is to be hoped, it will never experience again.

(a) The best evidence of a sufficiency or insufficiency of food, is to be found in the state or condition of the people. If all have plenty of wholesome food and comfortable clothing, and are comfortably lodged;—no doubt there is a sufficiency; on the other hand, where there is any portion of the people ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-lodged, it is clear, there is an insufficiency.

So much is said by the advocates for the corn laws, about the effect which the importation of foreign corn will have in throwing inferior lands out of cultivation, that I shall probably be excused for again adverting to this subject.

It must be clear, that the inducement to cultivate any lands which are now cultivated, can only be taken away, either by some measure (if there could be such) which would have the effect of lessening their capability to produce corn; or which will have the effect of causing a larger portion of their produce to be taken from their owners than is now taken.

That the importation of foreign corn will have the effect of lessening the *capability* of poor lands to produce corn, is what no one, I should suppose, will think of maintaining; and if the land-owner's taxes and other burthens, are reduced in the same proportion in which the prices of his corn and other agricultural produce may be reduced, or if present prices are kept up, in either case it may, I think, be regarded as quite clear, that the importation of foreign corn will *not* have the effect of causing a larger quantity of the produce of poor lands to be taken from their owners than is now taken; and consequently will *not* have the effect of throwing a single acre of poor land out of cultivation.

If it should not be already sufficiently clear that the importation of foreign corn will *not* throw an acre of land out of cultivation which is fit for cultivation, let us suppose the case of a person with an income of 1,000*l.* a year,

arising, we will suppose, from 2,000 acres of *poor* lands; and that of another person with just the same amount of income, arising from 500 acres of *good* lands. How it may be asked, will the importation of foreign corn affect the former more than the latter?—that is, supposing, either present prices to be kept up, or taxes and other burthens to be reduced. I think it will be difficult to answer this question. But the notion, that the importation of foreign corn will cause inferior lands to be thrown out of cultivation; that is, that it will *necessarily, and unavoidably* have this effect, may safely be dismissed as an erroneous one. No doubt, if the importation of foreign corn had the unavoidable effect of taking from the owner of poor lands a greater quantity of their produce, in taxes, &c., than is now taken, it might have the effect of throwing such lands out of cultivation; for if such a portion of their produce was taken in taxes, &c., as to leave little or nothing for the use of the owner of the lands, he could have no inducement to cultivate them; but exactly the same might be the case even with respect to the richest lands; for heavy taxation might leave their owner so little of their produce for his own use, that all inducement to their cultivation might be taken away.

Report (though it may possibly be entirely unfounded) speaks of an intention on the part of the government to propose; that the importation of foreign corn shall be permitted to the extent of half a million of quarters annually, and *not further*. But to limit importation to such a

quantity as this, would be doing very little indeed towards relieving the distress of the country. Such a quantity would, literally, not afford a quarter of an ounce a day to each distressed person: nor would such a quantity do any thing towards benefiting our trade and commerce. Free-trade principle will never be of the slightest use to us, if trade in corn is to be restricted to such a quantity as half a million of quarters. To apply free-trade principles to articles which we possess in quantities sufficient to supply the demand, but to reject those principles with respect to an article (corn) which we do *not* possess in quantities equal to the demand, would be a line of conduct springing from any thing but an enlightened view of the subject. But *why*, it may be asked, limit importation to half a million of quarters? Can it be shewn that such a quantity is sufficient to supply the deficiency of our own corn? And if not, then *why* not allow importation to the full extent of supplying such deficiency? Ireland, (and on the mere ground of having large quantities of her corn, beef, and other agricultural produce taken from her, and consumed in England), may reasonably expect that she *alone* should be allowed to import foreign corn to a much greater extent than half a million of quarters. But *why* not allow the importation of a quantity amply sufficient to drive away all distress and wretchedness from both Great Britain and Ireland? Why stop short of the quantity necessary to make both countries flourishing and prosperous? But to this extent, no doubt, importation will be allowed; for

when the subject comes to be thoroughly considered, as it will be soon, no doubt it will be properly understood; and it will then be clearly seen that *this* is the extent to which importation ought to be allowed.

I shall conclude by recapitulating the principal objects of this and of my two former Letters to your Lordship; viz.; —to shew that the distress of the country arises —*not* from taxation, or any other of the causes to which it has been commonly ascribed, but from an insufficiency of food in the country for the proper support of the whole of the people: —to shew, that to supply the deficiency by importation from abroad, will not only put an end to the distress, but will be the means of greatly promoting the power and prosperity of the country: —to prove, that the importation of foreign corn will *not* throw inferior lands out of cultivation; nor, in any other respect, prejudice the interests of the English land-owner, provided, either the present prices of our own corn be kept up, or if not, then provided taxes and other burthens be reduced in the same proportion in which prices may be reduced: —to prove, that, if either prices are kept up, or taxes and other burthens properly reduced, the importation of foreign corn, so far from being necessarily attended with injurious effects to the land-owners, may be made the means of producing a positive benefit to them; but, on the other hand, that unless either prices be kept up, or taxes and other burthens reduced, the importation of foreign corn will be attended with the most serious injury to both

land-owners and farmers;—to land-owners with heavy charges on their estates, with, probably, nothing short of absolute ruin:—to prove that an import duty will not have the slightest effect in keeping up the prices of English-grown corn; and to prove, that there is no means by which they can be kept up, except by an increased amount of the circulating medium:—to shew, how desirable it is to the whole country that measures should be taken in order to place the circulating medium on a solid, safe basis; and to guard it from convulsions and fluctuations in its value.—What I have said upon the above subjects, may, I hope, be found to be not altogether unworthy of your Lordship's attention.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

E. G. ATHERLEY.