CONSIDERATIONS

ON

THE IMPORTATION

OF

FOREIGN CORN.

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Arising out of the Proceedings, at a Meeting of the Heritors of Fifeshire, proposing to petition the Legislature for further Restriction, as published in the Courier Newspaper of the 10th Dec. 1813:

COMPRISING

A Review of the usual Arguments adopted by Agriculturists, in support of this Measure;

SHEWING,

That the present high Price of every thing has been caused by the excessive Increase of the Rent of Land, and a Circulating Taxation. That the proposed Encouragement to Agriculture, in the Legislative Support of yet higher Prices, is delusive; and will be wrested to the further increase of Rent, in the same manner as have been the High Prices, to which the Country has already submitted;

That the High Prices of Things, in no way result from Paper Currency;

Also exhibiting the true cause of the Rise in the Price of Gold and Silver in Britain; and thereby shewing, that it is independent of the circulation of Bank-Notes.

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Considerations on certain Resolutions at a Meeting of the Heritors of Fifeshire, of which General WEMYS *was President, as published in the Courier Newspaper of the 10th December,* 1813.

THESE Resolutions, comprised in fifteen Articles, which it is proposed to examine in the order in which they stand, are stated to have been moved by Sir John Anstruther. After which it appears to have been further resolved, that they should be the foundation of a Petition to Parliament, and a Committee appointed to prepare such accordingly; also that they should be communicated to the Conveners of the other Scotch Counties, and a correspondence commenced with them; and the Committee further authorised to communicate with the Committees of the other Counties, at Edinburgh.

We may therefore view these Resolutions as the public annunciation of the general co-operation of the whole Landed Interests of Scotland to support the high price of corn; and thereby that excessive increase of the Rent of Land, which has been effected during the last 20 or 30 years throughout the whole kingdom. In this view they carry with them an import-

ance calling on the commercial, manufacturing, and monied classes, to give a timely attention to them.

1st Resolution.—"That the measure proposed to Parliament at the conclusion of the last Session, for the amendment of the Corn Laws, is of vital importance to the State, and has equally for its object the ultimate advantage of the commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural interests."

On this Resolution, it may be sufficient to acknowledge the fact of the importance of the measure to which it alludes: referring to our further examination of it, how far this importance may not rather rest on its rejection, than on its adoption by the Legislature. And this, in fact, not less essentially to the agricultural interests, than to the commercial and manufacturing.

2nd Resolution.—"That it is of the first consequence to every country, to be independent of other countries in its supply of food."

That the proposition contained in this Resolution is highly desirable, must be at once admitted. One fact, however, occurs to oppose the strong statement of its being of the first consequence. Holland, in the zenith of its commercial prosperity, imported nearly its whole

consumption of corn, without the result of any inconvenience.

3rd Resolution.—"That it appears from returns presented to the House of Commons, that during the last 21 years, upwards of 58 millions sterling has been paid to foreign countries for corn imported into Great Britain."

The advocates of any measure are apt to endeavour to uphold it by extreme cases. This high sum of 58 millions, averages less than three millions a year for the 21 years; an amount which those acquainted with the magnitude of our manufactured exports, may be induced to view of less importance than conceived by the movers of these Resolutions; and to question, how far the commercial returns obtained by the appropriation of the portion of our national capital and labour, enabling us to make these manufactured exports, may not merely have countervailed, but further, have greatly preponderated over the profit that could have been derived from their direct application to agriculture.

It is too to be recollected, that during all this period we have had to support a state of warfare, great beyond all former example. Consideration must be made for the unavoidable waste in providing for such numerous Armies and Navies as we have maintained, and the

increased consumption of the soldiers and sailors composing them, with that of their families; and of all the artificers and others in the pay of the public, beyond what it would have been in their natural and individual callings. The excess occasioned by these circumstances has probably made up no inconsiderable part of these three millions of annual average importation. With the restoration of peace, this increased demand will cease.

4th Resolution.—"That the balance against this country for an article of the first necessity, must have diminished the capital which would have been invested in the improvement of land, lessened the internal resources of the country, and tended to the increased cultivation of Foreign States, at a loss of similar extent of cultivation and improvement to Great Britain."

With respect to the first part of this Resolution, as relating to diminished capital by this importation, it must suggest itself, that the capital and industry of the country would not have flowed preferably into the channels of commerce and manufacture, if they had not there found a more beneficial employment: and that the interference therefore of the Legislature to divert them from those channels selected by the always better judgment of individual practical

experience, is to be deprecated. The return made to this country for the exports of our manufactures and colonial produce (for such colonial produce is always purchased by the previous export of other manufactures) must exceed that profit that would have arisen from the direct application of the same capital and labour to agriculture. And consequently the balance, instead of being against, has been more favourable to us; instead of having diminished, has increased the general wealth of the country, and accordingly that capital available for land. It must be seen to have augmented, not lessened the internal resources of this country. That our importations tend to increase the cultivation of foreign countries, *so far* as stated to be at the expense or loss of a similar extent of cultivation and improvement to Great Britain, must therefore also be seen to be further erroneous.

In our intercourse with Foreign Nations, the benefit they may derive from it should be the source of congratulation to ourselves. And this not only in a spirit of philanthropy, but equally so in the true knowledge of our own interests: for it must be apparent, that the greater and richer they are, so also must be more advantageous to ourselves our communications with them.

If we desire Foreigners to purchase our ma-

nufactures, in what are they to make us a return? We do not wish it in other manufactures. In what then must we receive it, if not in the gruff produce of their soil? They have not all mines of gold and silver, any more than ourselves. If we close our markets against all other commodities excepting gold and silver only, those who have them not, must cease to take our manufactures, having nothing to give us in exchange, which we will accept; or they must seek to obtain gold and silver by their own trade with those countries which produce them. If the countries producing gold and silver; if South America requires not the corn of Germany, Germany then, to obtain its gold and silver, must establish within itself some manufactures which South America may want, with which to make the exchange. In doing so, these manufactures must come in competition with, and in as much as they succeed, exclude from the markets of South America those goods now supplied by England, either directly or indirectly through Spain and Portugal.

The dark days are passed, which had imagined gold and silver to mark the advantage or disadvantage of our foreign interchanges. Gold and silver are now known to be mere articles of merchandise, which, like other merchandise, come and go according to the de-

mand for them, in the natural flow of commerce. The blind conception, that if in a trade between two countries, it was beneficial to one, it must therefore be in as much disadvantageous to the other, no longer misleads; at least in Britain. We have become sensible that all commerce, although perhaps in some instances more beneficial to one country than to the other, is, however, necessarily beneficial to both. Climate, soil, a more perfect skill, or other accidental circumstances, may give to one country advantages which another cannot, or does not possess. Their exchanges must consequently be mutually beneficial. If two countries can exchange one with the other any articles, whether of manufacture, or raw material, or sustenance (which last is in fact the greatest of all raw materials, and together with all other raw material, only a lower order or primary kind of manufacture, or product of labour applied to the soil), for other articles, whether of manufacture, raw material or sustenance, which have relatively been produced with less labor and capital, the mutual advantage must be evident. If England exchanges with Germany a piece of cotton cloth, which has been made with the labor of ten persons, for ten days, (allowance being made for the value of the cotton wool imported), for a quantity of iron or wheat, which could not have been pro-

duced in England, but with the labor of double the number of persons for the same time, it must be evident, that England is more advantaged than she could have been in the application of her own double labor to its production: and consequently, that English capital must be augmented by the exchange, beyond what it would have been by the direct application of its labor and means to the production of the iron or wheat. Also, if on the other hand, Germany could produce with the ten days' labor of the ten persons, the iron or wheat she exchanges for the piece of cotton cloth, which, although made in England with the ten days' labour of the ten persons, could not have been made in Germany but with double the labor and capital, or at double the price of them, Germany too is in this manner advantaged. Also, if one of two countries, equally capable of producing the same things by means of the same labor and capital, should however be able to direct that labor and capital to more advantageous pursuits, the advantage to that country in so doing must be not less apparent, although it should thereby be obliged to receive from the other country the things which it could otherwise have produced within itself. Supposing England and Germany both capable of producing the iron and wheat at the same expense of labor and capital, yet if England

at the same time can by superior ingenuity, convert this labor and capital to the manufacture of cotton cloth, producing a quantity of it greatly beyond what Germany may be able to produce by the similar application of its labor and capital, then must both countries still be benefited by the exchange. Germany in this case obtaining the cotton cloth at a cheaper rate than that at which, relatively to the iron or wheat, it could have been made for in Germany; yet sufficiently above that of the labor and capital required for its production in England, by means of superior ingenuity, to make the exchange also advantageous to England. Germany obtains more cotton cloth than it could have fabricated for itself, by means of the same labor and capital employed in the production of the corn or iron. England obtains more corn or iron than it could have produced for itself by means of the same labor and capital employed in the fabrication of the cotton cloth. Exchanges of this sort constitute the basis of commerce. Uninfluenced by duties or customs, the money price of any commodity always represents the just value of the labor and capital required in its production: and it cannot be supposed, that nations will be disposed to continue a trade, that is not attended with some advantage on both sides. The individual interests of the fair trader are always identified

with those of the community to which he belongs. In trade we must give and take; and if we wish Germany or any other country to receive the products of our industry, we must also take something in return, which Germany, and German, or other merchants, must find an interest in exchanging with us.

Restraint upon any other species of raw material, is quickly understood to be destructive of our manufactures. Ought it not also to be perceived, that restraint upon this kind of raw material, the sustenance of the artificer, must be equally ruinous to his industry? Our merchants must have some returns for those things they export to foreign countries; or they must cease to export them. The ruinous effect of the return upon us of foreign manufactures in exchange for our own, must be obvious. In what then may it be proposed that this return shall be made, according to the present extent of our exports? It must be seen, that to oblige Germany and the other nations of Europe to pay us gold and silver only, must operate to compel immediately their similar industry to the rivalry and diminution of our own; thus destroying or diminishing the home market furnished by our manufacturing population for the products of land, and thereby, instead of drawing capital to our own agriculture, as assumed in this Resolution, on the contrary, by dessening the actual

encouragement of good markets, produce a result diametrically opposite.

5th Resolution.—"That the balance paid to other countries in return for imported corn, must have affected the exchange with foreign nations, and embarrassed our commercial transactions."

The considerations offered in respect of the preceding Resolution, comprise in substance what deserves our attention in respect of the present. It surmises, that if the capital and industry of the countries which created those manufactures we have exported to Germany and other countries, had, instead, been employed in our own agriculture, we should not then have had occasion for that corn which we have imported. But if this capital and industry had been so employed, whence should we have produced the manufactures we have exported? It must be evident those manufactures would not have been produced. This brings the question to, which may have been the most advantageous employment of this portion of the national capital and industry? Whether employed in our own agriculture, with a view to the export of corn and other gruff produce of the land; or employed in manufactures, and thereby maintaining those numerous artificers and their families, whose consumption it is that constitutes

the present home market for this corn and other produce of the land, and without whom, as no such home market would exist, it could consequently be only disposed of by exportation. It must readily occur to every Landholder, that no exportation price he can expect, would support the present high rent of land. If it were possible that the Landed Interests would be content to lower their rents, so as to enable the British farmer to look to foreign markets, as in 1688 and 1700; to the similar state of the country in which years (when, if we exported some corn, we also imported to a considerable and perhaps greater amount of manufactured goods from France, Holland, Germany, and other places) it is the avowed object of these Resolutions to bring us back: yet it must be seen, that from the bulky nature of corn, it could not bear the charge of distant voyages, and that therefore the export of it could not extend beyond the nearest foreign countries; and even then, to be sold to a disadvantage against the natural produce of those countries, because in the same manner as foreign corn has to encounter the disadvantage of freight and risk in being brought to England, so British corn in this case must be subject to the similar charge of its transport to those countries, to be deducted from the price that might be obtained for it. Whereas manufactures, compressing great va-

lue in small bulk, are capable of repaying the expense of the most distant voyages, and enable us to extend our trade to the furthest quarters of the world. More mature reflection should awaken the Landed Interests to the sense, that in proportion to the flourishing state of our manufactures, must be the best possible market, that is, the home market for the produce of their lands; and that in urging their rents so as to raise the price of subsistence above that rate which our manufacturing classes are able to pay, according to the price foreigners are content to pay for our manufactures, instead of making them at home for themselves, they are destroying these classes, and with them the market they constitute.

The question of our foreign exchange therefore does not rest, as implied in this Resolution, upon the effect stated to be produced by our import of corn, but upon the balance there may be between it, together with all our other imports; and the export of our manufactures, with all our other exports, including the re-exportation of foreign and colonial produce necessarily first obtained from other foreign countries and our colonies, in exchange for other manufactures and exports.

6th Resolution.—"That the only permanent and effectual mode of reducing the price of

grain, is to hold out to the cultivator of land, an inducement to increase cultivation."

At the first glance of this Resolution, it may seem incapable of objection. It is to be considered, however, whether there may not be some existing impediments, the removal of which would act more forcibly than any fresh inducement, and which impediments, if not properly understood, may be liable to gain strength from the intended new inducement, so as perhaps to more than countervail it. The examination of these points will occur in the consideration of the subsequent Resolutions.

7th Resolution.—"That the only mode of inducing the cultivator of land to increase the quantity of corn sown, is to secure him from foreign competition. A competition which withdraws capital from this country for the improvement of Foreign States, damps the agricultural exertion of the farmer, from the uncertainty in which he is placed as to the supply of the market, and renders us dependant upon others for an article with which we cannot dispense."

The first part of this Resolution, viz. "That the only mode of inducing the cultivator of land to increase the quantity of corn sown, is to secure him from foreign competition," assumes that such are the existing difficulties or

impediments, that they cannot be overcome by any other means; and that they are in themselves incapable of remedy. It seems strange, that so comprehensive an assumption should not have been introduced by some demonstration or allusion to the nature of these difficulties or impediments, which we must suppose the authors of these Resolutions to have well contemplated. Not being thus set forth, we are driven to the necessity of gathering them elsewhere, in the usual arguments of the other general advocates of this measure of restriction on the import of foreign corn. As such, they may be stated to be, the general increase in the price of labor and of all things, or the change in the value of money; increased taxes; and the increased rent of land.

In proceeding to the consideration of these points, it must immediately occur, that the increased price of labor, and generally of all things, or change in the value of money, has arisen out of, and been caused by the other circumstances of increased taxes, and of the increase of the rent of land: but as the proportions relatively to each other, in which these last have operated, and the extent in which the taxes themselves have also been caused by the increase of the rent of land, is not perhaps so universally understood, it may not be misplaced to go into some details in this inquiry.

All taxes necessarily fall in the end on realized capital. Some direct taxes, such as the Legacy Duty and the Property Tax as regarding realized property, must be seen to do so immediately. In these, nothing more is paid than what passes at once into the Public Treasury; and they accordingly produce no other effect than the loss to the parties paying them, in the exact amount received by Government. It is otherwise, however, with respect to indirect taxes, such as Excise or Custom duties on articles of general consumption, and indeed with respect to most, if not all, methods of indirect taxation.

In different stages of society, the laborious orders may earn a something more or less liberal support; but emulation and competition always prevent their obtaining beyond a fair maintenance, according to the circumstances of the community and their station in it. They cannot do with less than this; and, consequently, under whatever delusive form the taxes of the country may be made in appearance to bear on them, these are, however, always shifted by them from one to another, till they at last fix on the capitalist. Nor is this general effect confined to the lower orders; the physician, the lawyer, and other liberal professions; the manufacturer and the trader, by retail or wholesale, are all included in it. None

of these derive from their exertion and talents more than their just remuneration. Extraordinary profits occasionally flowing into any one branch, induce so many new adventurers to enter into it, that it soon finds its due level; and when overloaded, the consequent failures deter from its pursuit, till the employment it offers, approaches to the proportion of those it is capable of maintaining in that sphere adapted to the occupation. Extraordinary success in any particular trade never lasts long; competition soon reducing its gains to a reasonable recompense for the trouble, skill, and risk with which it is carried on. All these classes are, therefore, as well as the lower orders, equally obliged to add their taxes to the price of their talents and industry, or to the profits they take on the articles of their trade. One cannot afford more than another to pay any new tax out of his old gains; and concurrence equally prevents every one from making an undue advance. Individual exceptions may sometimes arise to these observations; but they are merely exceptions, and not of sufficient weight to merit attention in the general view.

Further, neither can these classes afford to charge again the mere tax only, but are obliged to add a profit on it similar to the profit on their goods, on account of the additional capital it employs and risks. This being done

successively by each person through whose hands the goods pass, the ratio of the increased price of them in the accumulating progress of profit on the tax, and profit on the previous profit on the tax, as well as on the goods, may be double; and in the action and reaction of numerous taxes of this description on themselves and on each other, perhaps often quadruple, and sometimes tenfold the amount of the tax itself.

As well as absolute Excise or Custom duties on articles of general consumption, nearly all the rest of our taxes, perhaps with the exception of the two above named, the Legacy Tax and the Property Tax as affecting realized capital, have only more or less this same operation, as they take effect a little nearer or a little more remote from the original sources of industry. The Property Tax, as affecting the gains of trade, the tradesman's eighteen pence in the pound on the rent of the premises he occupies, the farmer's similar eighteen pence in the pound on the rent of his farm, all licences to particular trades, duties on servants employed in trade, duties on horses, carriages, &c. used in agriculture or trade, and even duties or taxes on many seeming luxuries, necessary to support the appearance or comfort of some professions and stations, are all necessarily charged again in the profits of the par-

ties by whom they were immediately paid, or rather advanced only in the first instance.

It must be seen, therefore, that part of the price of whatever we consume is made up of these taxes; and this even when the article may not in itself be directly and ostensibly taxed.

The example of the tax on leather, will perhaps convey an adequate idea of the progress of a tax on an article of general consumption. Paid by the tanner, he adds the amount of the tax to the price of the material, and takes his profit on the whole. It consequently passes to the leather-seller's hands charged not only with the tax on it paid by the tanner, but also with the tanner's profit on the tax. From the leather-seller it passes to the shoemaker, further charged with the leather-seller's profit on the tanner's profit on the tax, as well as the tax itself. All which are again charged by the shoemaker to his customers, with his own further profit on the whole. It passes indeed, through more hands than have been enumerated, each of which successively takes his profits. So far as to the tax and its immediate accumulations in the price of our shoes. But its effects by no means stop here. In our climate, and according to our usages, shoes are little less an article of necessity than our absolute sustenance: they are at least in general use by the

poor and laborious, as well as by the rich and idle. The price of the labourer's or trader's shoes being in this manner advanced to them, they are obliged to advance the price of their labor or their profits, that they may be able to pay it. The price of wool, therefore, as it passes from the hands of the wool-comber, must be advanced by him, to cover the additional price of the shoes he has worn while preparing it; the same to the spinner, to the weaver, and to every other hand through which it passes, and to the tailor till it is made into a coat, in the price of which the consumer necessarily pays the additional price of the shoes of all the persons who have been employed in every part of its preparation. Accordingly the wearer of the coat pays this tax on leather in the price both of his shoes, and of his coat. Let us suppose him a hatter, who again charges it in the price of his hats. The stocking manufacturers consequently pay it in the price of their shoes, coats and hats; and charging it in the price of their stockings, the linen manufacturers pay it in the price of their shoes, coats, hats, and stockings; and who charging it again in the price of their linens, it proceeds in apparently almost endless reciprocation and circumvolution, yet gradually reaching at every point towards the capitalist, in whose power alone it is to pay it without again charging it to others.

But will be understood, that many traders, professional men, and others, who live by their absolute labor, may be, and are in general partially capitalists, and according to the extent of their capitals necessarily make good without retribution their due proportion of the public burdens. Gain of trade or other earnings, being properly only that excess of profit over and above what the capital employed would have yielded in any other way without risk or trouble to the proprietor, as if laid out in land, houses, lent on mortgage, or placed in the public funds; that is to say generally, what is obtained over and above five per cent. No trader with a borrowed capital, and having the interest of it to pay, can by competition oblige the trader with a capital of his own to reduce his gains. The latter therefore is able to pay a proportion of his taxes without retribution or charging them again on his profits, according to his capital; and will be found to do so.

The result of our numerous duties on articles of general consumption and other indirect taxes, all acting on each other in a cumulative collision, will be more readily conceived than calculated. This effect, from the duties on coals, soap, candles, salt, and on other like articles of the first necessity, must be powerfully felt.

With this view before us, of the manner and

extent in which this method of taxation operates, in shewing itself as a part of, and enhancing the general prices of all things, not merely to the amount of the tax, but also in such great excess, we will now proceed to the consideration of the yet more extensive action of every increase of the rent of land.

It must be immediately apparent, that there can be no difference either to the individual farmer, or to the community at large, between a general and excessive land-tax levied by the government, or an equally excessive increase of rent by the land-owner; that one equally with the other obliges the farmer to sell his produce at an increased price, thereby raising the price of the first necessaries of life. And it must be in the same manner evident, that with the increased price of subsistence, the price of labor must advance! nor is it material to the present question, whether this may be effected by a direct increase of wages, or eked out by parish allowances. It is, indeed, in the latter case more unjust, because calling on those, in the form of a parish rate, to make up the wages and maintenance of that labor in which they have had no profit. It is also further unjust, because parish rates falling largely on houses in towns, the proprietors of which may have had no part in that general increase of the rent of land, which by increasing the price of subsist-

ence has created the necessity of these heavy parish rates: so that their parish rates are in as much virtually only an indirect mode of taxation on them by the proprietors of agricultural land.

The nature of the accumulative progress on an article of general consumption, has been shewn in the instance of the tax on leather, in the profit on the tax, as well as on the profit of the leather itself, taken in each successive hand. If such is the operation of a tax only once paid, how much greater must not be the effect of an increased price of labor, caused by the increased price of subsistence arising out of the increased rent of land, not only paid by the tanner in the increase of wages to his workmen, but also by the leather-seller in the increase of wages to his workmen, and so on progressively through every stage not only with accumulation on the previous charge, but further as a new charge in this increase of wages in each successive hand, and all advancing in a similar series of accumulation?

Contemplating the increase which has been made in the rent of land, together with the manner in which so great a proportion of our public burdens are levied, both in the same manner reaching us in the form of increased prices, we must be sensible of the sufficiency of such powerful causes to have wrought the

change in the value of money complained of, without allowing ourselves to be hoodwinked by the sophistry of any theoretic assumptions. Viewing that compound increase these co-operating causes acquire in their course, it must be matter of surprise only, that their effect has not been greater. Some distinct observations on money and paper currency given in the sequel, it is conceived, will satisfactorily demonstrate the fallacy of the supposition very prevalent among the lower classes, and even entertained by many well informed men, that the present high prices of things have been the consequence of our too extended paper currency, or, as it is sometimes expressed, the too great abundance of money.

At present we will continue our consideration of the two self-evident sources of the evil. It will not be denied, that in the course of these last 30 or 40 years, or since 1765, a period that will be found referred to in an after Resolution, that the average increase of the rent of land, in one situation with another throughout the kingdom, has been after a rate of 20 shillings an acre, and upwards: that is to say, that lands which used to let at 10 or 15 shillings an acre, now let at 30 and 35 shillings, and so on progressively or with a greater increase. Let us suppose a farm of 400 acres, and the mere increase of rent accordingly 400*l.* The taxes, in-

clusive of the farmer's property-tax, and of every other tax payable by the farmer on a farm of this extent, taken in the same manner in one situation with another throughout the country, the land at a medium quality, or about 40 shillings the acre, will be found to average somewhere between 80*l.* and 100*l.*; probably about 90*l.*; but not to under-rate, we will assume them at 100*l.*

Thus it appears, that the mere increase of the rent of land is four-fold the amount of taxes. But it is to be recollected this is the whole amount of taxes, which we are comparing not with the whole amount of rent, but only with the increase of it since the period referred to: whereas such part of these taxes as existed previously, ought to be deducted. However, we will pass by this consideration. Assuming then the increase of rent to have been as 400*l.* to taxes 100*l.*, or as four to one, it must be seen that whatever the increased price the farmer has been obliged to demand for his corn, cattle, and the other produce of his land, it has been proportionately four parts by increase of rent, and one part by taxes: that is to say, that if the price of the bushel of wheat in 1765 was 5*s.* and supposing it now 12*s.* 6*d.* being an increase of 7*s.* 6*d.* then four parts in five of this increase of price, or 6*s.*, have been occasioned by the increase of rent; and 1*s.* 6*d.* only by taxes.

Or in such proportion of whatever may have been the increase of the price of the bushel of wheat; and in the same manner of butcher's meat, and all other articles of subsistence, or other products of land. But this is not all. The present price of the loaf of bread is notoriously three-fold what it was about 1765. Many other things, however, not having risen in equal proportion to bread, we will assume as a general average increase of prices, including that of labor, that they have doubled. Accordingly the public expenses in carrying on the war, and therefore the taxes necessary to meet them, have been also double what they otherwise would have been; or one half of them would have sufficed. Whatever may be the ratio of this excess of our taxes, it must be chargeable to the causes that have produced it; that is, to the increase of rent and to taxes, each in the due proportion in which they have operated. For the reaction of taxes on themselves is to be here considered: all additional taxes on consumption necessarily advancing directly the price of the articles on which they are levied, and further, as has been explained, indirectly of every thing else, rendering thereby the national expenses greater, and consequently inducing the necessity of still greater taxation. It has been shewn that where the increase of rent has been 400*l.*, the amount of taxes does not ex-

ceed 100*l.*, or that they are in proportion to their joint amount, the former four parts in five to the latter one part in five. Taking them in this proportion, the account will stand, that the taxes being 100*l.* the half of which is 50*l.* four parts in five of this last being 40*l.* is to be deducted from the total taxes 100*l.* reducing them to 60*l.* And the same being added to the increase of rent, as caused by, and therefore virtually a part of it, makes it amount to 440*l.* Giving a proportion of 440*l.* increase of rent and only 60*l.* taxes: or as nearly seven parts in eight to the account of increase of rent, and one part in eight to that of taxes. Consequently the increase in the prices of all things to which we have been subjected, or the change which has been made in the value of money, has been caused in the proportion of nearly seven parts in eight by the increase of the rent of land, and only one eighth part by national taxation. Taking the loaf of bread at fourpence in 1765, and at the present day at one shilling, this increase of price has been caused seven pence by the increase of rent of land, and one penny by taxes.

Loaf of bread in 1765, ...	£0	0	4
Increase of rent of land, ...	0	0	7
Taxes, ...	0	0	1
Present price of the loaf of bread,	£0	1	0

It will be said that the increase of rent has been gradual, and that the above calculation rests wholly on its present height. But so also have the taxes been gradual, which are equally taken at their present height. Besides, it is the whole amount of taxes against the mere increase of rent. It will also be said that we have many other taxes which, not falling on agriculture or on immediate subsistence, therefore do not affect the price of labor, or only in a very slight degree, but which add none the less very considerably to the price of the articles on which they are laid. Articles of this sort, however, constitute a very small comparative part of the public expenses of the country. Many other objections will doubtless be made to this kind of calculation; and it must be liable to some deductions. It is to be observed, however, that it is also open to some considerable additions. It must be seen that the average increase of rent has been under-rated, and that it ought more properly to have been taken at twenty-five shillings an acre, and upwards, instead of at twenty shillings; also, that the comparative taxes have been over-rated, when stated at 100*l.* They are probably a good deal over-rated, beyond what is faithfully paid.

Whatever may be the extent and relative proportion in which the change in the value of money has arisen from these two great causes, the

increase of rent and taxes, we may consider it as an occurrence that will participate in any mitigation they may themselves be susceptible of.

Viewing the nature of our landed tenures, it must be perceived that any hope of relief by a relaxation and transfer to other property, of the taxes on agriculture, would be only converted by the Landed Proprietors to their own partial advantage; availing themselves of the intended relief to the farmer, to load him immediately with so much additional rent. Reasoning, that if he had previously been able to pay these taxes together with his rent, so now being relieved from them, he must be able to pay an equivalent increase of rent. The result therefore would not be to enable the farmer to sell his grain and other produce at a reduced price, but that the community at large would still continue to be charged the same price for its subsistence; and at the same time become further subjected to another tax, in order to replace the present taxes on agriculture thus repealed with a view to its relief, but perverted by the landowner to the further increase of his rent. Nor does this reasoning apply merely to the direct taxes on agriculture, but also to all those other indirect taxes by which it may be affected, as contributing with the increased rent of land to raise the price of labor. If it were yet further possible by the repeal of any of these taxes,

to lower again the price of labor even to its former standard, it would only be an advantage seized upon by the land-owners, arguing as in the case of the repeal of the direct taxes, that if the farmer had before been able to pay his rent together with the higher rate of labor, now obtaining labor at a cheaper rate, he must be able to bear the difference in addition to his rent. But it must be seen that any reduction of the price of labor, is incompatible with a high rent, and consequent price of subsistence.

If the above suggestions be just, it must follow, that in the same manner as any direct tax on land or agriculture is openly a hindrance or deduction from that rent which would otherwise be exacted by the land-owner: so only more covertly do all our other taxes terminate in the same effect. Those persons therefore, if any there are, who look forward to the ultimate liquidation of the national debt and their release from the taxes it compels, would yet be disappointed in any relief they should teach themselves to expect in consequence: for the result would be only, that the land-owners by means of their increasing rents, would further make the other classes of the community pay an increased price for their subsistence equivalent to the repealed taxes. This precisely in the degree the Landed Interests may be able to persuade the Legislature to give them scope in the

prohibition or restriction of foreign grain, leaving them accordingly so far masters of the price of that of British growth. It is indeed sometimes pretended, that it is not the amount of rent that fixes the price of provisions, but the market price of provisions which regulates the rent. This, however, is a mere delusion. Such a rule may indeed hold with respect to commodities that may be produced ad libitum, and being at the same time such as admit of an option in the consumption. Such may be brass buttons and cotton cloth, in respect of which every man may limit himself according to his means and pleasure, while the manufacture of them may be carried to any extent of demand. But this cannot be the case with things of such first necessity as constitute our absolute sustenance. With these we cannot dispense beyond a certain degree, and must therefore pay the price demanded. No competition in any trade can go so far as to make those who carry it on, take a less profit than covers their rent, taxes and all outgoings; nor to attempt to sell a commodity charged with a tax or stamp, at the same price they could and would do without it. In the same manner all farmers being pretty nearly equally high rented relatively to the quality and advantages of their farms, one cannot afford to undersell another. It were as well to pretend that the malt tax made no difference in

the price of beer, as to attempt to establish that the rent of land does not fix the price of subsistence. If the land-owners themselves were not sensible of this fact, why then this application to the Legislature against the competition of foreign corn? Is it not in the sense they entertain, that it is this foreign competition which alone limits their power?

It may be a bold view of the question, but seems warranted, that however heavy our taxes in a long course of rapidly succeeding wars, yet they are no more than equivalent to what, in a similar course of uninterrupted peace and of the greatest public economy, the other classes of society would have been equally subjected to by the land-holders, in the price of their subsistence. This supposing they should have been able to have obtained from the Legislature such a restriction on foreign corn, as to have placed the price of our own sufficiently in their power to have gone this length. If the only rule of the rent of land is to be the ability of the other classes to support it, then is all other wealth, every species of industry, merely subservient to the rapacity of the land-owners. What then to the other classes of the country can be peace or war, order or profusion in the public expenditure, compared with the object of a free competition of foreign corn in our markets, constituting the only practicable coun-

teraction of this greedy grasp and subversion of every other kind of property? Great as has been the increase of the rent of land, it has been this competition alone that has kept it from having been yet more excessive.

It will not be pretended, that any moderation in the breasts of the land-owners have withheld them, or that they are not disposed to raise their rents even beyond the ability of the community at large, when we behold one half of it in the form of parish paupers reduced to beggary, want, and the charity of the other half. For it is no longer the helpless alone, but the hard-working artificer, and indefatigable laborer, who have become scarcely less the objects of our poor-laws. The first fit of sickness, a transient want of work; or what was once the poor man's blessing, a large family, bring them on the parish. They may be reproached with a departure from that honest pride which set their forefathers above this humiliation. But it is that their wages have not risen, and the impossibility that they should be so raised as to be equal to the rise which has taken place in the price of their subsistence, without a very extensive interruption to the general industry of the country, that drives them on to the humiliation of parish-relief. We must all be conscious that no ordinary laborer with his wife, both in good health, and in the prime of

life, can do more than maintain themselves and their children. The aged parent, who used to rely for the support of his old age on his children's exertions, is now left to the parish. When a Justice of the Peace signs his order to the overseer of a neighbouring parish, to extend relief to some poor family, can he pretend to be ignorant that it is the rack-rent at which he has let his lands, obliging the farmer to sell his produce at a rate, which the laborious poor can no longer afford to pay, that has caused the necessity of this order? When my Lord and my Lady Bountiful are ostentatiously subscribing their five and their ten guineas to their soup-shops, can they pretend to be ignorant that it is the increased rack-rent of their lands, quadrupled within memory, that has deprived the poor of a better and more sufficient diet, at the price of their honest industry? Are we to believe it charity, or some sneaking sense of the impolicy of driving the poor to the desperation of right-out starvation, that induces this apparent mitigation with one hand, while with the other they are aggravating the evil in the ever-unsatisfied demand of increasing rents? Must not every tradesman in the kingdom feel, with the increased expenses of his own family, that also in his annually increasing poor-rates, he is only further called upon to enable some of his poorer townsmen to make up that price of their

sustenance, necessary to satisfy the increasing rent of land? When the poor woman laments the small size and light weight of her sixpenny loaf, and begs private alms, that she may be enabled to add something to it to satisfy her hungry family, must there not be an invincible disposition to refer her for relief to those whose fortunes and luxuries have been raised on the small size and light weight of her loaf? Must not every man feel in his acts of private charity, that more than half of whatever he gives, is thus perverted from the relief of the object of his consideration, to make up the increased rent of land? Must not most of us feel, that of every pound and every shilling we assign to the aid and comfort of age or infirmity, more than one half is thus wrested from our intention, to contribute to the fortune of some one already richer than ourselves?

It is an unfortunate misapprehension of the intelligence of even the lowest orders in England, if it is imagined, that with the rapid increase of the rent of land under their observation, in many instances forty shillings an acre and upwards, while the whole taxes on it do not exceed four or five shillings an acre, they do not know how to apportion accordingly the oppressions to which they are submitted, to their proper sources.

It is not unusual to hear it maintained, that

unless by the exclusion of foreign corn, the price of our own is kept up, the farmer must be ruined; and that the ruin of the farmer must be followed by the ruin of the tradesman, who is supported by the farmer's custom. A reduction of rent must, however, be the same thing to the farmer, and equally avert from him this threatened ruin. But then it is said the land-owner's income would be reduced, and being obliged to contract his expenses, the tradesmen with whom he deals losing so much of their profits from his diminished custom, will not be able to continue to pay their taxes, and that a general bankruptcy of the country must ensue. What is this, but in other words to pretend that the draper, the grocer, and the ironmonger, would find an advantage in making a present of an hundred pounds to any country gentleman or farmer in their neighbourhood, on condition that it should be spent at their shops? For it must be evident, that if the present high rent of land is to be maintained by the high price of subsistence, and the consequent high price of every thing else, to be paid by the draper, the grocer, and the ironmonger, the money is in this manner first drawn from them to be afterwards spent in their shops.

Some cases of individual hardship must doubtless arise, in the instances of farmers who

may have lately taken leases at high rents. But this seems to be in the very nature of the farmer's station. He stands between his landlord and the public. His landlord will make him pay the utmost rent, and he will make the public pay the utmost price for their provisions. It can be only through his inability to obtain his prices, that his landlord can be compelled to a reduction of rent. The only practicable means by which the public can compel the farmer to a reduction of his prices, must be seen to be in the competition of foreign corn.

An apprehension is sometimes entertained, and this by persons of deep thought, that it is only in consequence of the change in the value of money, that the country is enabled to support its present taxes. It would certainly happen, that with such a reduction of the rent of land as should materially reduce the price of commodities, the same rate of taxes being still to be borne, must be relatively heavier. But it would be indeed sanguine, to alarm ourselves at the expectation of any such reduction of prices, as to become an important consideration in this respect. Besides, it must be evident, that with a general reduction of prices, the public expenses would also be diminished, and consequently the taxes supporting them be also open to reduction. Our National Debt, indeed, must remain a permanent charge, till liquidated in

the progress of the Sinking Fund. But the consideration must here present itself, of the different ability of the country to maintain and extend the exportation of its multifarious industry at the present high rate, or further increase of the prices of subsistence and of labor; or of the extent to which this exportation may be expected to be carried by a reduction of them. And accordingly, must be also viewed, that with the general increased wealth and resources of the country, greater numbers being enabled to participate in the public burdens, must make them fall proportionably lighter on all individually.

With the restoration of peace and of its ancient governments, and its former administrations of justice, the industry of the Continent will revive, and we must be prepared for a competition which its disasters and oppression have of late prevented. As our manufacturers and merchants will have this competition to meet, the impossibility of their doing so for any time must be evident, without something like an approach to an equal rate of subsistence. To maintain a competition in the sale price of their goods, our manufacturers must also be admitted to something like a competition in the cheapness of their own support. Without this, neither our established capital, nor our machinery, will long enable us to carry

on the contest; but may be expected themselves to lead the emigration, at the first moment of security, of more than one branch of our most profitable industry.

It is not uncommon to hear a land-owner, when raising a rent, make a sort of justification, that he is only doing so to meet the increasing expenses of the times; or that he is only doing as all other men are doing, in making the most of his property. But it may be asked, with what justice is the landed capitalist to increase the rent of his land on this pretence, any more than the monied capitalist to increase the rate of interest of his money? Whatever the taxes, the monied capitalist pays his due proportion of them without any power of retribution, and with what justice can the landed capitalist pretend that he is to indemnify himself, by the raising his rents, for these very taxes incurred as much for the defence of his land, as of the other property of the country? On what plea is every new tax to be met by him, as a new pretence for raising his rent so many shillings an acre; or his other increasing expenses in the increased price of every thing, caused so chiefly by his already increased rent, to be met by him with its further increase? We have only to cast our eyes, on any side, on the owner of a landed estate, and inquire what it yielded him or his ancestors

in 1765, and what he draws from it now; and however great the taxes since that time, and the change in the value of money, we must be sensible he has not merely kept pace with the times, but gone greatly beyond them. What is this, thus indemnifying himself by the rise of his rents, and the consequent price of subsistence, if it has not been a virtual evasion and shirking of his own due proportion of the public burdens, throwing it on the shoulders of the other classes of society? And, further, inasmuch as he has gone beyond this point, that not content with merely evading his fair contribution, he has been fattening in the midst of the general distress; availing himself of the very times, when all other property has so cheerfully been yielded in support of our salvation from an overwhelming foe, to inflict a scarcely less grievous wound, in having actually reduced one half of his fellow countrymen to the humiliations of parish-poor.

That he is only making the most of his property like other men, is also a fallacious statement. Any comparison between the rent of land and the profits of trade, would be misplaced, because these last are subject to a risk which the first is not. The just comparison is between the rent of land and interest of money, each yielding to their proprietors an income without any exertion of their own. The inte-

rest of money being restrained to five per cent., the proprietor can derive no greater profit from it: while the land-owner has raised his rent beyond all proportion.

This Resolution goes on to say, "a competition which withdraws capital from this country, for the improvement of Foreign States, damps the agricultural exertion of the farmer, from the uncertainty in which he is placed as to the supply of the market, and renders us dependent on others for an article with which we cannot dispense." The first part, "that this competition withdraws capital from this country," has already been shewn to be erroneous, if it is admitted that we have carried on a more beneficial trade through the medium of our manufactures; and in the fabrication of which a greater quantity of corn was consumed by the workmen and their families, and brought a better return, than could have been obtained by its direct exportation. British capital has therefore been increased not diminished, as implied in the stating it to be withdrawn from the country for the improvement of Foreign States. That Foreign States also derive a benefit from this interchange of their industry for ours must be supposed, or they would decline continuing it. It has already been shewn how trade may be beneficial to both countries between which it is

carried on; and that in fact it always is so, or ceases.

If the agricultural exertions of the farmer are really in any degree damped by the uncertainty of the market, it appears, however, to be attended with some counterpoise in his favor. The uncertainty of the price he may be able to obtain for his produce, rendering also uncertain the exact limit of that utmost rent which he can afford to pay, acts as a sort of protection to him against his landlord. But the effect of the competition of foreign corn to produce any uncertainty in the market, seems to be at least questionable. In all other cases, the greater the competition, the better assured is the steadiness of the price of the commodity. So far from creating an uncertainty, it should rather seem that competition holds out the best assurance of the price always being within certain limits. The supply of corn, the staple commodity of the land, is an object of too great extent not to be generally known throughout the country. It is not as the supply of a few drugs, the nature and production of which, and their probable demand, being confined to the knowledge of a few individuals only, may be made a secret speculation. Imported corn is not obtained for the mere fetching. It bears a fair price in the countries whence it is brought.

And the merchant importer must view with attention, the probable result of our own growth before he can venture to direct his foreign purchase. If the culture of the land of the country is committed to individual discretion, not less may be committed to similar individual discretion, that supply the market is likely to demand or bear from foreign sources. The individual judgment of the merchant importer is not likely to be less sound, than that of the cultivator.

"That it renders us dependent on others for that with which we cannot dispense," is involved in all the general considerations how far our agriculture is not likely to be better promoted through the increased opulence flowing into the country in the extension of our commerce.

We must view the magnitude of that political elevation we have attained among nations. Britain has now become, in a manner, the great metropolis of the whole world. As the wealth and greatness of towns is derived from the interchanges of their own, and as being the emporia of the general interchanges of the industry of the surrounding districts; so the wealth and greatness of Britain is derived from its more expanded communications throughout the universe. We are told that on the first carrying the turnpike roads into the distant counties, such was the apprehension of the

Land-holders in the immediate neighborhood of London, that they petitioned against the measure, on the grounds of the injury to their estates, by promoting such a concurrence in the supply of the London market. Yet by this very extension of its resources has London so increased in opulence, that its overflowings have raised these neighboring lands to a value infinitely beyond any thing they could ever otherwise have reached. Just such may not be viewed the present proceedings of the Landed Interests, in their misapprehension and false alarm of the more extended supplies of Britain?

8th Resolution.—"That the object of the measure proposed, is not to increase the price as a premium to the Land-holder and farmer at the expense of the other classes of society, but to promote the investment of a greater capital in land, by which a constant increase of corn will take place, and the supply become steady and independent of Foreign Nations, ultimately tending to a diminution of the price, and securing the country against those fluctuations which have in some years brought want and beggary on the laborer and manufacturer."

This Resolution commences with telling us the object in view is not to increase the price (of corn, &c. may be understood), at the expense

of the other classes of the community, to the benefit of the land-holder and farmer. Will the framers of these Resolutions then tell us at whose expense they intend the price shall be increased, and to whose benefit? But it proceeds with a sort of salvo of inducing a greater capital to be invested in agriculture, by means of which it is to be again ultimately reduced. It is then the proposition, by a call on the Legislature for a restriction on foreign corn, so to obtain the command over the price of our own, that instead of reducing their plundering rents to the relief of their farmers, they may be able to compel the other orders of society to furnish the capital for the better culture of their lands. First, may it not be asked on what plea the owners of land pretend to have a claim thus to force capital from the pockets of the other orders, to their particular emolument? It is true, the Resolution states only, to induce the investment of a greater capital in agriculture. But some of the authors of these Resolutions ought to have been aware, that legislative interference is always necessarily coercive, not persuasive. The Resolution is indeed so worded, as to seem to imply the willing investment by capitalists of their property in the pursuits of agriculture. But the primary action of increased prices must be seen to be of a very different complexion; that it is not persuading,

but forcing from the rest of the community a greater proportion of their property than they would otherwise part with, to the agriculturist for their subsistence. Such legislative interference must be therefore coercive, and its operation to wrest forcibly from one man a portion of his property, and to transfer it to another, in a way that would not otherwise occur. But when we reflect on the very high prices corn and all other provisions have now been at for a series of years, and perceive the rapacity with which, instead of being allowed to act as an encouragement to agriculture, they have only been converted to increasing rents, how are we to allow ourselves to be persuaded, the yet further increase of prices will not be in the same manner only further converted to the yet further increase of rent.

But the intention may be to draw capital to the enclosure of waste lands. It does not seem, however, how high prices should be of more effect in this way, than in the improvement of the culture of the old enclosures. They must in the same way be open to the same perversion to excessive rent. Is not this too an object that it is notorious might be readily effected without the imposition of these high prices? Let the leading parties of the Landed Interests at once speak fairly, and say why, instead of promoting, they have so long directly or indi-

rectly thwarted and opposed, a general act of enclosure? When we are told of high prices to induce enclosures, and see them thus frustrated, what must we think of the argument of high prices? Must we not be inclined to treat it as a mere juggle and pretence for the upholding of rents? And at the same time, must we not feel a desire to search into the motives which can have influenced opposition to a measure of such palpable resource? No man questions, but such an act would produce the rapid enclosure of every foot of land in the kingdom that is capable of culture. Suspicion ever alive, says it is a sense of this result that has been the chief cause of all the difficulties and embarrassments of the measure, in the apprehension that such an extensive increased culture, sending greater supplies to market to the relief of the public, by reducing the general price of subsistence, should consequently compel some reduction of the rents of the old enclosures. It is true, special acts of enclosure are continually obtained, where no private views frustrating the public interests, the parties can agree upon their rights, and afford the expense. But every man who has traversed the kingdom, must have remarked the innumerable small commons and patches, each too small to bear such a costly mode of proceeding,

and yet often peculiarly situated for the facility of cultivation.

Let us suppose corn at five guineas a bushel. This might indeed enable the farmer to pay a rent of 20 or 25 guineas an acre. And would he not immediately be called upon to pay such a rent? High prices thus perverted at the very threshold, can never therefore become the sought-for encouragement to the farmer, or tend at all to the greater investment of capital in the improvement of land. Assuredly, when are contemplated the actual prices we pay for our daily food, already tripled upon us in the course of so short a period, and so excessive beyond the price of subsistence in any other country, it cannot be pretended that enough has not already been done in this sort of encouragement! The impediments to British agriculture are certainly not at the present day want of markets, or want of prices. It must be seen that this insatiate rent, which we are yet asked to feed with higher and higher prices, is itself the great bane of agricultural exertion. And may it not be asked why the rent of land should not be liable to change with time and circumstances, like the profits of other property? Hardly the framers of these Resolutions will pretend, that in the cruel advantages they have availed themselves of, during a pe-

riod of unexampled warfare and the consequent embarrassments of our foreign communications, to raise their rents so oppressively, they can have attained any legal or equitable right to be upheld in them.

9th Resolution.—"That it appears from official papers, that since the year 1765, when importation was thrown open and exportation discouraged, the price of grain has been on the constant rise, and our imports have uniformly to a large amount exceeded our exports.

It does not follow of necessity that the rise in the price of grain, nor the excess of our imports, have been occasioned by the change made in the corn laws in 1765. They may have arisen, and in fact have so arisen, from totally distinct occurrences. Prima facie there must be a presumption, that this change was not made without cause. This cause may have been the intention to counteract the very circumstances now complained of, and which might then have begun to be felt or foreseen.

It may have happened, that this change in our corn laws in 1765 may even have tended to diminish these effects: so that they are now less than they otherwise would have been, although, at the same time, it has not been capable of wholly correcting them.

It is from about the period of 1765, that those changes have so extensively taken effect in the continued augmentation of the rent of land, and in the concurrent increase of taxes on articles of general consumption, the operation of which in raising the price of corn and of every thing else, have been fully shewn in the consideration of the 7th Resolution. With this demonstration before us of two such other most efficient causes, there can be no good reason to affix this rise of price on the change in the corn laws in 1765, on the mere grounds of its subsequence.

Independent of the extension of our general industry, it is essentially from the same period or about 1765, that we have to date the wonderful growth of our cotton manufactures. To comprehend the extent of these, we have only to cast our eyes on Manchester, Glasgow, and the many other towns and villages which may be said to have absolutely arisen out of this one source. The changes which have taken place at Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield, and throughout every manufacturing district, cannot but be also very conspicuous. That our exports of corn should have ceased, and that we should even have been driven to considerable importation, must be so evidently attributable to this immense increase of population, as totally to defeat the charge contained in this Resolution, of its having arisen from the corn laws of 1765.

With a population known at this day to amount to several millions of individuals taking no part in agriculture, but devoted to other arts and occupations, it should rather be matter of wonder that we are not obliged to import to a greater extent; and must shew forcibly the advantage derived to the agricultural interests, from the commercial successes. The quantity of enclosed and cultivated land in England and Wales in 1765, is commonly estimated to have been about 24 millions of acres. At present it is understood to be upwards of 30 millions; being an increase of six millions enclosed either by particular acts of parliament, by encroachments or otherwise. To these are to be added the often not less costly, nor less valuable, improvements of our old enclosures. How has all this been effected, but by means of that capital first realized in our successful mercantile and manufacturing industry? And in the face of these things, the Landed Interests propose to call on the Legislature to cramp, by a restriction on its means of subsistence, this very mercantile and manufacturing industry, which has already thus practically displayed and shed its invigorating influence over them. They tell us indeed of ultimate

reduction of prices again. But reduction in the price of the products of the land necessarily comprises a reduction of rent, and on what grounds are we to suppose they will be more disposed to this reduction hereafter, than at present? May not the mercantile and manufacturing classes rather say, Leave it to us! Behold what we have done. We offer no theories. Ours is all practice! We only wish to proceed in that course which has already enabled us, enriching ourselves, to spread wealth and improvement around us! What we have done, has not only been without your concurrence, but further in spite of your plundering rents, retarding and checking that wealth and means of greater exertion, which your farmers would otherwise have derived from the ready home-market we created for them.

10*th Resolution.*—"That the scope of the measure proposed is to bring back the corn laws to that state in which they were established in the years 1688 and 1700, and in which they remained down to 1765, a period during which the average price of corn was lower and steadier than during the periods either immediately prior or subsequent, and during which our exports uniformly exceeded our imports, affording an incontestible presumption, that a restraint upon importation and an encouragement of exportation had given a spring to agriculture, and was followed by a growth of corn above the wants of the people."

To those who have considered the arguments offered in respect of the preceding Resolutions, it is conceived the fallacies contained in the present must be apparent. It asserts as an incontestible presumption, that of two things one has necessarily been created by and arisen out of the other, merely on the grounds of their successive occurrence. It asserts that restraint upon importation and encouragement to exportaion, had produced a uniform excess of export, and had given a spring to agriculture. It may however have happened, that neither the excess of export, nor spring stated to have been received by agriculture, were created by this restraint and encouragement, but that they arose altogether from different events. This is not a question that can be treated abstractedly, nor distinct from the considerations of the relative state of the other industry of the country at the time. It is always to be recollected, that the export or import of manufactured goods of any sort is virtually the export or import of all the corn consumed by the workmen during their fabrication. The export of the piece of woollen cloth may be said to be the export of all the corn used by all the hands contributing to its preparation. In the

same manner, the import of the linen of France, Flanders, or Holland is the import of so much French, Flemish, or Dutch corn. When therefore we represent the export or import of corn, we must also take into the account the relative import or export of those other things, in the production of which it was consumed. In this view it must be seen, that considering our great import of foreign manufactures at the period referred to, instead of the balance of the export of corn being really in our favor, we indirectly imported it to a greater extent. And in the same view it must be equally apparent, that at the present time, instead of the balance of the import being really against us, we indirectly export in the foreign sale of our own manufactures, a quantity of corn infinitely exceeding our direct importation.

It must be too evident to require demonstration, that increasing industry, manufactures, and consequent population providing a home market for our own and other products of land, have been greatly more beneficial to the Landed Interests themselves, and the advance and improvement of agriculture greater than when they were obliged to depend on a foreign market. Dependence on a foreign market involves, that the price of the home market, to give rise to exportation, must be below that of the foreign market. As far as

the Landed Interests were themselves concerned, this case was indeed obviated by a bounty of five shillings a quarter on the export: which, the price of wheat being then about 35s. the quarter, was something more than 15 per cent. on the value of it, levied by a tax on the country at large, to be paid to the Landed Interests to enable them to carry on this exportation. So that the country paying them five shillings out of 33s.: the real export price they received from foreign markets, allowing for their expenses, was only 28s. These exportations were chiefly to Holland and France: for France was at that time, as well as Holland, what we have since become, a great manufacturing country, not rearing a sufficiency of grain for the support of the rapid increase of population consequent upon this application of its industry. Thus then our own Landed Interests were feeding the artificers of France and Holland with our own wheat at 28s. a quarter, while they made our own artificers pay 33s. That our manufacturers have been successful, must then assuredly have been in spite of our Landed Interests, and of our own corn-laws at this boasted period of exportation. And yet these are the times and circumstances to a similarity with which, we are fairly told, it is the scope of the measure proposed in these Resolutions, to bring us back.

It further merits attention, that our own manufacturers were not only thus made to pay a higher price for their subsistence in our own market, than that at which it was also from our own market furnished to foreign manufacturers, against whose productions they had to carry on a competition; but they were further over and above taxed for the bounty, at the rate of 15 per cent. on the corn thus furnished to their competitors. In this manner being made to pay, not only a higher price for their own subsistence, but also a part of that of the foreign manufacturer's. These arguments appear to have been forcibly urged for a series of years prior to 1765, and may be considered among those which conduced to the change of the corn laws at that period.

When we see a public challenge like the present, thrown out for the whole of the Scottish Landed Interests to embody themselves in array, with their Committees of Correspondence, and are aware that similar proceedings are in agitation among many great Landholders in England and Wales, may it not be time for meetings also among the other classes of the community; for counter-addresses from the leading commercial cities and manufacturing districts, and from every town in the kingdom, for there can be none which is not vitally interested to oppose this modern exer-

tion of feudal power? Seemingly all powerful as may be the Landed Interests, with a cause so upheld by practical demonstration, we cannot be without hope of attention. The voice of sound reason will make itself heard. The greater and the better part of the Landed Interests themselves may appear among the foremost, to avert a measure so eminently destructive of our great resources; a destruction in which themselves must eventually be involved.

11th Resolution.—"That from the information before Parliament in the Report of the Select Committee on the Corn Laws, there is no doubt, that if sufficient encouragement is held out to the cultivator of lands, this country possesses the means of supplying its own wants."

The plain statement of the ability of the country to supply its own wants, is here made to involve the condition of encouragement to the cultivator. The other Resolutions shew us, that this proposed encouragement consists in raising yet higher the price of corn.

We have, however, the practical experience of this description of encouragement, to an extent, making it now somewhat difficult to believe, either in its insufficiency, or that it must not long since have produced, and even

have gone beyond the object in view, if it were calculated ever to do so. The cause of this failure has been already shewn to be the perversion of it from the purposes of agriculture, not to satisfy, but to pamper, the insatiate appetite of increasing rents. It is not, therefore, further encouragement of this kind, but the correction of the abuse of that which has been already given, which should seem to constitute more properly the question.

The interests of the proprietor of the soil and of the public are not only always at variance as to the price of its products, but also unfortunately not unoften as to the quantity. In landed tenures under a fixed money rent, the proprietor has no immediate interest in the quantity of produce obtained from his land, but only that it be so managed, as to yield him the greatest permanent rent. The public interest rests wholly in the quantity of its marketable produce. To make this understood, let us suppose four farms of 150 acres each, laid out as our old small farms very much used to be, in nearly equal parts of arable and grass land. Let us also suppose these four farms, according to modern practice, thrown into one great one. Every man who has attended to the operations of the great farmer will be sensible, that his object is to lay every thing down in grass. This he probably does to the extent

of 500 acres, keeping not more than 50 or at most 100 acres under the plough. It must be obvious, that in this proceeding he obtains less from the soil, in as much as grass yields a less return than cultivated lands. This disproportion is probably not less from middling lands, such as the greater part of the kingdom consists of, than from 10 to 15 pounds of grain to one pound of meat; or if under artificial grasses or other support of cattle, also in very great excess. But though the farmer, by thus augmenting his grass land, obtains less produce from the soil, he is yet able to pay the greater rent, by the saving of the difference of labor. Four farms of 150 acres each, as supposed, in nearly equal parts of arable and of grass, require probably with the farmers' own families, servants and occasional laborers, on an average of work and employment throughout the year, the labor of 10 persons to each farm, or in all 40 persons. The great farmer, as supposed, does not probably employ 20 persons. Here then is a difference of one half of the population employed in agriculture, and consequent deficiency of return from the land, by the loss of their labor. But it is said the public has nothing to do with this point; that it is only interested in the surplus produce sent to market; and that the smaller farmers, consuming so much more themselves, have a less

produce to dispose of than the great farmer, who is thereby enabled to pay his greater rent. There appears however to be a misapprehension in this assumption. It must be seen that both parties have to send to market a sufficient produce from the land, to pay, as well as their rents, also their outgoings. Now as the outgoings upon the 40 persons employed in the culture of the small farms must be double the outgoings from the 20 persons, so must therefore the produce sent to market from the small farms be so much the greatest. The immediate sustenance of the cultivators is here supposed to be in either instance first deducted, as consumed by them on the spot: taking into view only the surplus marketable produce. The outgoings surmised are therefore confined to the clothing and other incidental expenses of the farmers' own families, wages to their servants, &c. These last however upon an excess of 20 persons are of considerable amount, and such as must exceed materially the difference of rent the great farmer can ever afford to pay. But in fact the difference in the number of persons employed in these two different kinds of farming in most parts of the kingdom, is greater than stated, and consequently the quantity of produce necessarily sent to market to meet their extraordinary outgoing expenses, also greater. The public is therefore deeply interested in that system of cultivation which yields it the greater quantity of sustenance.

Nor can the public be said to be without an interest in the destruction of a hard-working yeomanry, offering a reciprocal market for the industry of the other classes, the strength of the country, and proud in their independence: now very differently replaced by the lazy cottager, himself reared on parish charity, and not looking beyond the same resource for his own offspring.

May it not be thought that the public should here rather entertain the reasonable expectation of some legislative interference for its protection, than to hear of Petitions that it may be called upon to uphold and extend by yet increasing prices, such a state of things?

It must be difficult to estimate the general loss to the country, both of agricultural population and surplus marketable sustenance; but if we can give credit to the ancient accounts of our agriculture, the enclosed and cultivated lands of England and Wales consisted near a century since of about 24 millions of acres, laid down in about 13 millions grass, and 11 millions under the plough. At the present day they are understood to comprise 30 millions; but divided into about 20 millions grass, and 10 millions arable. Thus within six millions of acres additional of reclaimed lands, we have

absolutely less arable. This presents a lamentable return from the Landed Interests, for the high prices the other classes have afforded them.

Pardon is asked for this digression, entered into, to shew the manner in which a Landowner's interest on a money rent, not always consisting in the obtaining the greatest produce from the soil, may be consequently at variance with that of the public. It seems also to point to one of the fallacies by which the advantage of this modern system of large farms is usually defended, as drawing capital to agriculture, by in this way inducing men of greater substance to apply their means to it. It is the example of the application of this desired capital to the purpose of rent, not merely indifferent to, but absolutely to the injury of the public interests; not being made the means of increasing, but absolutely of a diminution of their supplies from the land. It is not undeserving attention, that Germany was some time back in a similar situation, not growing a sufficiency of corn for its own consumption, till in 1772, Commissioners were appointed throughout the States, whose report equally attributed the deficiency to have been caused by too large farms, and too little land under the plough. They recommended the increase of the latter, and soiling the cattle in the homesteds. Germany now exports corn.

Having endeavoured to shew that it is not the want of sufficient encouragement of prices, but the too hasty perversion of it to rent, which constitutes the great bane of agricultural improvement, it may not be misplaced to suggest slightly other discouragements under which it labors; and some of which may perhaps be more susceptible of remedy.

First among these, are always mentioned tithes, the tithe-owner taking the tithe of all improvement without having contributed to it. In this point, however, their operation seems to be little different from an arbitrarily increasing rent. Their more pernicious effect is probably in their tendency, in other respects, to promote the increase of grass land, at the expense of the arable.

Next may be ranked the usual short holding, and uncertain tenure of the farmer, neither giving him credit to procure, nor encouragement to sink that capital which he otherwise would, in any certain assurance of remaining long enough to recover it again. It is true, this is sometimes obviated by leases where they are given, but this is not very general at the present day. At best it is only a partial remedy, least likely to be applied in the instances most requiring it, of oppressive landlords. The farmer at present may be generally said to have only a six months' holding.

being always liable to be turned out on a six months' notice. In this predicament, he must be always unwilling to incur expense on the chance of another's profiting by it. He must be expected to contract his efforts, that he may not bring the land into a state to promote the increasing of his rent, or to be an inducement to others to bid against him for the holding. This is probably a discouragement to the investment of capital in agriculture, scarcely less than the result of continually increasing rent, in the apprehension of which, in fact, it chiefly rests. Legislative interference might not, in this case, perhaps, be unwisely applied to extend, with such limitations as might also be satisfactory to every liberal land-owner, some security to the farmer for his sufficient continuance to gather in the advantage, or be otherwise indemnified for his improvements. Might not this be effected by a law which should generally give to the farmer a seven years' holding, by making, instead of a six months' notice, a seven years' notice requisite to his ejectment, while continuing to pay his rent, and do what is reasonable? Or if peremptorily ejected, to have made good to him his expenses incurred, with a consideration for his exertions, and for his privation of that profit, the expectation of which induced them. Alteration of rent, or other stipulations

being, none the less, eligible to be determined on at any time, but not to take effect till after seven years. Such a law should seem calculated to act with very different efficacy from the proposed further increase of prices. It should seem to hold out the assurance of whatever improvement capital can effect; and at the same time to permit every equitable increase of rent, at a reasonable period when the farmer may be conceived to be indemnified.

12th Resolution.—That during the year 1812, when the trade with the Continent was nearly closed, and when there were great difficulties in a commerce with America, from the obstacles thrown in the way of importation, increased agricultural efforts were made, and during that year the corn exported exceeded in value that imported by 284,379*l.*

The instance of any single year of export and import must always lead to error. In the case of excess of export, it may have been caused by the import of the previous year, or two or three previous years, having been beyond the current demand, and the consequent overloaded state of the market. In the case of excess of import, it may have been occasioned by the too great export of the preceding years. Some seasons are also naturally more favorable than others. It can be therefore

only from an average of years that any just conclusion can be drawn. It deserves attention, that the excess of export is here given in value only, and not as to the quantity in quarters or bushels. This is objectionable, because the price of grain often varying much in the course of the same year, and the export being generally made when it is cheapest, and the import when dearest, these different prices may have been such as not only to diminish, but if the imports and exports have both been considerable, may perhaps even totally have countervailed the apparent balance of the latter. This may not have been the case in the cited year 1812, the chief exports during which, being probably on the public account, in supplies to our armies and navies, it may possibly result, that the export price was greater than the import. It remains further to be inquired, how far the stated excess of export was not wholly confined to the exports on the public account, none having taken place in the usual course of commerce. If this latter should prove to be the case, the Resolution tends to convey a deception, in as much as it implies the supply of corn to have been such as to have been the cause of this export; whereas no export would have been made in the course of trade; nor could have been made at all on account of the price, ex-

cepting by the Government to meet the exigencies of a particular occasion.

Whatever may be the object of this Resolution, it is open to too many contingencies, to call for further comment. It states, however, greater agricultural exertions to have been made in 1812. Every man at all acquainted with agriculture, will be sensible, that the extraordinary efforts of any one year, can only be made by bringing that land under corn, which would not otherwise come so in the ordinary rotation of culture, and that it is consequently an exertion made at the expense of the next and following years. Agricultural efforts, to be permanent, require to be conducted in the regular course of husbandry through several years of foresight and arrangement.

13th Resolution.—"That the fair and steady price of corn is advantageous both to the grower and the consumer. It holds out a fair security for capital employed, and an inducement to the still further investment in the improvement of land, whilst it tends to produce an abundant and increasing supply."

14th Resolution.—"That great fluctuations of price are injurious both to the laborer and manufacturer, as the price of labor does not

accommodate itself to the occasional fluctuation of years of scarcity, whilst it universally tends to an assimilation with the fair and steady price of grain.

The latter part of the first of these two Resolutions, has been already sufficiently discussed. Fluctuation of price being in other respects the burden of both, we shall avoid repetitions by considering them together. It has also been already questioned, how far the steady price of grain is favorable to the farmer, in as much as it would put him more in the power of his landlord, who would thereby be better able to ascertain the extreme point of rent possible to be borne. It has too been further shewn, that it is at variance with ordinary experience in other instances, that competition should have the effect of creating an irregularity of price: but that on the contrary, the greater the competition in the supply of the market, so much more regular and uniform is always the price of other commodities. No grounds are shewn in these Resolutions for this different conclusion, nor does it seem easy to comprehend whence it should be drawn in the present case. The action of the competition of foreign corn must be too evident to admit of argument, in keeping down the price. The experience we have of its not having been always able to do so, sufficiently

to be within the reach of the laborer and manufacturer, must induce more than a presumption, viewing all the charges and risks of importation, and the advantages of our own cultivators having the demand at their doors, that it can never be brought to our markets under a price, which with every consideration for taxes and other extraordinary outgoings, must yet exceed what, at an equitable rent of land, should be a fair and sufficient encouragement for its home growth.

It remains therefore to speak only, as of an assumption, of the effects of a fluctuating price to the laborer and manufacturer. In the natural course of the price of labor it is necessarily so regulated to these classes, that it may be sufficient for their support, even in a moderately hard year, and being so, it enables them in better years to have some little indulgences. It is too true, this course has been in a great degree set aside, by our poor laws undertaking to eke out relief to the laborious classes, and thereby rendering their habitual state at all times just removed from absolute want. What is this, however, but the excessive rent of land first placing the price of subsistence beyond their means to pay for it by their honest industry, and then humiliating them by the form of public charity?

But there is another point of even yet higher

moment, in which this complaint of fluctuating prices must be considered. Instead of great public stores or granaries, as resorted to in some other countries, to counteract particular seasons of dearth or scarcity, it is the private granary of the wealthy farmer or speculating corn-dealer, that is the security of Britain. Great as the public prejudice against this description of persons, and however little actuated by any sense of public good, they are none the less most vitally promoting it while following their individual interests. In abundant years, when grain is cheap, their object is to purchase, to sell again in a year of scarcity or less abundance, when the price will be necessarily advanced. In this manner, securing to the country the superfluity of one year, to meet the deficiency of another. It must be seen that a steady price would destroy this resource, by taking away that temptation on which the speculation rests. When it is known that such is the usual extent of these speculations, that the country has often nearly a whole year's stock thus secured to it over and above its current consumption, it may be thought that any transient inconvenience to the manufacturer or laborer, or to any class of society, must be amply compensated in such an assurance against all the sad misery and confusion of absolute famine. Nor are to be disregard-

ed the gradual effects of these speculations, ever on the approach of scarcity, or as the supply in the country becomes sensibly diminished, advancing the price; and thereby checking, in good time, the general consumption.

15*th Resolution.*—"That an exporting country possesses a fund by which it can always alleviate a year of scarcity, and bring the supply more nearly equal to the wants of the people."

The inference taken in this Resolution, that a country growing more than required for its own consumption, possesses within itself a source of relief in any year of scarcity, however specious, is far from founded in practical experience. Historical facts tend to shew, that great exporting countries are most subject to the scourges of absolute want at home. And this too, while it has been relatively little felt in those which usually depended on them. Holland in its prosperity always imported nearly the whole corn it required, and this chiefly from Poland. Yet the years of distress in Poland were scarcely perceived in Holland. Holland always readily supplying herself in other markets, by means of the same resources from which she had been accustomed to supply herself in those of Poland. It has been remarked that the provinces in the East Indies,

which in the ordinary course of seasons export grain, are those which have been most subjected to famines. Bengal and the Circars are instances of this occurrence. It may be true, that America in the aggregate has never known a dearth. But America is a vast Continent, with a variety of climate and seasons, and its comparison can be only with another Continent. Its comparison with such a territory as Britain must be restrained to some one of its particular states, most of which have been at times, by the inclemency and irregularity of seasons, separately subjected to very severe distresses, and driven to a recourse to their neighbors for their indispensible supplies. It is further not undeserving of remark, that although Holland imported the chief part of its consumption, the price of grain there was always more steady and less liable to fluctuation than in the countries whence it was exported, preserving a medium of the prices throughout all the different countries whence it was obtained.

Thus therefore the assertions contained in these Resolutions, that an exporting country contains within itself a resource against years of scarcity, and is less subject to a fluctuation of price, are not supported by example. Sound reasoning seems to tend also to a similar demonstration. An exporting country as to grain, necessarily implies one in which its own prices

are usually below those of foreign markets, and to which last accordingly the chief attention will always be given. Such a country will therefore always drain itself to the utmost it can dispense with from its own immediate demand. Thus situated in a deficient year, (and to such years all countries are occasionally subjected), becoming suddenly thrown upon foreign supplies, it cannot be on an equality with a country that habitually imports. The most commodious foreign markets to which it can have recourse, must be probably those which have been accustomed to be supplied in ordinary years from this very country; and therefore participating in the dearth, unable to satisfy this reverse of demand, instead of supply. Another embarrassment arises as to the commodities it proposes to barter for this extraordinary demand. It must have on every side to force a market, the disadvantage and sometimes impracticability of which must be seen by every mercantile man. A country, on the other hand, that usually imports, if it cannot obtain what it requires in one market, quickly repairs to another, and effects its object at the same or nearly the same price. It should seem therefore, that the habitual importation of foreign grain to a certain extent, tends to alleviation in years of scarcity, and to maintain the supply more equal to the wants of the

people: while the fund, as supposed in this Resolution, to be possessed by an exporting country, is a fallacious expectation, exporting countries being necessarily accustomed to look to and consider the foreign demand in preference to their own; and which latter must therefore be liable to be distressed accordingly through the hasty exportation, whenever the crops may happen to be ever so little below the usual average.

It must be unnecessary to push further any argument on the suggestion of the British farmer ever being thrown again on the foreign markets, an occurrence no man who beholds our rapidly increasing population can any more seriously look forward to, than he does to the liquidation of the National Debt. It has only been thought right to follow it so far, because among the specious fallacies implied in these Resolutions.

Some General Considerations.

The calculation given in the consideration of the 7th Resolution, may possibly be conceived overcharged. But it seems upheld by the following general data, and results. England and Wales are known to contain upwards of 30 millions of acres of enclosed and cultivated lands; to these may be added 10 millions for

Scotland, and the same for Ireland, or for both together 20 millions; making a total of 50 millions. It is not meant to speak of the whole rent of land, but only of the increase of it since 1765. It will be admitted, that this has been on an average from 20 to 25 shillings an acre. We will say that the whole increase of rent has been 60 millions. Our present taxes are about the same amount. Of these there existed in 1765 about 10 millions. We may accordingly assume, that the increase of taxation since that period has been 50 millions. That all things have doubled in price since that period will be also admitted, so that one half of our taxes would otherwise have sufficed. One half of our taxes, or 25 millions, is therefore all we should otherwise have been submitted to. The other half, or 25 millions, is consequently chargeable to the causes that have produced the present high prices; that is, to the increase of the rent of land, and also to such taxes as may be supposed by their reaction to have participated. It may not be possible to estimate accurately this part, but we must be sensible that neither the property tax on realized property, nor the legacy tax, nor any other tax falling direct on the capitalist, and therefore paid at once without further circulation, have had any part in producing increased prices. Of this 25 millions of taxes, with which we should

at any rate have been charged, one half are probably of this sort, so that the proportionate increase of rent and taxes, in working the present increased prices of things, have been as 60 millions of increase of rent, to $12\frac{1}{2}$ millions of taxes. That is, where any commodity has increased in price seven shillings and three-pence, then five shillings of this increase has been caused by the increase of rent, and one shilling and three-pence by taxes. Supposing then the quartern loaf in 1765, to have been $4\frac{1}{2}d.$, and that it is now one shilling; this gives six-pence to the account of rent, and one penny halfpenny to taxes. This indeed shews a less disproportion between increase of rent and taxes than before assumed, but it must be evidently a subject incapable of correct estimate. The object proposed does not go further than to show, that the effect of increased rent has been excessive beyond that of taxation.

It is always in the policy of great conquering nations, to make their conquests contribute to their support. The commerce of Britain effects the same result. It brings the fields of Poland to contribute, with those of Kent and Essex, to the subsistence of the inhabitants of Britain. Britain is enriched by the reciprocal interchanges of its industry for that of the people of Poland and Germany, not in a less degree than if those countries had been subjected to

its arms. It is not meant to say, that the increase of our own agricultural resources, the improvement of our old enclosures, and the bringing our yet remaining wastes under culture, are not greater objects. But why are not both to be realized? When properly understood, so far from clashing, must not be seen their tendency to co-operate; or at least, that of the greater extent of foreign resources, to nourish and accelerate internal melioration?

The nature of landed property, vesting in a particular class the property of the soil, confers on them the power of making all other classes pay them for their subsistence. At first, while the population is scanty and land comparatively abundant, the emulation to dispose of its products compels a moderate price of them. As society advances, and commerce and the other arts give rise to a greater population and consequent demand, lands become improved and wastes reclaimed in order to meet it. But as the demand begins to surpass, or even to approach to the supply, the land-owners become more sensible of their power to fix their own terms on it. They soon perceive their greater profits to rest, not in the quantity of the produce they obtain from the soil, but in advancing the price of it. This advanced price, instead of operating as in other arts to augment production, is diverted to feed the increased

rent of land. In this state it must be seen, that no national land-tax, or other tax on agriculture, can at all affect the community at large, in the price of its subsistence. All the other orders of society are already charged the utmost they can afford to pay, or other circumstances permit their being made to pay. Whatever national tax is laid on land, has no other action therefore, than only to force a deduction from the rent of the landlord. It may be further said, that all taxes do indirectly, in this manner, in the end come home to land, in as much that, as but for these taxes, the people generally would be able to pay a higher price for their subsistence, and would accordingly be made to do so. That all taxes in this way, however, come home to land, can arise only from the landed proprietors being allowed to set such an exorbitant price on its products, as swallows up all other property. The counteraction of this appears feasible only in two ways. The one by a direct legislative interference restraining the price of the products of lands, which, though not impossible, must be attended with very considerable difficulties. The other, in the competition of foreign grain in our markets. In this competition of foreign grain, now proposed to be petitioned against, the country at large has, therefore, not only a mere interest in the immediate price of its subsistence, and

corresponding ability of its industry, but the absolute question becomes involved, how far every other species of property, shall be ingulfed in this vortex of landed power?

One further momentous reflection yet remains. In other arts, the saving of labor, as it reduces the price of the commodity, encourages its greater consumption, extending further the manufacture of it; and in the employment it gives to additional numbers, thereby increases population. It is the great boast of the modern improvements of agriculture to have perfected in many instances a similar saving of labor. But the soundness of the application of this principle to agriculture, is at least doubtful. That alone which can make the culture of its own fields more beneficial to Britain than those of Poland, interchanging equally with the inhabitants of its own fields and with those of the fields of Poland, its other arts of industry for the productions of the soil, is the increased strength and security of the country in so much additional population. Reduction of labor in agriculture implies a reduced population supported by it. The principle is not applicable, as in other arts, that savings of labor, by reducing the price of the goods, increase the demand, and thereby create additional employment. The savings of labor do not reduce the price of the products of land, but are the source only of

so much additional rent to the landlord. Such additional rent as may be obtained by any saving of labor, is therefore at the expense of the agricultural population. This presents then another point, in which the increase of the rent of land has been, in so much, established on the absolute depopulation of the country, as derived from that saving of labor, by means of the extension of the grass, at the expense of the arable lands.

A legislative view of agriculture must necessarily rest upon its result towards the community at large. In this respect it should seem essential, that the profits of agriculture may arise in obtaining the greatest possible produce from the soil, and not in the increase of the price demanded for it; and that it should also be so conducted, as to employ and support within itself the greatest possible number of hands. Both these objects must be seen to depend on the preference to tillage over grass. Might not some limitation of the taxes on land, liberating the arable and transferring the chief burden to grass lands, tend to countervail the present preponderant interests, which have produced such an excess of the latter?

Persons unacquainted with agriculture, may be led to consider this increase of grass land necessary for the supply of butcher's meat. It must be seen, that this is at once to suppose

the country incapable of producing both the butcher's meat and grain it requires. But the advantages of tillage are not confined to the produce of grain. It is not less successfully applied to the increased support of cattle, by means of its greater production of artificial grasses, roots and other nutriment adapted for them, than can be obtained from the richest meadows.

Concluding Resolutions.

"That a Petition founded on these Resolutions, be presented to both Houses of Parliament."

"That a Committee be appointed to prepare the same, and that the said Committee do consist of, &c. &c."

"That these Resolutions be published in the Courier and Morning Chronicle of London, and in the Edinburgh Newspapers."

"That the Convener be instructed to transmit copies of these Resolutions to the Conveners of the other Counties of Scotland, and to correspond with them on the subject."

"That the Committee before named, with such other Heritors of the County as may be inclined to attend, be appointed to meet at Edinburgh with such Committees of other Counties in Scotland, to support the measure."

We have here exhibited to us, the organization assumed by the Scottish Landed Interests. The last Resolution shews us the proposal, if not the existence, of a Landed Scottish National Meeting, independent of Parliament: how far consistent with the British Constitution, the writer submits to those better versed in its laws, than itself.

Paper Currency not excessive, and not the Cause of the present High Prices of things.

Many persons incline to attribute the great rise we have experienced in every thing, or in other words, the change that has taken place in the value of money, to our extended paper currency: reasoning, that as the abundance of any commodity in the market reduces its price, so the value of money is reduced by its abundance. In the first place a question may be raised, whether the extension of our paper currency is not a good deal over-rated in the public opinion. Secondly, a direct objection must occur to this comparison of money with any real commodities; money not being in itself property, but merely the representative of it. In a more attentive view, it must be seen to be, but as the title deed of the estate. Whoever possesses money, possessing with it the power of immediately possessing the property of which it serves as the conveyance, may indeed be said to possess that property. But this is only the power to possess, not the possession. Money and property are therefore essentially two distinct things. Gold and silver coins carry with them an intrinsic value of their own, and according to the metal contained in them, are in themselves property. The real value of this property so contained in them, depends on the market price of the metals. But if the law forbids their being melted down, or sent abroad; and at the same time circumscribes the value at which they shall be current according to a certain amount of money of account, is as much as this law can be enforced, it deprives them altogether of any dependence on the market value of the metals, and reduces them to the same with a bit of leather or a bit of paper, which may equally be rendered by the law, or by general adoption become, current at the same amount. In this state, gold, silver, or paper money, all alike, serve merely for the conveyance of other property. A man by his note of hand conveys the property it expresses to another person. It acts as an assignment issued on the whole of his property, to the amount expressed. By a deed of assignment he may convey his house to another person, and the gold or paper money he may receive in return, conveys to him a power to pur-

chase a ship, or anything else. But the deed of assignment is no property independent of the house; nor the money paid for it independent of the ship, or what else may be purchased with it. Gold and silver coins therefore, as used in the essential character of money, no more than paper, have any other than a representative value. Their metallic value is a distinct consideration. Paper money evidently can have no other character whatever. Consequently to reason on the effect of its abundance as diminishing the value of property, or even on the abundance of gold and silver money in its absolute essential character as money, must be palpably erroneous. The use of money consists in the facilities it gives to the exchanges of property; and as by its abundance its power must be increased in facilitating these exchanges, the facility of which is so essential to the operations of trade and industry, the more just conclusion must be, that the abundance of money, whether of paper, gold or silver, so far from enhancing, has tended much to keep down the general prices of things below what they otherwise would have been. It will be seen that a much smaller proportion, than is often imagined, of the currency of any country, ever has, or ever can consist of the precious metals.

If we go back to the period before we may conceive money to have been invented, we must

suppose all exchanges of property to have been made by the absolute barter of the commodities. Thus one man having a score of sheep, and another an ox, and the owner of the ox wishing for one of the sheep, must have been necessitated to exchange his ox for the whole score of sheep, or as many as might have been agreed upon for its worth. Or not willing to take more than one sheep, he must have obtained it by a promise to return another sheep at another time, or to consider the value of it in some future exchange of other things. Here then begins a book-debt. It is true, they might not in the days we are supposing, keep books, but it was, none the less, a true debtor and creditor account between the two individuals. The man, however, who had let the other have the sheep in this manner, and which latter had become thereforeit his debtor, having himself occasion for a calf from a third person; and not being able otherwise to adjust his exchange in order to obtain it, or otherwise wishing to transfer this debt owing to him for the sheep in part of the exchange for the calf, accordingly makes over the debt. Here we have a debt transferred. It only wants the forms of pen, ink, and paper, to render it a regular bill, or draft. Accepted by the original debtor, and endorsed over to the third, a fourth, and successively one to other persons, it becomes a negotiable paper money.

But in those rude days, when they had neither pen, ink, nor paper, to aid them in the keeping and transferring such accounts; and probably also without laws to enforce the payment of debts; mankind sought for something capable of being rendered the general medium of exchange. Various appear to have been the first essays, till at length the civilized world, as by general accord, settled in the adoption of gold and silver: by their scarcity sufficiently valuable, to convey in an easily portable form the worth of most other commodities; and otherwise appropriate, by their capability of minute division.

Although these metals have been thus generally adopted, they have, however, been so, under very different circumstances by different nations. In some countries, as in England, and the rest of Europe, the Governments have interfered, coining them into certain pieces of known fineness and weight; prohibiting, by penal laws, their being melted down again, or carried out of the country; and further determining the proportions of their currency, one to the other, as twenty-one silver shillings to a golden guinea.

The native governments of the East Indies have only so far interfered, as to form these metals into coins of known fineness and weight; but without any penal laws against their being

melted down again, or fixing their relative value. At least if there are, or ever have been any such laws, they are a dead letter. In consequence, these coins are in no other respects different from uncoined bullion, but as to the facility of determining the quantity and fineness of the metal contained in them. Their relative value is left a matter of daily variation, according to the prevailing demand in the market, for one or the other. The adjustment of this, with respect to the vast number of different coins, of different princes and of different periods, current in every district of India, all daily varying, according to the particular demand for them, in their relative value, is made by means of a nominal standard, or what may be called money of account. Under the British Governments of India, it has indeed been attempted to fix the relative value of the Company's coinage of gold and silver, but without success; excepting partially at the immediate seats of the governments, and in accounts in which Europeans are concerned. The rule, however, is generally enforced in the receipt of the public revenue, and which appears to be the case also by some of the Native Princes, so far as to make their own coinage the measure to which, in whatever coins the payment may be made, the value of them is adjusted. But this does not hold in private accounts, these

being generally settled to the nominal money; and in respect of which, the coins of the particular district itself are constantly varying, as well as all others. According to European ideas, this state of coinage must be attended with almost insuperable difficulties and inconvenience. These, however, are not discovered in the practice. But it gives rise to a distinct trade, that of the money-changers, or shroffs, who have their stalls or seats in every Bazar, readily exchanging, for a trifling profit, all coins according to their market value. The money-changers in England, in former times, seem to have exercised a similar calling. The system possesses perhaps some advantage over that of Europe, which by attempting to fix to a certain standard, by virtue of their coinage, two metals, which in their market state of bullion, are always varying, necessarily opens the door to the alternate melting down or exportation of one or the other of them, as the market value may preponderate.

Recollecting that these metals are in themselves mere commodities of trade as much as any other, not only in their natural state constantly varying in value to each other, but also to every other commodity, there seems to be a further inconsistency in attempting to make them by law (a law that it never has been possible to enforce in any country), to be, by virtue of their coinage, the unvarying measure of all other commodities. The fallacy of measuring cloth by an elastic yard, would be immediately apparent. Money of account, or nominal money, having no intrinsic worth of its own, by the market-demand for which it can be effected, seems to present a preferable measure of value. The manner of keeping accounts in all commercial countries, partakes essentially of this principle, only less perceptibly, because necessarily more indirectly, in those where it is attempted to be counteracted or restrained by particular laws.

The Chinese use no other but this nominal money, currency or money of account. They have no coined money, excepting for the most trifling exchanges. This usage in China certainly does not arise from any want of ingenuity to coin the metals, or from any want of commercial intelligence to estimate the advantages or disadvantages of a coinage.

Paper money, as not liable to the variations of metallic, should seem better calculated to accommodate itself to this money of account, and when well managed, will always do so. But although paper is divested of the variations of the market value of bullion, it is, however, itself often subject to other material variations. These may be caused by a failure of the credit on which it has been issued, and

other incidents tending to its depression. It may also be sometimes at a premium, when the quantity in circulation may be less than the demand for it, or from any peculiar circumstances of convenience.

These instances of money of account are at variance with the reasoning of the Earl of Lauderdale, in his late pamphlet; and in which, confounding it with Bank-paper, it is conceived that Nobleman has been led to more than one false conclusion.

But it is not to be supposed gold, silver, or any other metallic money, in whatever manner adopted, has ever in any country absolutely superseded accounts, or reckonings of debt and credit; that is to say, paper money. In the poverty inseparable from barbarism, it must have been still more difficult to acquire even the little that might be requisite, than the greater quantity demanded in the more advanced stages of civilization. If every thing that is daily and hourly bought and sold, all estates, merchandise, cattle, grain, houses, furniture, clothes, bread, meat, and every thing, from the first magnitude and value, to the most insignificant trifle, were to be always instantly paid for in gold and silver, it must be perceived, that even with every consideration for the quick transition of money from hand to hand, and the number of purchases

If this, admitted, the contrary must be true: ergo, the reasoning of the author false, in toto.

the same pieces may effect in a very short time, yet that all the gold and silver in the world might not perhaps suffice for England only. But it is not England alone, but the whole world, which demands these metals for the same purposes. As nations advance in civilization, their laws become better established, enforcing with more punctuality the performance of contracts, and thereby giving greater confidence in them. Also people become more expert in the intricacy of accounts. From these circumstances, however greater their wealth, and therefore the greater demand for money to effect the exchanges of it, yet they may often be better able to dispense with gold and silver for this purpose, than their poorer neighbors; who perhaps less versed in the management of account, or whose tottering governments, and corrupt or ignorant courts of justice, perverting rather than enforcing their pretended laws, necessarily restrain or destroy all general good faith. In such a state of things, merchants can be little disposed to give credit to each other, or to rely with much confidence on each other's bills or drafts. A similar suspicious conduct in their dealings, must extend to all classes. In every transaction of sale or barter, where the absolute commodities cannot be directly exchanged against each other, gold and

silver alone can be resorted to, as the intermediate means.

If we attempt to trace and define paper money, we must see that it takes its root in the very first act of credit which one man may give to another. The moment one man has become debtor to another, some token of the debt will exist. It may be the book of the creditor only. But if we suppose the creditor to be a retail shopkeeper, and that by the exhibition of his books to the wholesale dealer, shewing him what debts he has due on them, he thereby induces the wholesale dealer to give him a greater credit, it must be seen, that this mere book-debt has already made an inchoate advance to the operation of money. A promissory note or draft between the parties, gives it a negotiable form. But the little consideration of the parties, or the nature of the bill or draft, payable only after a certain time, and for an amount not convenient for the general purposes of money, must restrain its circulation within narrow bounds. Bank notes next appear, made payable at the instant of demand, and issued by bankers, whose business making them generally well known among men of property, their notes obtain a more ready confidence.

The experience of the writer of these sheets does not enable him to pronounce, but he can-

not help submitting the question, how far, since the present extended currency of bank notes, credits are not generally shorter, and to less amount; and whether there may not be fewer drafts and notes of hand in circulation, in the ordinary transactions of business. Many of these which would otherwise have been in circulation, (that is, performing daily and hourly the office of money, in passing from hand to hand, representing and transferring the power over property, to the amount they specify) is being now locked up in the banker's chests, whose notes are only circulating instead of them. If this should be the case, then, in so much, is the present great currency of bank notes only a substitute for another sort of paper money, less convenient in its form. It must be seen, that a bank note is a mere token of acknowledgment of the debt of one man to another, as much as a promissory note, or any other bill or draft.

In the view of this point, consideration must also be given to the great change in the value of all things, being double at least, at the present day, what it was fifty years ago; and the similar exchanges requiring accordingly a double representative value. Also to the real increase of wealth, calling for further means to effect its increasing interchanges. Allowance too must be made for the quantity of paper cur-

rency demanded to replace the gold that used to be in circulation, and which must now be double the amount of such gold withdrawn, on account of the double prices of the present day. When due attention is paid to these circumstances, it is suggested that the former larger and more extensive credits, and transferrable paper in circulation, bore a much nearer proportion than is generally supposed, to the present circulation of bank notes. On these grounds also, it is thought, any effect attributed to the greater abundance of money must be erroneous.

Other substantial arguments are not wanting, to still further call in question the reality of an increased currency beyond the demand. It has been shewn, that the very root and lowest order of a paper currency in a book-debt or note of hand, implies an acknowledgment of property given in exchange. A note of hand, like other money, conveys the portion of property it represents. The exact property may not be defined, but it acts as an assignment, to a specified amount, chargeable upon all the property of the party granting it: just as a man borrowing on mortgage, by pledging, virtually conveys, till he may redeem it, to the mortgagee, a certain interest in and portion of his estate. In the same manner when a banker issues his notes, it is always for a something

pledged, and therefore virtually conveyed to him till redeemed by the return of his notes, or some other equivalent. Attention to the necessity of this pledge and virtual conveyance of property, to the circulation of bank notes and of all other paper currency, must shew the fallacy of a belief prevalent in the minds of many persons, that banks have it in their power to create paper money, and thereby a fictitious property to any extent. When a farmer borrows a couple of hundred pounds of a country banker, taking it in his notes, he may either pledge, and thereby virtually convey to the banker, by his note of hand, a corresponding amount secured on his property generally; or a particular rick of wheat. Whatever he pledges, becomes the property of the banker till the money borrowed is repaid to him, either by the return of his notes, or other equivalent means by which he can obtain them again. In a similar way, in all other instances, the issue of a bank note does not depend upon the banker's wish to issue it; but on the wish of somebody else to obtain, and having at the same time something to pledge for it. Nor is it any more in the power of the banker to keep it in circulation, beyond the inclination or occasion of the other party. On application the banker restores the property pledged, receiving again his own notes, or some other banker's notes or

equivalent securities. If his own notes are thus returned, the transaction is closed. If other notes or securities, as he can get no advantage by retaining, he applies for the discharge of them to the other bankers or parties by whom they were issued, and who, probably having also a similar amount of his notes, remit them to him in exchange; or in the course of the operations of banking, a similar amount of his notes become otherwise speedily returned upon him. His power to keep his notes in circulation, ceases with the restoration of the pledge. This may not indeed always happen very accurately with every particular bank, (although it commonly does so), but it must readily be understood to be the case, taken against all banks generally.

The demand being what regulates the quantity of paper possible to be in circulation, it should follow, that it can never be either in excess, or insufficient.

But it is said bank notes are often issued on fictitious securities, or on what is termed accommodation paper: that is, two persons draw on each other reciprocally and discount the bills, or by other equivalent proceedings, the parties perhaps possessing no property to pledge or convey. Although it may be true, that they really did not previously possess any property, yet it is not to be supposed, they again part

with these notes without themselves receiving a real value for them. Such value, therefore, constitutes still the security of the bank. It must be seen that the genuine operation of the bank in this instance is, that it employs these parties, in a manner, as its agents, trusting to their discretion in the circulation of its notes. This is not therefore, as sometimes represented, the creation of a fictitious property, but an equivalent property is conveyed to the bank, though somewhat indirectly by this system of agency. The parties, although not before possessed of any property, become so by means of these notes, and are thereby rendered capable of a responsibility to the bank.

It may happen, that the bank may be deceived in its confidence. If so, it rests on the bank itself to make good its paper, whenever it is returned upon it. The bank is so much the poorer: therefore no new property is created. Whatever may appear to be so, the funds of the bank are proportionably diminished. It may happen, that the bank should be so incautious as to be thereby ultimately ruined, and unable to make good its notes. This is one of the risks of private bank paper. Whoever takes it, puts his confidence in the good management and ability of those by whom it is issued. If he is deceived he must submit to the loss, in the same manner as a man who sells

his house or his horse to a sharper, or a bankrupt. It was optional with him, whether he would take these notes, or not. The loss sustained by the holder, implies that he had parted with some property for them. No new property was therefore created by their issue.

In the case of the Bank of England discounting fictitious paper, that is, advancing its notes on securities which should ultimately prove to cover no property, the position is said to become different: because the Bank of England being protected by law, from the obligation to pay in any thing but its own notes, would meet the loss only, by a further issue of them; and as nothing, in this case, would appear to be pledged or conveyed to the Bank for this second issue, it must seem to create an artificial property. But as in a private bank the loss reverts on itself, so equally does it fall on the Bank of England, under a similar want of discretion. The security on which this second issue of notes goes forth, in exchange for the first, is on the general funds of the bank itself, which like a private bank, is accordingly so much the poorer. We trust in the Directors of the Bank of England, that they will not often, nor materially involve the Bank in such unfortunate transactions. They are not supposed to be wanting in circumspection. The alledged over issue of its paper has never been attributed to such a

cause. At any rate, still no new property appears to have been created. If the power of purchase has been obtained by others, by means of the bank paper, the Bank being so much the poorer, has itself so much less power of purchase. It is, therefore, an erroneous construction of the Bullion Report, to understand it as implying that a new power of purchase is created by the issue of bank notes. It is only the conveyance of such a power from the Bank to the parties to whom it grants its notes. The issue of the notes is virtually nothing more than giving a currency, in a more convenient form, to the securities they hold, and which constitute their responsible funds. The operation is similar to that of the Lottery-office keeper, who dividing a ticket into sixteen shares, renders it more marketable, but he creates no new ticket. So the Bank, when it issues an hundred notes of ten pounds each, on the security of a treasury-bill of one thousand pounds, gives it only a more marketable form, but creates no new property.

The question therefore resolves itself into one of the discretion of the Bank Directors not to issue notes beyond the solvency of the Bank: that is, beyond the securities vested in it, in exchange for them. The transfer of these securities to the Bank, in order to obtain its notes, of itself proves the demand for them; and while

confined to this limit the issue can therefore never be excessive. For by an excessive issue must be understood, an issue exceeding the demand, so that a greater number of notes are thrown into circulation, than required: the Bank at the same time not recalling, or refusing to take back such surplus; or the return of it being frustrated, by the Bank, in such case, issuing in exchange only other similar paper. Such surplus, therefore, being otherwise liable to become a total loss to the individuals in whose hands it may happen to be, to avert which, they are induced to part with it below its representative value, thus bringing the whole paper in circulation into discredit.

It is sometimes surmised in the gross, that, since Bank of England paper has been rendered equivalent to a legal tender, and the Bank being at the same time the organ of the Government for the payment of the National Debt; and by means of its paper, equally so of all other public outgoings, Bank of England Notes no longer retain any essential distinction from a direct issue of Government paper-money. It has been shewn, that as the just equality of the issue to the demand is regulated by, so the solvency of the bank note is also secured upon, the property pledged in order to obtain it. When a treasury-note, or other government-security is issued, they convey to the Bank, or

to the parties to whom they are issued, a transferrable charge or mortgage upon the whole property of the country, to the amount they specify. The funding of these securities is a mere matter of account, a mere change of form, in which they none the less continue to cover, and virtually to convey, with their transfer from one individual to another, the power over the property they pledged, at their issue. Bank of England Notes, as issued on these pledges, rest therefore on the validity of the whole property of the country, as secured by its laws to this purpose; and when which security may ever prove ineffectual, that on which rests every other description of property, must become more than dubious.

With the issue of these public pledges, effective taxes are levied for the payment, in the mean time, of the interest or ordinary profit on the property thus virtually conveyed by them to the Bank, or other parties to whom they were issued, or to whom they may be transferred: and further, a surplus tax is applied, through the instrumentality of the Sinking Fund, to the ultimate operation of the similar virtual conveyance to them, of the principal of the property so pledged.

The security of a direct Government paper-money, may in the same manner be said to rest on the general property of the country. Trea-

sury-notes are such. But it is incompatible with the other cares of a great government, to exercise the requisite circumspection, or to give its attention to the necessary details. It therefore confides these to the distinct establishment of a great bank. It must however be seen, that there is a material point of difference between a treasury-note bearing interest, that is, paying the ordinary profit of the property it purports to convey a power over; and what is generally understood, by a direct Government paper-money, being a mere token, intended, indeed, to convey similarly the power over a certain extent of property, but in the mean time, failing to convey the usual profit of it. A Government paper-money, therefore, issued in this form, does not convey the whole of the property it purports to represent, for it does not convey the accruing profits of that property; and, if indefinite as to the time of its duration, it, in fact, pledges no property at all. This is, indeed, an attempt to create a fictitious wealth. Discredit must accordingly attach to it.

Bank of England Notes, it is true, not bearing interest, neither convey the profits of the property they represent, and yet circulate with general accord. The convenience of their form and amount, adapting them so readily to the purposes of money, probably secure to them in

part this advantage; and which the same circumstances might equally be expected to give to a direct Government paper-money. It is the want of equal confidence in it, that constitutes the great difference. Individuals confide in the Bank, that it possesses, in some form or other, the securities for the property of which it issues its representative notes; and although they may not be able to obtain the property on demand from the Bank, the general sense of its sufficiency makes its notes circulate, and maintains their credit. A Country Bank, which should be known to possess a mortgage of a hundred thousand pounds on the landed estates in its neighbourhood, would not be likely to see its notes at a discredit, while it should also be known, that their extent in circulation was within this amount.

Gold and silver money neither convey any accruing profit on the property they represent. But gold and silver have themselves an intrinsic value, and if the coins they are made into, contain the exact value in bullion, which they represent, without any restrictive laws as to their retention within the country, nor against the conversion of the metal into any other form, they are in themselves a bonâ fide delivery of property, in the same manner as an equal value of bullion, or any other commodity, would be. No possible discredit can ever attach to

coin in this state. But if the law prohibits their exportation, or conversion into bullion, at the same time fixing a determinate value on them, and it happens, (as it always does happen, from day to day, the price of bullion being variable like that of all other commodities, according to different circumstances,) that it rises or falls above or below the rated value of the gold and silver coins; then, in the first case, they must be liable to be melted down and exported, notwithstanding the prohibitory law, individual interest being so powerful in this instance to do so by them; or, in the latter case, as they will no longer contain the full market value they are intended to represent, the confidence given to them on account of their intrinsic value, will be only equal to that value. Their coinage and legal currency will, however, continue to uphold them, unless the price of bullion should fall very much below that of their relative representative value, in which case they would assimilate to a gold and silver coinage at once issued at a rate greatly above its intrinsic value. The implied deception in the issue of money of this description, and the certainty of its deficiency never being compensated, must always place its credit below that of any moderately well assured paper.

If indeed at any time, the Bank of England should be compelled by the Government to

issue its notes in excess above the securities given to it in exchange for them, the Government being no longer able to levy effective taxes to meet its expenses, or from other circumstances a want of confidence in the public faith should arise; or if the Directors of the Bank should be supposed, in any other way so to mismanage its affairs, that it could be no longer solvent, then, indeed, Bank-notes must be at a discredit. The excessive issue, without securities pledged, to meet the exigencies of Government, must be perfectly similar to the issue of a direct Government paper-money, and subject to all its incidents.

The credit of the Bank-note, issued on national securities, must be identified with that of those securities. So far the credit of a Bank-note is equal to the credit of the public funds; and those who are contented to risk their substance in these, can have no reason for withholding their confidence in it. It is always to be kept in mind, that although in the levy of a tax, money is what appears to be received by the Government, it is but the agent or representative of what the people really pay, which is a part of their substance. The money they pay, was in their hands a power to acquire substance. By the payment of the tax, they make over to the Government that power. What the Government therefore collects in the tax,

is the power of commanding so much substance, which is virtually the acquisition of the substance itself. It is this substance, that is pledged to the Bank.

It has been shewn in the foregoing pages, in the consideration of the 7th Resolution, that the present increased prices of all things have been caused by the increase of the rent of land, and by taxes, in a proportion that it may convey no inadequate representation of, to suppose the quartern loaf, as in 1765, at fourpence; but subjected to two stamp duties, such as used to be the case with our hats, and is now on quack medicines. One of these being a one penny stamp to the Government, levied for national purposes; the other a sevenpenny stamp to the Landed Interests, levied for their particular benefit, in the increase of their rent during the last 30 or 40 years. Having shewn the sufficiency of these causes to the effect produced; and now having, it is believed, further satisfactorily demonstrated the fallacy of attributing this change in the value of money, to our paper currency, it may not be without interest to remark on the change also in the value of gold and silver bullion, relatively to bread, and other commodities generally.

We may assume that in 1765 gold was at 4*l.* an ounce; and that an ounce would then have purchased, at the rate of fourpence a loaf, 240 loaves. At the present day, at 5*l.* 8*s.* an ounce, it will purchase, at 1*s.* a loaf, 108 loaves. The change in the value of gold, as to bread, is then as 240 in the year 1765, to 108 at the present time. It must be seen, therefore, that it is not merely our paper which is depreciated, but gold also; and that though we are in the habit of speaking of gold as having risen in value, because comparing it only with our currency, yet by the criterion of bread and the general prices of other things, it has also really fallen, or is depreciated.

The first impression we must receive, from the observation of the smaller quantity of bread we now give, for the same quantity of gold; or what is the same thing, the greater quantity of gold we now give for the same quantity of bread, must be, that gold is therefore more abundant. A comparison with the price of corn, appears to have been a general rule adopted in most tables and calculations, endeavouring to estimate the value of gold, through the last several centuries; and inferences to have been formed accordingly, of its supposed abundance or scarcity. At the present day, the erroneous foundation of such a datum must be apparent. It must be seen, that the quan-

tity of gold, even relatively to the demand, cannot be assumed from a comparison of its exchange for corn alone, or any other one particular article; but from the average of its exchange, against all things generally. It must also be seen, that corn bears a very variable value relatively to other things, at different periods. In the earlier stages of society, it appears to have borne a less value relatively to manufactures than afterwards, as these have become better understood. An estimate formed on corn alone, must therefore be deceptive; as being low in the first case, and high in the latter.

But to confine our immediate attention to the price of gold and silver in Britain, we must be sensible, that as foreign commodities, their price must be influenced by that of those things we give in exchange, in order to obtain them. Gold and silver, as the great media of foreign commerce, are obtained by us from all countries; and what we exchange for them, is, therefore, what we export generally. It is not the general industry of the country, which constitutes our exports, but only some particular parts of it. We have assumed the price of the ounce of gold to have been in 1765, at the rate of 4*l.* of our currency, or money of account. This supposes the general average value, in the same manner in our currency or money of account, of those particular commo-

dities we exported to obtain gold, to have been, at that time, at the same rate relatively to the price of the general industry of the country. But the change has been very great in the relative value of many things since that period. Bread, and the other first necessaries of life, and all those things which press most, may be said to have tripled in price. Many other things, however, have not risen in the same proportion. Some even, have scarcely risen at all. Those things which constitute our chief exports, such as cotton goods, woollens and hardware, by the improvements of machinery, and the better ordering of labor, have not probably risen more than 35 per cent.; that is, taking one with another, on the average of their prices in 1765. These being our principal exports, and therefore what we exchange for gold, should seem to regulate its price; that is to say, whatever may have been the change they have undergone in their relative value as to the general industry of the country, such also should be the change in the value of gold obtained in exchange for them. In 1765, the yard of broad cloth, of the nominal value of 20*s.* cost, in fact, 60 loaves of bread, at 4*d.* each. At the present day, the similar yard of cloth advanced to the nominal value of 27*s.* costs only 27 loaves of bread, at 1*s.* each. This is supposing an

advance of 35 per cent. in the price of broad cloth, assimilating it to the rise in the price of gold from 4*l.* to 5*l.* 8*s.* an ounce. Had it, however, have happened, that broad cloth, instead of falling from the value of 60 to 27 loaves, had fallen only to 40 loaves, the loaf having equally advanced in our currency from 4*d.* to 1*s.*; or what is the same thing, in such case, if the yard of cloth, instead of advancing to 27*s.* only, had advanced to 40*s.* or doubled in nominal value, then must gold also have doubled, and have advanced from 4*l.* to 8*l.* the ounce. If the advance in the price of the cloth had kept pace with the advance in the price of bread, or have tripled, then must the present price of gold also have tripled, or have advanced to 12*l.* the ounce.

If the above reasoning be correct, it must shew, that the advance in the money value of gold, has arisen out of the same causes which have worked the change in the money value of those things we exchange for it. These causes we must perceive to have been the increase of the rent of land, aided by circulating taxes, in their effect on the price of subsistence, raising accordingly that of the general industry of the country; and which, although improvement in machinery and in manufacturing intelligence, has, indeed, so greatly counteracted, in regard to most of those goods which consti-

tute our exports, yet it has not been able to do so altogether.

This presents another strong view, in which the present high prices supporting high rents, or high rents creating high prices, have already caused, what is commonly called, the balance of exchange to be so unfavorable. These Resolutions, therefore, not only alledge an erroneous cause, when they attribute it to the importation of foreign grain: but the remedy they propose, by a restriction on this, to be enabled to establish still higher and higher prices, must, on the contrary, by further raising the price of those things we export, in exchange for gold, raise also the price of gold; and thus render our foreign exchanges still more disadvantageous, in their money-estimate.

It is understood, the present object is not merely to establish present high prices: but assuming, that the increase of the price of grain has averaged, at the progressive rate of one fifth part, or advanced 20 per cent. in every twenty years, to lay down a rule to perpetuate this progressive advance, by a similar progressive restriction on the importation of foreign grain, advancing it one-fifth, or 20 per cent. at every period of twenty years; or proportionally after the rate of one per cent. annually, taking effect at shorter periodical limitations. The opera-

tion of such an extension of the evil, in the progressive check to industry, and in the evident sacrifice of all other property to the profits of land, must speak for itself. Nor can it escape attention, that it must be a proceeding not less fraudulent towards those foreigners, who have committed their property, on either the public or on private securities in this country, than would be the reduction of the quantity or quality of the gold in the guinea, or silver in the shilling, below the standard established by our laws, at the time they committed their property to us. If we are willing to blind ourselves in such a transaction, we must yet be sensible, that foreigners may see more clearly: and the high credit of the country, become accordingly shaken.

It is impossible not to contemplate in imagination, the progress and extent our commercial and manufacturing interests must in all apparent reason have attained, if it had been possible, that we could have proceeded on the footing of rents and taxes, and consequent prices, as in 1765. The yard of cloth, which has in fact fallen in value from 60 to 27 loaves of bread, it must be seen, in such case, would also otherwise have fallen from twenty shillings to nine shillings. What has been said of cloth, will be understood as only instanced of our exports generally. The result in the increase of

these under such circumstances, and the consequent encouragement to greater production, must pass calculation. Our national taxes have perhaps been in great part inevitable; but the same cannot be averred of the increase of the rent of land.

It is not, however, meant to imply, that the changes in the value of gold and silver may not have been affected by external, as well as internal causes. It has been only intended to shew the powerful action of the latter. It must be evident, that as foreign commodities, they must also be liable, like tea or wine, to a change of price in the foreign markets, whence we obtain them; and as the advance in the foreign price of these articles, whether arising from scarcity of production or increased demand, must be felt in England; so must too that of gold and silver, from similar causes. The forced demand of these metals for the supply of our navies and armies abroad, must have affected their market value in Britain. There are also reasons to think, some essentially important external changes have taken place in respect of them. Further, the perturbed state, during the last twenty years, of the whole Continent of Europe, has submitted the demand for them to such sudden impulses, causing such vacillation in their foreign value,

sometimes co-operating with, and at other times counteracting the internal change in their value in Britain, that it is impossible to attach any general inferences to the irregularity of its progress.

If it should be asked, Where can be the remedy to the state of things herein depicted? The evident answer must be, In the removal of the causes by which it has been produced. The apparent practicability of doing so, must be in the free importation of grain, presenting itself as a natural barometer for the rent of land in Britain, according to the price our manufacturers and the other industrious classes can afford to pay for their subsistence, with a due reference to the price of that of their foreign competitors. And in the transfer of as many of our circulating taxes, as may not be so directed by a distinct policy to the protection or encouragement of particular trades and manufactures, to become a direct charge on landed and monied capital; within such limits on the latter, as not to be the means of driving it out of the country.

Truths, so little palatable to many individual interests and feelings, may be expected to be admitted with reluctance: but every provident man must be prepared, that the whole system of the political economy of the country

is rapidly approaching that state to render necessary, and the general intelligence and perception of all classes fast becoming such as must command, attention to them.

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 55, line 4, *for* 35s., *read* 33s.
— 82, — 8, *for* itself, *read* himself.

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