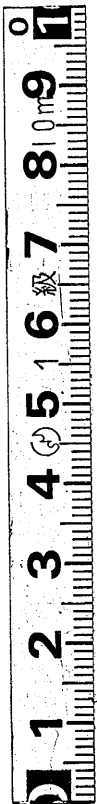


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SUBSTANCE  
OF  
**THE SPEECH**  
OF  
CHARLES C. WESTERN, ESQUIRE,  
IN  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
MAY 1814,  
ON THE SUBJECT OF  
**THE CORN LAWS.**

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**SPEECH,***&c.*  

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I AM desirous, Sir, of making some observations on the question now before the House; and in so doing, shall apply myself generally to a consideration of the principle of the measure. I beg leave in the first place to declare, that in the view I have taken of this subject, I have never regarded, for one moment, the interests of the grower of Corn distinct from that of the consumer. I believe that they are inseparable. It is the practice indeed to talk of the interests of the grower and consumer as disunited, and even opposed to each other, but the fact is quite otherwise. The consumers form the market for the grower, and their number, wealth, and ability to purchase, constitute the value and extent of the market; and it is only the successful and prosperous condition of the grower can in-

sure an adequate supply to the consumer. In the discussion of the proposition now submitted to the House, I shall endeavour to confine myself to the consideration of the probability it affords of providing an abundant supply of food to the inhabitants of this country: for the accomplishment of this purpose, I apprehend we are about to legislate. But, Sir, we must not forget, that the measures we have now before us are confined to the regulation of the foreign trade, and supply of foreign Corn; and it is of course essential to consider what proportion that supply has hitherto borne, or is likely to bear to the total demand and consumption of the united empire.

I know, Sir, it is very difficult to form an accurate estimate on such a subject. I have endeavoured to obtain one out of all the different materials we at present possess for this purpose; and my result will, I think, be allowed to be fair and tolerably correct, or at least that it takes the proportion of our own produce as low as it can be placed. The consumption of Wheat, Barley, and Oats, in Great Britain and Ireland, I estimate at thirty-five millions of quarters. The import of all sorts of Grain, on an average of the last ten years, is known to be about one million: of course the native growth is to the importation as thirty-four to one.

It is necessary to have this proportion in our contemplation, that we may see how speedily any diminution of our own agriculture would reduce the aggregate supply.

The regulation of the foreign trade has generally been subject, as it now is, to a great diversity of opinion. Some gentlemen think it safer to prohibit the importation of foreign Corn, and to rely upon the steady exertions of our own farmers; others contend the importation should be stopped at what is called the medium price; and there are those who maintain that the importation and exportation of Corn should be perfectly free, and liable to no restriction whatever.

It is impossible to doubt for a moment, that if an entire freedom of trade could be established throughout the world, it would be decidedly for the advantage of mankind in general. There is not a dissentient voice upon this subject; at the same time no hope or expectation can reasonably be entertained that such an event will ever come to pass. It is impossible in the present state of the different countries of Europe and the world, or in any probable state which the most sanguine person can look forward to, that such relations of concord and amity can ever be established amongst nations, as shall secure an uninterrupted freedom of trade. But it is

said, though we cannot look forward to the freedom of trade generally, it would be better, as far as lies in our power, to have a free trade of Corn, to permit a free export constantly, and to open our markets at all times to the admission of foreign growth. The question is, whether such a system would give us, in a course of years, a more abundant, more steady, and cheaper supply? I am convinced it would not. But let us examine what the effects of such a measure would be. If the superior fertility of foreign soils, or other circumstances, should enable the foreign grower to pay the freight, and undersell the British farmer, the first consequence certainly would be, that British agriculture must give way to the extent of the increased supply of foreign Corn. The more sterile lands of this empire would be thrown out of tillage, the capital therein employed would seek more productive channels, the proportion of foreign supply would increase, and our own produce diminish: our present import of one million would arrive perhaps at five millions, and our own growth would be reduced from thirty-four to thirty: if we could draw still more copiously from foreign countries, the relative proportion of our own produce would of course be still farther altered. But I presume there is nobody who does not admit that there must be a limit

to the quantum of foreign supply. It cannot be supposed for an instant that we can draw our entire subsistence in Corn from foreign countries; there must be some limit: then I say, when we have arrived at that limit, we shall be exactly in the same situation in which we are now, except that we shall have five millions of quarters of foreign Corn (supposing that to be the limit) instead of one, and thirty of our own instead of thirty-four. When this is done, what can prevent the price rising to the same level it would naturally reach, if no such change had taken place. I put out of the question here the manifest objections to so great a reliance upon foreign, and perhaps hostile countries, and view the argument as if divested of all these considerations.

I presume it will be on all hands admitted, that neither Corn nor any other article can long continue to be produced in any country, at a rate of profit lower than that which is derived from other trades and manufactures. If the trade of the farmer, or any other trade, ceases to be profitable, in that proportion the capital of the persons employed in it will by degrees seek other channels, and their industry will be turned to more advantageous employments. By these means, the quantity of the article to be produced will diminish, till the

demand operating upon a reduced supply shall restore the price to a level that shall again place the manufacturers of that article upon a footing with others: during the period of this reduction they will be obliged, no doubt, to sell at a loss, but they will relieve themselves as quickly as possible from this situation. In the present state of the agriculture of this country, if we allow the ports to be open to foreign corn, and if we can draw large quantities from thence at a cheaper rate than we grow it, the operation I have just described must take place; and during the period of the consequent declension of our own agriculture, the price may be lowered beyond that, which shall give the farmers an adequate profit: when we have arrived at the limits of the foreign supply, then the price of the whole must return to the level which shall give them a profit equal to that of other British manufacturers. I am now looking at the question without considering the possibility of any interruption to the foreign trade; and yet it does appear to me certain, that viewing the measure of free import even under these most favourable, but most improbable circumstances, the consumer would in the event be miserably disappointed in his expectation of finding a cheaper or more abundant supply.

I come now, Sir, to a consideration of those laws which have hitherto been enacted for the regulation of the trade with foreign countries; they have been, as we all know, very different in their effects; at the same time, there has been a uniform similarity in one respect, inasmuch as they have always subjected the export and import of grain to restrictions or encouragements dependent upon the market price. For instance, by the Act of 1791 Wheat was exportable on bounty till it reached 44s. per quarter; at 46s. the export was stopped; at 50s. foreign Corn might be imported on a duty of 2s. 6d.; at 54s. it might come in duty-free.

It is obvious, that the scale upon which the regulating prices are taken, must decide the efficacy and consequences of such a measure; and it is well known, that so differently has that scale been fixed at different periods of the history of our Corn Laws, that their effects have been diametrically opposite. In one period it has operated nearly to the exclusion of foreign Corn; at another, it has given the benefit of the British markets, almost without interruption, to the agriculture of foreign countries. These periods may be computed, first from our earliest information up to the Act of the 22d of Charles the Second, in the year 1670, thence to the 13th

of George the Third, 1773, and from thence to the present time.

During the first of these periods the prevailing character of the laws was to encourage importation and prohibit exportation; and during that time the nation experienced a great and distressing fluctuation of prices, and a painful dependence on foreign supply.

The Act of 1670, on the contrary, subjected the importation of foreign Corn to such duties as virtually amounted to prohibition; and this was followed by the Act of the 1st of King William, by which every encouragement was given to the exportation of our own produce. This system was continued to the year 1773, and was certainly most successful in the extension of our agriculture, and in producing a plentiful supply of Corn at a steady low price. To this system, Sir, I am anxious to return, and to accomplish it we must form our regulating scale, as near as we can, upon the proportions at that time adopted; and the degree of approximation recommended by the Committee of last session, is that to which I adhere, as the proper measure for the purpose.

An idea very generally prevails, that, in fixing the import, we are in truth settling the lowest market price of Corn; a more unfounded and

erroneous opinion cannot well exist. It seems, however, to be deeply rooted in the minds of the people, and probably has originated from the circumstance of the market price having very seldom been below the import price since the commencement of our present system of Corn laws, which I date from the Act of 1773. The causes of this I shall now proceed to explain; by tracing their several enactments, and the events that followed; and in so doing I shall at the same time shew, in a great measure, the inefficacy of the principles on which they were formed.

This Act of 1773 allowed of the importation of Corn from all parts of the world, when the price of British Wheat rose to 48s. a quarter, and other grain in proportion. Now, it is to be observed, that the average price of the preceding ten years was 45s. 6d. consequently the least deficiency of supply, or diminution of the value of money, which has certainly been progressive since that time, would necessarily make the market price equal to, or above the import price. This Act, whilst it subverted at one blow a system eminently beneficial, established on the experience of a century, exhibited in its own enactments the most impracticable ideas, and most futile and absurd projects. The Act of the 22d Charles the Second continuing in force till

1773, fixed the import price of Wheat at 53s. 4d. a quarter, subject also to a duty of 8s. together 61s. 4d. The Act of the 1st of King William gave a bounty of 5s. upon the export of British Wheat when the price was at or under 48s. a quarter; and these two Acts combined formed the system of laws under which the trade was governed till the period I am now speaking of. Now this Act of 1773 absolutely converted the export bounty price into the import duty-free price, so that a more complete and utter subversion of a code of laws could not by any possible means be effected. The expectations which appear to have been formed by the authors of this Act are demonstrable by its provisions, and are certainly very extraordinary. By its different enactments, when Wheat was under 44s. it was exportable with a bounty of 5s.; when above 44s. the exportation of it was altogether prohibited, under a severe penalty; and when the price rose to 48s. foreign Corn was admissible from all parts of the world duty-free; so that they really seem to have entertained the idea of keeping the price of Corn within the limits of 44s. and 48s. The same opinions seem to have prevailed in the year 1791, as the provisions of that Act were nearly similar. The average price of Corn of the ten years preceding 1791 was 51s. and the import

price was fixed at 52s. 6d.; including a duty of 2s. 6d. it was exportable on bounty under 44s.—export allowed, without bounty, under 46s.—prohibited above 46s. Here again it is obvious from the same causes; the market price, differing at the time so little from the import price, would soon be equal to or exceed it.

We come next to the Act of 1804, which, under the direction of a Committee, I had the honour of introducing into the House. That Act carried the import price, including duty, to 65s. 6d.; the export bounty price to 48s.; permission of export without bounty to 54s. The average price of the ten years preceding, inclusive of the scarce years of 1800 and 1801, was 70s.; exclusive of those two years, 60s.; so that upon the calculation of ordinary years, the average market price was only 5s. 6d. under the duty-free import price. Upon a review of all these cases, it is therefore apparent, that at the time of passing these several laws the market and import prices were nearly at par, and events, too obvious to be noticed, have constantly occurred to annihilate that minute difference, and generally to render the former much higher than the latter.

The Committee of 1804 in general thought at the time, that the measure recommended by them to the House would not afford suffi-

cient confidence and encouragement to the British farmer; but were induced to give way to the opposition they had to encounter. And here I will take the liberty of stating more fully what I have before asserted, that Mr. Pitt, who was then at the head of the Administration, gave to this measure his most decided and cordial support. I was certainly surprized to find, in the pamphlet of the Right Honourable Gentleman\*, the declaration of an opinion directly at variance with this assertion. The Right Honourable Gentleman says, in that publication, "he knows Mr. Pitt was prevailed upon reluctantly to give his assent to concur in the regulating prices enacted in 1804." The Right Honourable Gentleman must, I think, be mistaken; for I still entertain a most perfect conviction, that Mr. Pitt not only cordially assented to those prices, but wished to have carried them considerably higher. I have a clear recollection of what passed at our first interview with him upon the subject. We presented to him our plan, remarking at the same time, that the measure probably would be strenuously contested; that much clamour was already excited, and that to obviate it we had

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\* Right Honourable George Rose.

adopted the lowest possible scale. He said, it appeared to him so low, that he thought it might prevent the threatened opposition; the only doubt he entertained was of its efficacy. I also feel persuaded that he expressed hopes we should be able, by degrees, in subsequent sessions of the legislature, to carry further the principle of protection and encouragement to the agriculture of our own country. When the Bill got into the House of Lords, an alteration was made in the calculation of the duties; in consequence of which, when it came back to this House, it was rejected. Mr. Pitt directed a message to be sent to me, informing me of the circumstance, and desiring I would come to town, which I immediately did. It was then the middle of July; he told me he had hoped the prorogation of Parliament would have taken place before that time, but would advise the delay of a week or ten days, in order that a new Bill might be introduced, which I accordingly moved the same evening; and which, after some opposition, passed into a law. I mention these circumstances to enable the House to form a judgment of the real sentiments of Mr. Pitt, independent of the mere recollection of myself or any other person, which certainly may be erroneous.



From the period of the passing of this Act, which, it is curious to observe, has in no one instance impeded the importation of foreign grain, the average price of wheat has been nearly 100s. a quarter: in 1812 and 1813, it was above 120s. almost double the import price of the Act; so that if there are those who persist in supposing the import price must necessarily be the lowest, they certainly cannot flatter themselves with the hope that it will invariably be the highest; the experience of the last fifty years has fully shewn that such an expectation would be vain indeed; and the history of the century prior to 1773 will equally prove, how opposite to truth the assumption is, that the market price never can be lower than that at which the importation of foreign Corn is prohibited.

In reverting to that period it will be recollected, that the import price, including the duty, was 61s. It so continued above a century, and yet, during the whole of that time, the average market price was not quite 40s.—This example is of itself decisive. But the case is stronger yet: for by the Act of William, British Corn was forced out of the country, by a bounty of 5s. a quarter, till the price exceeded 48s. and during the full operation of this law,

and the Act of Charles II. combined, the price of Wheat, for 68 years, was only 33s. 6d.\*

It is well known indeed, that under the operation of these laws, British agriculture flourished beyond all former example; that from being considerably indebted to foreign countries, we not only became quite independant, but acquired a large surplus, and a beneficial export trade. The price was also steady, and on an average comparatively lower than it had ever been before, or has been since. If these facts will not eradicate the opinion, that in fixing the import, we are fixing the lowest market price, I am at a loss to know what arguments can have any avail.

There are persons who will say, perhaps, that all these events have followed from other causes; but it must be observed, that the system established by these Acts of Charles II. and William was of a most decisive character; it amounted in effect to an absolute prohibition of foreign Corn †; and it gave such encouragement to ex-

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\* In the first thirty years of this period the excess of our exports was on an average 345,392 quarters, and the average market price was 36s. 6d.; in the last thirty years the excess of exports was 642,182 quarters, and the price only 30s.

† See the table of exports and imports.

portation, as never was before attempted in any other country in the world. It must be remembered also, that previous to the adoption of this policy, we had been dependant upon foreign countries, as we have been since its abandonment. If the system had been less operative, its effects might have been attributable to other causes; but so powerful, and so effectual as those laws were, it seems impossible to doubt they must have occasioned the consequences which followed upon them, and which they were intended to produce.

But, Sir, the beneficial effects which resulted from that system are equally deducible, from a consideration of the principle on which it was founded; one simple proposition, the truth of which cannot be disputed, formed the basis of the plan; I mean that undoubted axiom, that self-interest is the source of all production; that neither Corn nor any thing else can be procured, but by the operation of that active principle working upon the mind of the producer; and that the more scope is given to it, the more effectually will the public be served. Nothing more strikingly exemplifies this position, than the regular and nicely-measured supply of food to the population of this vast metropolis: the uninterrupted operation of selfish motives alone miraculously accomplishes this great work; it is

the certainty of market, and an adequate reward, which attracts to this capital every thing which its inhabitants require. The same principle, of course, is applicable to the provision of food for our entire population. The Corn laws, matured and settled at the Revolution, were obviously founded upon it; they inspired with full confidence of uninterrupted reward the British growers of Corn; they held out to them the possession of the home market, and taught them to look to all the other markets of the world; in short, the system was calculated, by offering boundless prospects to their view, to produce that ardent competition, which will always produce an ample supply of any article we are desirous to have in abundance.

I know it will be said, this is all very true, and why not let the same principle operate upon foreigners as well as upon British subjects? The obvious answer is, because they are foreigners; and the fruit of their industry is subject to direction over which we have no controul. If the character of mankind could be altered, and if those passions, which have hitherto involved nations in continual hostility, could altogether subside, and just views of policy invariably prevail, then indeed the case would appear in a different light, but till then it would be the height of folly to allow ourselves to be depen-

dent upon foreign countries for any considerable proportion of that which is necessary to our existence. In the article of food, an uninterrupted intercourse is less likely to be established than in any other; the prejudices of men so powerfully operate against it, that it is only in modern times the entire freedom of the Corn trade has been fully accomplished within our own dominions.

The present system of our Corn laws is founded upon a notion, that we can at any time derive assistance from foreign countries; and not only that, but that we can command it exactly to the extent we think is desirable, and at the moment we fancy it is necessary. In order to do this, we go to work to find out what is called a fair average price for the British grower in ordinary seasons, and the moment that is exceeded our ports are immediately thrown open. Now, if we were even to suppose that foreigners enjoyed an uninterrupted liberty of free export, it would still be absurd to believe they would always have a surplus ready for the supply of an uncertain demand. They are not more likely to have a constant surplus than we are, unless they have a constant demand for it. We may indeed extract a portion of their food, by the temptation of high price; and if our average demand for a given number of years produces a constant market for

them to a given extent, they will soon have that quantity in ordinary years to spare; but, beyond that, they will have no surplus, and even that average supply is always liable to be withheld. In the mean time, what is the effect of this fallacious system upon our own agriculture? This uncertainty of market, it must be recollected, operates upon those who must ever provide the bulk of our aggregate consumption; it damps their spirits, checks their exertions, and teaches them to confine their produce rather within the limits of the necessary supply. If then a succession of indifferent seasons at any time occurs, which experience instructs us to expect, we find ourselves unprovided for the occasion, no foreign supplies can be extracted but through the operation of high price, and the nation becomes exposed to great distress and danger. In a short time our agriculture, which before had languished from the causes I have just mentioned, begins to feel the influence of an eager demand, the market price rises rapidly, and the growers of Corn for a time experience great profits. In spite of the discouraging nature of the laws, unusual gains excite unusual exertions, and in the course of a few years the aggregate produce of the kingdom is largely increased. Profits now again decline, and thus an alternate succession of periods follow each other; in one

of which the farmer gains more than an adequate profit, in another less. I know very well the difference of seasons must, under all circumstances, render uncertain the produce, as well as profits of agriculture. But it is this very uncertainty we should endeavour to guard against; and indisputably that country which has the largest surplus produce will suffer least from this inevitable variation of seasons. The only way to grow a surplus in ordinary years is to promote a demand, beyond our actual necessities, for the food of our own population; and this is effected by bounties on exportation, and still more by an extended home consumption of grain. The breweries, the distilleries, and the quantity used by horses, fortunately occasion in this country a great extra demand; and the consequent increased production essentially adds to our means and resources in time of need. Few countries suffer much in ordinary years; the great object should be, to make provision against the incalculable evils of a real scarcity.

We have very recently experienced that vicissitude of events which I have endeavoured to describe, and happily for us the period last past has been that of high prices and large profits, and we are in possession of the plenty which they have occasioned. It is true the last crop was unusually and universally productive, but

the abundance we at present possess is greatly attributable to the extended and improved tillage of every part of the united empire. In the last eight or ten years, in consequence of causes too powerful to be counteracted by the baneful tendency of the laws, our agriculture has advanced with rapid strides, larger capitals have been devoted to it than formerly, and the science as well as practice has greatly improved.

This is the time then to secure the advantages we have thus painfully acquired; the sacrifice to accomplish it will be trivial, and will be most amply repaid. It is impossible, indeed, we can continue long to enjoy the full amount of our own extended and improved agriculture, and receive large foreign supplies into the bargain. Such an idea would certainly be most preposterous; and if we were to endeavour to act upon it, we should have sufficient reason in a very few years deeply to regret our folly. The path we ought to pursue is plain before us; we should revert to the policy of the Revolution laws, we should give to our farmers that confidence which they inspired, and thus again throw off all dependence upon foreign countries.

I am much afraid the character of the plan now under consideration is too indecisive to accomplish this great object; it resembles too nearly the measure of 1773, and every subse-

quent Act of the Legislature; it affords no certainty of market to the British grower, and no security against an influx of foreign Corn. He certainly will not continue his late exertions under the influence of the regulations we are now contemplating. The application of capital to agriculture is already checked; and if the profits become inadequate, and the markets doubtful, the produce will again diminish with a rapidity much exceeding the comprehension or belief of those who have no practical knowledge of the subject. The first consequence of such a state of things is, to put a stop to all those essential improvements which require any considerable expence; the next is to convert a spirited and liberal practice into a saving and parsimonious system of farming; and the difference of produce between the one and the other is immense. There are, amongst farmers as amongst other persons, some more enterprizing than others; one class get money by saving, the other by freely embarking their capital, in the expectation of proportionate returns. It may be doubtful which in the end put the most money into their own pockets; but such is the obvious effect of capital applied to the growth of Corn, as well as to all other manufactures, that nobody can doubt which are the best farmers for the publick. It may be said, that

at all times it must be the real interest of the farmers to grow as much Corn as they can; but, upon a moment's reflection, it will be seen that that can never be true, as persisting by unrequited expences to overstock the market must even accelerate their own destruction. Some few of the more opulent and adventurous may, for a time, pursue the same liberal system, expecting a speedy return of pressing demand; but they will in general have recourse to a reduction of expediture in every possible way. If they still continue to feel the loss of adequate returns for their capital and industry, they will give up a portion of their land to pasture; those who can withdraw their capital will do so, and others will be ruined. Such is the course we shall most unavoidably go through, in proportion as we weaken the confidence and exertions of the British farmers, and increase our dependence upon foreign countries.

I will now notice some observations, or rather misrepresentations, of the Report of the Committee; it is said they, at one and the same time, profess to have high prices for their object, and yet to make Corn cheap; I deny that high prices either are their object, or so stated in the Report; and if fairly considered, their reasoning on the subject is perfectly consistent and correct. They say that high prices, or in other words,

great profits will, in the nature of things, produce extraordinary exertions; that profits at one time inadequate, at another excessive, are not so good for the farmer as sufficient and steady profits; and that steady and sufficient profits will not only produce a sufficient supply, but, upon the whole, at a cheaper rate than can be procured by any attempt to press down the farmer's gains below that which capital and industry employed in other manufactures can command. In looking at the prices of Wheat for the last twenty years, we shall find that they have fluctuated from 42s. to 125s. a quarter; the average of the whole is about 79s. Now, I think it is quite obvious, that an average price in itself much lower, if not compounded of such violent extremes, would have been considerably better for the farmer, and that the consumer would have benefitted, there can be no possible doubt.

There is an opinion, I believe, entertained by some people, that this kingdom is incapable of growing Corn enough for the consumption of its inhabitants, and they are therefore very naturally apprehensive of checking the importation of foreign supplies. Such an idea to me appears very extraordinary, as I have no conception of any deficiency of means to provide amply for double our present population: indeed, as to all practical purposes, I can see no

limit to our possible production but the limit of demand. Let those who entertain such fears carry their views for a moment over the extent and situation of the United Empire of Great Britain and Ireland, over the millions of acres yet untouched, and the millions of acres of fine land hardly producing one-third of the quantity of food that might be drawn from them\*. Greatly as our agriculture is improved and extended, its limits are yet contracted, compared as well in regard to the science itself, as the circulation of that knowledge we have already acquired, and the application of it to the kingdom at large. Our attention, our industry, and our capital has, no doubt in late years, been much attracted to the cultivation of the soil; and if a sufficient portion of the vast capital we can command is allowed to find its way to this most advantageous employment, there can be no doubt of the produce of our own land keeping pace with any increasing demand. They would have done so hitherto, if the policy of the last fifty years had not forcibly directed our national exertions to manu-

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\* It is perfectly well known, that large tracts of very poor land in Norfolk, for instance, by means of judicious cultivation, produce a larger quantity of Corn and Meat than the same number of acres in many other countries where the land is of the best quality.

factures of inferior importance\* ; for if we look to the table of exports and imports since 1773, we shall see, that in spite of the discouraging nature of the system established at that time, the excess of our imports gained upon us by very slow degrees; and it appears to me impossible to doubt, that if our agriculture had not been checked by the pernicious influence of those laws, it would, from that moment to the present time, progressively have kept pace with the encreasing demand upon it. I will not now, Sir, detain the House any longer: I have endeavoured to confine myself to that view of the question I consider the most important; and I think I have succeeded in shewing, that however we might depress for a short time the profit of our agriculture, we should derive no permanent advantage from encouraging the importation of foreign Corn. It is indisputably certain the more we draw from foreigners, the less we shall grow of our own, and

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\* There is no intention here to under-rate the value of our manufactures, nor is any doubt entertained of the immense influence of their success upon the prosperity of agriculture; the observation is meant only to apply generally in a way which is never disputed, that the growth or manufacture of Corn (as it may fairly be termed) is of more importance than all others.

as the proportion we derive from them encreases, so is the supply of our food within the absolute controul of their respective governments. If we allow ourselves to become annually indebted to them for a material portion of our sustenance, we shall certainly sacrifice our political independence, and endanger the welfare and happiness of the People.

TO THE READER.

It must be obvious to the Reader, that in the Speech reported in the foregoing pages, a variety of important considerations are not adverted to, and there are one or two on which I am desirous of making some cursory remarks. In the first place, I wish to direct the attention of the manufacturing class of the community to the great advantage of the *home* market. They must see, upon reflection, to what *an enormous* extent the home demand for their goods exceeds the foreign, and it must therefore be obvious how essential to them is the prosperity of our agricultural population, creating, as they do, so large a share of the home demand. It is said, if we take Corn from foreigners, they will receive our manufactures: suppose we take a million of quarters, and they receive three millions of money for it; or, instead of money, consent to take the value in manufactures, it certainly appears that we should receive an equivalent in one sense; but I think I have made it evident, that the million supplied by foreigners could be furnished by our own agriculturists, who would thereby, to that amount,

become better customers than they are at present. The quantity of custom, or sale of manufactures, would be the same, with the advantage of being derived from a certain home market, instead of a precarious foreign market.

It is sometimes said, there would be no danger in opening our ports to foreign Corn; I am far from thinking a flood would come in that would overwhelm us at once; but it can hardly be doubted that foreigners can undersell our farmers, and would gradually gain upon them the possession of the markets to a dangerous extent. The superiority of their soil and climate, with taxes and burthens of all kinds so much lighter, must give them a most preponderating advantage, so that the idea of leaving the British and foreign grower to find their own level, appears to me like throwing two persons into the water, the one in the full possession of all his natural powers, the other with a mill-stone round his neck. This does not militate against the argument before urged, that when the foreign supply has run to its limit, the price would again rise to such a degree as would give a profit to capital and industry, devoted to agriculture, equal to that applied to other manufactures\*.

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\* If the visionary project of a perfect free trade could be realized, it is undoubtedly true that Corn might be had so



There is one other point of view in which I wish to represent the possible, if not probable, consequences of a reliance upon foreign countries. I will take it for granted, that we should receive five millions of quarters of grain from them, and grow only thirty of our own: let us suppose, under such circumstances, what is not at all unlikely, a bad season throughout Europe, and the general crop defective one fourth\*. Those countries, from whence we have been accustomed to draw these five millions will, of course, want it, and, without being at war with us, will keep it for their own necessities†. In addition to this loss, there will be the difference between a reduction of one fourth of thirty and of thirty-

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much the cheaper, in proportion as the aggregate supply might be drawn from the most productive lands: but then, as population increased, recourse must again be had to those of inferior quality.

\* As far as our supplies may be drawn from America, the danger of a season applying generally to all the countries from whence our supplies came, is certainly less.

† Upon an average of some years prior to 1765, we annually exported about 600,000 quarters of grain; in 1764 the price of Wheat was 30s. 7d.; in the five years, ending 1769, it was 43s. 2d.; and this was considered such an advance of price, that in each of these years the export was prohibited, and of course foreign countries deprived of the whole of the supply they had usually received.

five; leaving us only 22,500,000 quarters, instead of 25,350,000. Then comes the further injury to our manufacturers in another way, in as much as they will lose the foreign demand for their goods; and I should think the home demand would be diminished nearly in the proportion of 22,500,000 to 25,350,000, being the difference of quantity of Corn our agricultural population would have for market. And here it may not be amiss to consider the two-fold power foreign countries would have over us, in the case of an extensive exchange of Corn for manufactures, the one being of so much more importance than the other. The suspension of intercourse would not only be much less injurious to them, but the immediate consequence would be to give additional food to their people, and encouragement to their manufactures—to us universal distress, and absolute ruin to thousands of manufacturers. Let them recollect the injury they have suffered by the interruption of the foreign market for their goods, and compare it with a small difference in the value of Corn. It is infinitely desirable they should be induced to see that their prosperity is deeply involved in, and indeed dependent upon, the prosperity of our agriculture; and that it is as much their interest to admit, as it is that of the agriculturalists to require such a difference of

price, as would for a time result from an effectual check (I do not mean absolute prohibition) to the further introduction of foreign grain; they would in consequence have it cheaper upon an average of years. It is indeed their especial interest to cast their views forward; for it is to be presumed they are more able now, from their superior capital and machinery, to undersell foreign manufacturers, than they may be some time hence. They must expect that the struggle of rival nations, possessing great industry, taste, and ingenuity, will become more powerful after a short period of tranquillity; and then, when they would most stand in need of a cheap supply of food, they would find how much they had sacrificed to a temporary delusive advantage, and what an increase of price as well as other evils would eventually result from the depression of our agriculture at this time.

APPENDIX.

A TABLE, shewing the average Prices of Middling Wheat per Statute Quarter; the average Excess of the Exports of every sort of Corn, Flour, and Meal; the average Imports of the same, from 1697 to 1764, both inclusive.

PERIODS.	The Price of Wheat per Statute Quarter.	The Excess of Exports.	The Excess of Imports.
	<i>s. d.</i>	Qrs.	
5 years ending 1701	42 8	139,866	
6 ditto..... 1707	25 11	289,304	
4 ditto..... 1711	49 9	299,367	
4 ditto..... 1715	37 8	453,986	
4 ditto..... 1719	33 1	485,852	
5 ditto..... 1724	28 10	532,732	
5 ditto..... 1729	37 7	216,643	
5 ditto..... 1734	25 9	468,844	
5 ditto..... 1739	30 10	597,462	
5 ditto..... 1744	28 7	446,378	
5 ditto..... 1749	27 9	932,593	
5 ditto..... 1754	30 5	1,080,077	
5 ditto..... 1759	36 2	273,805	
5 ditto..... 1764	30 7	696,117	
	465 7		
Average.....	33 3		

Continuation of the Table in the foregoing page, from the year 1765 to the year 1795. The Acts of Charles the 2d and William were suspended annually from 1765 to 1773, when the new system was permanently adopted by the Act of that year.

PERIODS.	Price of Wheat per Statute Quarter.	Excess of Exports.	Excess of Imports.
	s. d.	Qrs.	Qrs.
5 years ending 1769	43 2	.....	223,184
ditto..... 1774	47 9½	.. ..	276,206
ditto..... 1779	40 9	.....	290,595
ditto..... 1784	45 9½	.....	185,906
ditto..... 1789	43 3	.....	198,716
ditto..... 1794	47 2	.....	1,145,584
	267 11		
Average Price } per Quarter }	44 7		

The Table in the following page, is copied from the publication of the Right Honourable George Rose, on the Corn Laws. The prices are taken from the Register of Eton College, being those according to which the rents were collected. The Windsor measure was nine gallons to the bushel, in this Table one-ninth is deducted. Some authors have quoted this Register without making that deduction, others have deducted two-ninths; one for the quantity, and another on the supposition, which is probably correct, that the Wheat sold in Windsor market, upon which those prices were taken, was above an average quality; but in either case the proportion in each successive year is precisely the same.

Prices of Wheat per Quarter at Windsor Market\*.

YEARS.	Prices of Wheat at Windsor, 9 Gallons to the Bushel.	Prices reduced to the Bushel of 8 Gallons.	Average of 10 Years according to the Winchester Bushel of 8 Galls.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£. s. d.
1646.....	2 8 0	2 2 8	
1647.....	3 13 8	3 5 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1648.....	4 5 0	3 15 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1649.....	4 0 0	3 11 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1650.....	3 16 8	3 8 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1651.....	3 13 4	3 5 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1652.....	2 9 6	2 4 0	
1653.....	1 15 6	1 11 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1654.....	1 6 0	1 3 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1655.....	1 13 4	1 9 7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 11 7 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1656.....	2 3 0	1 18 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1657.....	2 6 8	2 1 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1658.....	3 5 0	2 17 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1659.....	3 6 0	2 18 8	
1660.....	2 16 6	2 10 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1661.....	3 10 0	3 2 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1662.....	3 14 0	3 5 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1663.....	2 17 0	2 10 8	
1664.....	2 0 6	1 16 0	
1665.....	2 9 4	2 3 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 10 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1666.....	1 16 0	1 12 0	
1667.....	1 16 0	1 12 0	
1668.....	2 0 0	1 15 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1669.....	2 4 4	1 19 5	
1670.....	2 1 8	1 17 0 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	
1671.....	2 2 0	1 17 4	
1672.....	2 1 0	1 16 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1673.....	2 6 8	2 1 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1674.....	3 8 8	3 1 0 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	
1675.....	3 4 8	2 17 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 0 11 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1676.....	1 18 0	1 13 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1677.....	2 2 0	1 17 4	

\* These are the Prices of Mealing Wheat; which is understood, at Eton College, to be of a middling Quality.

YEARS.	Prices of Wheat at Windsor, 9 Gallons to the Bushel.	Prices of Wheat reduced to the Winchester Bushel of 8 Gallons.	Average of 10 Years by the Winchester Bushel.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1678.....	2 19 0	2 12 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1679.....	3 0 0	2 13 4	
1680.....	2 5 0	2 0 0	
1681.....	2 6 8	2 1 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1682.....	2 4 0	1 19 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1683.....	2 0 0	1 15 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1684.....	2 4 0	1 19 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1685.....	2 6 8	2 1 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 1 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1686.....	1 14 0	1 10 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1687.....	1 5 2	1 2 4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1688.....	2 6 0	2 0 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1689.....	1 10 0	1 6 8	
1690.....	1 14 8	1 10 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1691.....	1 14 0	1 10 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1692.....	2 6 8	2 1 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1693.....	3 7 8	3 0 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1694.....	3 4 0	2 16 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1695.....	2 13 0	2 7 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1 19 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1696.....	3 11 0	3 3 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1697.....	3 0 0	2 13 4	
1698.....	3 8 4	3 0 9	
1699.....	3 4 0	2 16 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1700.....	2 0 0	1 15 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1701.....	1 17 8	1 13 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1702.....	1 9 6	1 6 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1703.....	1 16 0	1 12 0	
1704.....	2 6 6	2 1 4	
1705.....	1 10 0	1 6 8	2 2 11
1706.....	1 6 0	1 3 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1707.....	1 8 6	1 5 4	
1708.....	2 1 6	1 16 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1709.....	3 18 6	3 9 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1710.....	3 18 0	3 9 4	
1711.....	2 14 0	2 8 0	
1712.....	2 6 4	2 1 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1713.....	2 11 0	2 5 4	
1714.....	2 10 4	2 4 9	
1715.....	2 3 0	1 18 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 4 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1716.....	2 8 0	2 2 8	
1717.....	2 5 8	2 0 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	

YEARS.	Prices of Wheat at Windsor, 9 Gallons to the Bushel.	Prices of Wheat reduced to the Winchester Bushel of 8 Gallons.	Average of 10 Years by the Winchester Bushel.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£. s. d.
1718.....	1 18 10	1 14 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1719.....	1 15 0	1 11 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1720.....	1 17 0	1 12 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1721.....	1 17 6	1 13 4	
1722.....	1 16 0	1 12 0	
1723.....	1 14 8	1 10 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1724.....	1 17 0	1 12 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1725.....	2 8 6	2 3 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1 15 4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1726.....	2 6 0	2 0 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1727.....	2 2 0	1 17 4	
1728.....	2 14 6	2 8 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1729.....	2 6 10	2 1 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	
1730.....	1 16 6	1 12 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1731.....	1 12 10	1 9 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1732.....	1 6 8	1 3 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1733.....	1 8 4	1 5 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1734.....	1 18 10	1 14 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1735.....	2 3 0	1 18 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1 15 2
1736.....	2 0 4	1 15 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1737.....	1 18 0	1 13 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1738.....	1 15 6	1 11 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1739.....	1 18 6	1 14 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1740.....	2 10 8	2 5 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	
1741.....	2 6 8	2 1 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1742.....	1 14 0	1 10 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1743.....	1 4 10	1 2 1	
1744.....	1 4 10	1 2 1	
1745.....	1 7 6	1 4 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	1 12 1
1746.....	1 19 0	1 14 8	
1747.....	1 14 10	1 10 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	
1748.....	1 17 0	1 12 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1749.....	1 17 0	1 12 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1750.....	1 12 6	1 8 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1751.....	1 18 6	1 14 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1752.....	2 1 10	1 17 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1753.....	2 4 8	1 19 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	
1754.....	1 14 8	1 10 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1755.....	1 13 10	1 10 1	1 13 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1756.....	2 5 2	2 0 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1757.....	3 0 0	2 13 4	

YEARS.	Prices of Wheat at Windsor, 9 Gallons to the Bushel.	Prices of Wheat reduced to the Winchester Bushel of 8 Gallons.	Average of 10 Years by the Winchester Bushel.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£. s. d.
1758.....	2 10 0	2 4 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1759.....	1 19 8	1 15 3	
1760.....	1 16 6	1 12 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1761.....	1 10 2	1 6 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1762.....	1 19 0	1 14 8	
1763.....	2 0 8	1 16 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1764.....	2 6 8	2 1 5 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1765.....	2 14 0	2 8 0	1 19 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1766.....	2 8 6	2 3 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1767.....	3 4 6	2 17 4	
1768.....	3 0 6	2 13 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1769.....	2 5 8	2 0 7	
1770.....	2 9 0	2 3 6 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1771.....	2 17 0	2 10 8	
1772.....	3 6 0	2 18 8	
1773.....	3 6 6	2 19 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1774.....	3 2 0	2 15 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1775.....	2 17 8	2 11 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	2 11 3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>
1776.....	2 8 0	2 2 8	
1777.....	2 15 0	2 8 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1778.....	2 9 6	2 4 0	
1779.....	2 0 8	1 16 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1780.....	2 8 6	2 3 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1781.....	2 19 0	2 12 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1782.....	3 0 6	2 13 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	
1783.....	3 1 0	2 14 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1784.....	3 0 6	2 13 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1785.....	2 14 0	2 8 0	2 7 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1786.....	2 7 6	2 2 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1787.....	2 11 6	2 5 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1788.....	2 15 6	2 9 4	
1789.....	3 3 2	2 16 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1790.....	3 3 2	2 16 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	
1791.....	2 15 6	2 9 4	
1792*.....	.....	2 13 0	

\* From this year, inclusive, the Account at Eton College has been kept according to the Bushel of Eight Gallons, under the Provision of the Act of 31 G. 3. c. 30. sect. 82.

YEARS.	Prices of Wheat at Windsor, 9 Gallons to the Bushel.	Prices of Wheat reduced to the Winchester Bushel of 8 Gallons.	Average of 10 Years by the Winchester Bushel.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1793.....	.....	2 15 8	
1794.....	.....	2 14 0	
1795.....	.....	4 1 6	2 14 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
1796.....	.....	4 0 2	
1797.....	.....	3 2 0	
1798.....	.....	2 14 0	
1799.....	.....	3 15 8	
1800.....	.....	6 7 0	
1801.....	.....	6 8 6	
1802.....	.....	3 7 2	
1803.....	.....	3 0 0	
1804.....	.....	3 9 6	
1805.....	.....	4 8 0	4 1 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
1806.....	.....	4 3 0	
1807.....	.....	3 18 0	
1808.....	.....	3 19 2	
1809.....	.....	5 6 0	
1810.....	.....	5 12 0	
1811.....	.....	5 8 0	Average of eight Years.
1812.....	.....	6 8 0	
1813.....	.....	6 0 0	5 1 9 $\frac{1}{4}$

An Account of the Average Prices of British Corn per Quarter, from 1792 to 1812, inclusive.

YEARS.	Wheat.	Rye.	Barley.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1792.....	42 11	30 8	26 9
1793.....	48 11	35 11	31 9
1794.....	51 8	37 9	32 10
1795.....	74 2	48 5	37 8
1796.....	77 1	47 0	35 7
1797.....	53 1	31 11	27 9
1798.....	50 3	30 11	29 1
1799.....	67 6	43 9	36 0
1800.....	113 7	76 11	60 0
1801.....	118 3	79 9	67 9
1802.....	67 5	43 3	33 1
1803.....	56 6	36 11	24 10
1804.....	60 1	37 1	30 4
1805.....	87 10	54 4	44 8
1806.....	79 0	47 4	38 6
1807.....	73 3	47 6	38 4
1808.....	79 0	52 4	42 1
1809.....	95 7	60 9	47 3
1810.....	106 2	59 0	47 11
1811.....	94 6	49 11	41 10
1812.....	125 5	75 11	66 6

The following estimate of the growth of Wheat, Barley, and Oats, in the United Empire, is drawn out by Arthur Young, Esq. I have formed mine on the same principles; but estimating the produce of Wheat at only twenty bushels per acre, and considering the growth of the other grains not to come so often in the general course of husbandry, I find a lower result, but am far from positive that mine is the most accurate. It will be obvious, the larger proportion of our consumption drawn from our own agriculture, the greater the evils resulting from its depression.

Population of Great Britain ..... 12,596,803

Population of England and Wales 10,791,115, whose consumption may thus be calculated :

	Qrs.
Wheat, with some Rye.....	8,500,000
Barley .....	831,666
Oats.....	668,333
	<u>9,999,999</u>
Wheat as above.....	8,500,000
Consumed, not in bread .....	100,000
	<u>8,600,000</u>
Deduct balance of export and import on the average of 1811 and 1812 .....	} 187,162
	<u>8,412,838</u>
Add for seed one-ninth.....	934,759
Annual growth .....	<u><u>9,347,597</u></u>

If the produce be 22 bushels per acre, the acres employed will be 3,399,126; and taking Wheat at one-fifth of the arable, and Barley and Oats as occupying half as much land again as Wheat, the acres of those grains will be 5,098,686 acres; and the produce at 4½ quarters per acre will be 22,944,100; and the total of White Corn will be 32,291,697 quarters: if we allow proportionably for the population of Scotland, it will add 5,401,283.

As Oats are much consumed in Scotland, and the amount in quarters much exceeding the consumption in Wheat per head, this seems to be a moderate allowance.

Total consumption of Great Britain, 37,692,980 quarters.

In regard to Ireland, the authorities referred to by Mr. Wakefield will not allow us to suppose a greater population than that of five millions; and it is well known that the great basis of their support is the potato: we must however remember, that all the higher classes, with a large proportion of the inhabitants of towns, as well as counties in the north of that kingdom, are supported on Corn. If all these circumstances permit us to estimate them as equal to the entire nourishment of 1 millions of persons, and allow to each (as their consumption is both of Wheat and Oats, but the latter in the far greatest propor-

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tion) 18 bushels,\* the total will be 3,375,000 quarters; and the grand total for the United Kingdom will be 41,067,980 quarters.

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\* Smith calculates the consumption of Oats at 23 bushels per head per annum—*Tracts on the Corn Trade*, p. 161.

F I N I S

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*Reynell, Printer, 21, Piccadilly.*