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DISTRESS OF THE COUNTRY.

DISTRESSED STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

THE
SPEECH

OF
THOMAS ATTWOOD, ESQ.

ON THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT,

AT THE
TOWN'S MEETING IN BIRMINGHAM,

HELD ON THE 8TH OF MAY, 1829.

N. B. Very incorrect Reports of this Speech having been published as revised and corrected by Mr. Attwood, it is proper to state, that he only acknowledges this Edition.

BIRMINGHAM,
BEILBY, KNOTT, AND BEILBY;
LONDON,
SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL; AND RIDGWAYS.

MDCCCXXIX.

BIRMINGHAM TOWN'S MEETING,
MAY 8, 1829.

SPEECH
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ON THE
DISTRESSED STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

MR. HIGH BAILIFF, AND GENTLEMEN
MY GOOD FRIENDS AND FELLOW TOWNSMEN,

It is not often that I have obtruded myself upon your attention at public meetings, and I do assure you that I should not now have done so if an overwhelming sense of duty did not compel me to use every humble effort in my power to relieve the distress which afflicts the country, and that far greater distress which I fear is approaching. It is well known that I have paid much attention to the subject of the National Distress; for more than twenty years, indeed, my mind has been almost constantly occupied with the investigation of this great subject; and if I do not understand it I can only refer my ignorance to some natural obtuseness in my own mind, or to some unconquerable difficulties in the subject itself, which no mind can grapple with, for it is certain that I have had every opportunity of investigation, and no possible labour has been spared on my part—all other subjects have appeared to me as objects of minor importance. Even the great cause of Par-

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liamentary Reform has sunk into insignificance in my mind, when compared with the investigation of the *cause* and *remedy* of the national distress.

This, Gentlemen, is the subject on which we are met here to deliberate. We meet to "consider the distressed state of the country, and the propriety of petitioning Parliament for its relief." In investigating this great subject, I flatter myself that I have been able to crush to atoms all the presumed causes of distress which the Ministers have alleged. But there is one *cause* assigned which I cannot overget; *that cause is the attempt of the Government to convert the paper taxation and the paper obligations of this overburthened country into solid gold!!* But before I proceed in this important discussion, it is proper that I should brush away some difficulties which present themselves, and which, if unremoved, may tend to injure the effect of my arguments upon your minds. It is proper that I should stand before you uncontaminated with selfish interests; and that I should also give you proof that I have a reasonable knowledge of the subject upon which I am about to address you.

It is true I am a Banker, and a manufacturer of "*worthless rags*," as Lord Goderich and Mr. Cobbett have called me, and upon this very subject I am about to address you. I am about to discuss the *Paper System*, and the effect which its destruction has had in occasioning the national distress. And

here I must beg that you will excuse me for speaking so much of myself; for in the situation in which I stand, it is necessary that I should do so, in order properly to elucidate the subject. In the year 1817 I published a pamphlet, in which I recommended the taking away from bankers, and from all other persons, the power of issuing cash notes; and I shewed, that by confining this power to the Government only, the *mere interest* of the money thus raised would of itself enable the Government to pay off the whole National Debt in about seventy years. I could not, therefore, have been very anxious to preserve to myself the privilege of issuing cash notes. I was, in fact, more anxious to see the country brought through her difficulties, and to see the national debt placed in a train of liquidation, than I was to gratify any narrow interests of my own. So also in the year 1819, when the Act of Parliament was passed which prohibited the issue of small notes after the month of May, 1823; when this act was passed I immediately followed the example of the Bank of England; and when that great establishment abandoned the issue of small notes, the house in which I am concerned immediately did the same. Our conduct in this respect was the subject of some unpleasantness. But when remarks were made to me, I answered, that in issuing instruments of this kind I thought we had been conferring a *benefit* upon the public; but as I found that this

benefit was not acknowledged by the Government, I was certainly not disposed to persevere in their issue. I answered also, that I was sure that a time was coming when the *sovereigns* would *fly abroad*, and that when the Bank of England abandoned the issue of small notes, I could not see the prudence of persevering to the very last in the issue of instruments denounced by the Government and abandoned by the Bank of England, and thus left without the means of payment whenever the day of trial should come. For these reasons I abandoned the issue of small notes near ten years ago. I did not therefore exhibit any low attachment to selfish interests, when the great interests of the nation were deemed to require their abolition. Nor is it right now for you to think that any low motives of this kind animate my conduct when I am about to lay bare to you the mortal mischief which has been done.

To confirm this view of the subject, I will beg leave to mention, that when Lord Castlereagh brought forward his *monetary* measures for the relief of agriculture in the year 1822; one of which measures was the legalising of the issue of small notes for eleven years more, which of course, if it meant any thing, meant *for ever*; at that period a friend of mine, now present, came to me, and urged me to issue small notes again, for several reasons. I answered, "*Let me see what the Bank of England does first.*" The Bank and the Govern-

ment you know, Gentlemen, are essentially bound up together. The one cannot possibly *exist* without the other. Well; the Bank did not avail itself of the permission to issue small notes. But in three years the *late panic* came, and then the Bank *did* issue small notes again. My friend then came to me again, saying, "Thou hast no excuse now: the Bank are issuing the small notes, and therefore thou must do the same." To this I answered, in the same spirit, "*Let me see what the Government will do first.*" Within a month, it is hardly credible, Gentlemen, but within a month this very Government, which upon its own confession, had just been saved from "*a state of barter*" by the issue of small notes, came forward in Parliament with a law abolishing them for ever!!

Mark, Gentlemen, the *public faith* had just been pledged to the bankers and to the public, that the small notes should be continued for eleven years!! But the ministers can blow *hot and cold* just as they please, or as their own views and interests may dictate. Their PUBLIC FAITH is a very *dragon of virtue* upon some occasions, and a very prostitute in the streets upon others.

I think that I must now have sufficiently shewn that although I am a manufacturer of "worthless rags," no unworthy motives of private interest have induced me to come forward in their defence. The same cause has indeed been advocated by many other persons who are not exposed

to the same suspicions as myself. Sir Robert Peel, the venerable father of the king's minister; Sir John Sinclair, Sir James Graham, Mr. Western, the member for Essex; Mr. Rooke; my estimable friend, the Rev. Mr. Cruttwell; and in our own town, Mr. Henry James, Mr. Jones, and many others, have for fifteen years together advocated the very same opinions as my own; and yet the whole of these gentlemen are utterly unconnected with banking and with paper money in any shape or way. I trust, therefore, that you will allow to *me* the same credit for disinterested motives as that which you cannot avoid granting to *them*.

But it is not enough that I should claim from you the credit of disinterested motives, it is proper that I should also give you reason to think that I understand the subject upon which I address you. Certainly I do profess to understand it. And you must not call this *vanity* in me. I conscientiously believe that the whole of the national distress is *monetary*; and it is *my trade* to understand the nature and operation of *money*. *Money*, it is said, "*is the root of all evil.*" I will not pretend to contradict this, but I will venture to assert, that it is equally *the root of all good*, for there is nothing *good* that you can get without it. You cannot pay taxes or debts, or get bread and cheese, or beef or beer, or even common respect, the cheapest of all things, unless your pockets are full of *money*. Without *money* you can scarcely exist,

and the only *liberty* you can have, is the *liberty of walking into the workhouse or the gaol!!* *Money* is therefore sufficiently important to account for many things, which might otherwise puzzle us. But important as *money* is made by nature, the Government under which we live has done every thing in it's power to make it ten times more important still. The Roman satirist advises us, to "*get money first; honesty after money.*" And most surely, the Government under which we live, for fifteen years together, has used every possible exertion, doubtless without the object, but certainly with the effect, of making this infernal maxim the law of the land. They have made *money every thing*, and *property and labour nothing*. And now, after fifteen years perseverance in this murderous and disastrous policy, *they are gravely enquiring into the cause of the encrease of crime!!!* I told Lord Liverpool in print, in May, 1819, "that the infatuation of his conduct admitted of no excuse, and that I could only explain it by calling to mind the impressive passage of Holy Writ, 'When God willet a nation to perish, he blindeth the rulers thereof.'"

But to come to the proof that I understand this subject, you will allow me to mention that in the month of May, 1819, just ten years ago, I brought forward before our Chamber of Commerce in this town a series of Resolutions exactly portraying

every thing that has since occurred. I was not fortunate enough to carry those Resolutions, but I will venture to assert, that of the individuals who then opposed me there is not one alive who would oppose me in similar resolutions now. I will also beg leave to mention some facts which occurred between me and many gentlemen interested in the Staffordshire Iron trade. In the year 1815, many of those gentlemen, with whom I happened to have connexion, made frequent complaints to me of the "*overproduction*" existing in the iron trade. They told me upon a hundred occasions, that "either Staffordshire or "Wales ought to be sunk into the sea," for it was not possible that both could exist together. I represented to them again and again, that it was a question of *underproduction of money*, and not of *overproduction of iron*. I shewed them that it was thus, that a *child in a carriage* sees the trees and the hedges *fly behind him*, that it was thus that in the ploughboy's eye the blessed sun appeared to move round the earth on which we live, and that it was for science to discover that it is the earth which moves, and not the glorious sun. In 1816 the Government retraced their steps, they abandoned for a time their object of restoring the ancient money, and the distress of the iron trade altogether disappeared. I could name to you works in the iron trade which literally *lost fortunes* to their old proprietors in the years 1815 and

1816; and which literally *gained fortunes* to new proprietors in the years 1817 and 1818.

But in the year 1819, when Mr. Peel brought forward his precious bill, which richly merits the eternal curses of his country; in that disastrous year adversity came again upon the iron trade, as you may well recollect, that it did equally upon all other trades. Several iron-masters came to me again with the very same story respecting Staffordshire and Wales, and again I answered them in the same way, and again my answer was confirmed by the future experience. In 1822 bales of paper money were again brought out by the Government, and again the distress of the iron trade and all other distress disappeared! In the years 1823, 1824, and 1825, the iron trade again became prosperous, even more prosperous than ever; and there are gentlemen here present who could give evidence to you that at that very moment I *proved to them* that the *very earth was sliding from under their feet*.

What now is the situation of the iron trade? Like that of all other trades which exist in England, it is carried on with a positive *loss* instead of a *profit*, and the workmen are being mainly maintained out of the *capital* of their employers, and not out of their just and wholesome profits.

I have said enough I think to convince you that I *must* understand the question upon which I now address you. I will therefore proceed at once to

the painful subject on which we are met here to deliberate. Look round then, Gentlemen, upon this unhappy country, and inform me if you can discover one single branch of industry that is prosperous. I do not believe that such branch of industry exists in England. On whatsoever side we look, to the north, the south, the east, or the west, to the cottons and muslins of Manchester and Glasgow, to the woollens of Leeds and of Gloucestershire, to the silks of Coventry and Spitalfields, to the iron works of Wales and Staffordshire, to the hardwares of Sheffield and Birmingham, to the collieries of the North and of the Midland Districts, to the Foreign Trade, to the Home Trade, to the Shipping Interest, or the Colonial Interest, to whatever part or interest of the country we turn our eyes, the same wretched and dismal scene presents itself. Profit annihilated, the reward of industry destroyed, and a distressed and discontented population are every where before our eyes. It is not too much to say, to use the words of an eloquent friend of mine, "we hear, as it were, from every part of England one loud general dreadful groan, like that which followed the last and bitterest of the ten plagues of Egypt." In some parts of the country the distress is indeed dreadful. I have here a Manchester paper, which represents the wages of labour, *including parish relief*, as amounting in some parts of Lancashire to only

two pence per day. I declare to you that when I first read this account my blood thrilled with horror. Why this is not enough to maintain a dog!! and yet Government seem disposed to suffer this state of things to go on, until hunger, and misery, and despair, shall have destroyed, what is blasphemously called, the "*surplus population!!*"

Now what is the *cause* of this general and overwhelming distress? There is no murrain among the cattle; there is no destruction of the first-born gone forth throughout the land; there is no plague which has carried mourning into every house. What then is the distress? Why, gentlemen, as I said before, the distress is *monetary*; it is a *plague of the pocket!!* You have each of you one pound in your pockets instead of two pounds; and out of this one pound you have just the same taxes and obligations to pay as you had formerly out of the two pounds. Is not this cause enough to account for the distress? The tax gatherer formerly took *half*. He now takes the *whole of your profits and income!!* The tax receiver therefore flourishes, for you will observe, gentlemen, that the distress is not literally *universal*. It is the *bees*, the industrious classes of the community, who suffer, whilst the *drones* have prosperity enough. They are in the pleasant operation of quietly abstracting from you just double the real value that they have any right to; and therefore there is no distress among *them*. It is *you*, my

friends, *you*, the unhappy *tax payers* of this deluded nation, and not the *tax receivers* who suffer distress. *If these latter could grind out of your industry large diamonds, or even tons of gold, instead of "worthless rags," for every pound sterling which they receive, it would be so much the better for THEM!!!*

I will beg leave to give you one proof that there is as yet prosperity enough among the tax receivers. In the year 1791, the National Debt amounted to 238 millions sterling. Since then the Government has borrowed 1047 millions more. If you add these two sums together, it will shew our present National Debt to amount to 1285 millions sterling. But observe, Gentlemen, 480 millions of this has since been redeemed by the *Sinking Fund*. The net government debt now therefore is about 800 millions sterling. Now, Gentlemen, mind the calculation which I am going to give you. This 800 millions was borrowed at the average rate of £60 to the £100 of consols. The sum of 480 millions therefore is all the money which the Government really received for it. But this 480 millions was advanced to the Government in *paper money*, worth only *one half* of the value of the ancient money of the country, or of that which is now being inflicted upon the country, or rather *ground* out of the bones and vitals of the country. The sum actually advanced to the Government was therefore only 240 millions

of our present money. The selling price of consols is at present 87. The sum which the fundholders are therefore now receiving from the Government is about 696 millions sterling in *solid gold*, instead of the 240 millions which they really advanced! *Here, then, is a net profit of 456 millions sterling literally given to the fund-owners without any equivalent whatever!!!* Is not this *prosperity* enough? Can you wonder that there should be some contented individuals among us, particularly if their heads should happen to be as *dull* as their pockets are *full*.

Now I do beg my friends, that you will not call this transaction by any harsh names. You must not call it *fraud* or *plunder*, or by any other ungentle or uncourteous appellation. The proper term is "*spoiling the Egyptians*," and when we speak of it in Parliament, we sometimes call it a "*transfer of property*." And a pretty sweeping "*transfer*" it is, God knows. As I said in a printed letter to Lord Liverpool in 1819, "It laughs to scorn all the robberies of the French Revolution." If any of you, my friends, should doubt the truth of what I have represented respecting the depreciation of the currency, and even of *gold itself* being literally 50 per cent. during the war, I have here the *Quarterly Review*, the *demi-official* organ of the Government, published only a fortnight ago, *which acknowledges the whole in the fullest degree*. It acknowledges in fact that

every tax and debt existing in the country, has literally been *doubled* by the bill of 1819, *which was passed into a law under the assurance that it would only increase them 4 per cent. !!!*

But, my friends, the *prosperity* thus occasioned has had some good effects. It has occasioned a great expenditure throughout the country in the building of houses, and it has contributed in some degree to bolster up the trade and the revenue of the country. It has exhibited other spectacles too which are not unworthy of notice. The fund-owners finding a few years ago, that their £60 of *paper money consols* were thus luckily converted into £97 of *heavy gold money*, felt literally overburthened with the excess of their wealth. It was *then* that we saw them wandering forth throughout the wide earth, soliciting *all nations and all languages to relieve them by way of loan!!* When they had exhausted the *borrowing powers* of all nations and of all languages, we saw them still overwhelmed with their "*prosperity*," and embarking in hundreds of public companies and enterprises, which held out to them the slightest chance of enabling them to *realize* or *pocket* their £97 of *solid gold consols*, in the place of the £60 of *paper money consols*. Hence all the *bubbles* as they are called, the joint stock mining companies and trading companies, and banking companies, and companies of a hundred kinds which we have latterly witnessed. I am sorry, my friends,

to trouble you so much at length, but I perceive by the kind attentions which you are pleased to pay me, that I have not yet fatigued you.

Now one would think that this state of things is very clear. It requires no great wisdom to discover, that the *doubling* of the taxes and obligations of the country, by a surreptitious increase in the value of the money in which they are collected, surely it requires no great wisdom to discover, that a tremendous operation of this kind must necessarily produce distress, without our having recourse to "*over-trading*" and *over-population*," and "*over-production*," or to "*speculation*," or to "*fictitious credit*," or to any other of the hundred *chimeras* with which the Ministers and the public press have *dinned* this deluded nation for fifteen years together. The *public press* has, in my humble judgment, been a *public curse*. Its proprietors are often *stock-jobbers*, interested in the national plunder, and its conductors are generally literary men, or what the French term *Savans*, men admirably acquainted with literature, with science, with law and theology, and many fine things. But they know nothing of *business*. They are skilled in all the lore of the ancients, but they know nothing of the wants, and modes, and means of living men.

The distress then, Gentlemen, is *monetary*. And, as I told the Agricultural Committee in April, 1821, the monetary distress is a question

of *price*; for if each of you could get an abundant *price* for your labour, and for the products of your industry, you would not complain of distress. You would be in the same situation as you were in the years 1824 and 1825, when I did most sincerely rejoice to perceive, that the general profit which existed in the employment of industry in every trade, had occasioned such a general demand for labour as was gradually lifting up the working classes of the community into some degree of just and reasonable equality with their employers. The working classes were not *then* obliged to wander from door to door, soliciting for "*leave to toil*." Their labour was in request, because their employers could make a profit in using it. It is now thrown out of *demand*, because their employers can make no profit in using it. The true interests therefore of the *employer* and of the *employed* are both one. They are embarked in the same boat together, and together they must sink or swim. If the masters prosper, the men are sure to prosper equally; and if the masters suffer, there is no power upon earth which can prevent that suffering from being largely communicated to the men. I do hope, therefore, my friends, that harmony and union, and mutual co-operation will prevail in this town among these two important classes of its inhabitants; and I trust that no unworthy or invidious feelings towards each other, will prevent our mutually unit-

ing together, in a cause in which we are all mutually interested. Things of this kind sometimes act upon men's minds, if we are to believe the ancient fable, which represents the *avaricious* man and the *envious* man, as praying to Jupiter, and Jupiter granting their requests with this condition, that the man who named the object of his petition *last* should receive just *double* of what the other received. No doubt this was a puzzling condition, which might well have perplexed better men than the two petitioners. It seems, however, that the *envious* man cut short the difficulty at once, by praying that he *might lose one of his own eyes, in order that his neighbour might lose both!!* I do trust that no feelings of this kind will prevail among *us*, and that the richer manufacturers will not look with a degree of morbid satisfaction at the severer sufferings of their less affluent neighbours. The distress which we all now suffer is great, but I know as well as I know that I exist, that the distress which is now approaching will be far greater than any which we have yet seen, unless Government indeed should abandon their measures. I do hope, therefore, that we shall not criminate and injure each other, but that we shall unite together in investigating the national sufferings, and in demanding from the Government redress for the national wrongs. There can be no doubt but blame attaches somewhere. *I charge the whole upon the*

measures of the Government. It will not do to plead ignorance in their defence. In such a case, ignorance is *guilt*. If the ministers cannot feed the hungry and clothe the naked, they have no right to stand where they do; they are not competent to govern this country.

But how can the Government plead ignorance in their defence? The thing has been explained to them over and over again by many individuals of a more important station than I occupy. In my evidence before the Agricultural Committee in April, 1821, I placed the whole question in a light which defied the possibility of doubt or error. I showed that the distress was *universal*, and that it must have an *universal cause*. I proved that this *universal cause* was *monetary*, and that it could not be removed permanently without permanently abandoning their *monetary* measures. And how do you think they treated me? They refused to insert the main part of my evidence in their minutes of evidence, and they did every thing possible to neutralize it altogether!! In a few days afterwards they brought forward a gentleman for the purpose of contradicting my evidence, such as it was. This gentleman produced a list of about thirty articles which had fallen in price, and instead of accounting, as I had done, for this general effect by some *general cause*, he produced, to the best of my recollection, about twenty-nine *causes* as having conduced to one common effect!!

But the distress being *general*, and having a *general cause*, as I have said, and that *general cause* being a contraction of the circulating system which measures *prices* and determines the exact quantity of *money* which each individual can obtain in exchange for his property and labour, to what then is this contraction of the circulating system owing? If less money exists in the country, and if one half of the existing money stagnates in the hands of persons who are afraid to use it in effecting the purposes of production and consumption, it is evident that in this case each individual must receive a less sum in exchange for his property or labour. Now this is just the state of things which exists at present, there is plenty of *property and labour* in the market, but there is not enough *money*. As my friend Mr. Salt says, "there is plenty of competition among the *sellers* of property and labour, but there is no competition among the *buyers*." Now, gentlemen, you must not think that because this deficiency of competition among the *buyers* of property and labour exists, there is therefore any real deficiency of *demand* among them. The whole, as I have said, is a mere question of *money*. The very *paupers* in our workhouse would *demand* all the goods in all our shops if they had but got the *money* wherewith to buy them. *Human wants* have no limit, but that which is imposed by the *deficiency of means*. Now these *means* are *money*,

and nothing else. Encrease the *means* of the community and you are sure to encrease the *demand* for commodities and labour to any extent that you please. But if you reduce the *means* of the country, if you reduce the quantity or the *activity* of money, you necessarily reduce the prices of property and labour in a corresponding degree.

What then, you will say, are *high prices* necessary? To this I answer *No!* It is plenty of money in every man's pocket which is necessary. *This* is sure to give *fair prices*, by first giving to the people the means of paying them; and *fair prices* are all that is necessary to restore at once the ample and beneficial action of the whole social machinery. Look back for a moment to your situation in 1818, and in 1824 and 1825. *Then* the money was made equal to the *property*, and *fair prices* existed in every branch of industry. Was not the whole country prosperous? Every branch of industry was fully employed, and as fast as each was *producing* its own commodities, each was just equally occupied in equally *consuming* the respective productions of each other.

Lord Liverpool told my friend, Mr. Jones, that this was "*overtrading*." Whenever the country prospered, Lord Liverpool thought there was something wrong in it. Things were never right in *his* eyes, unless the country was at the point of death. But Mr. Jones crushed his argument in an instant. "In 1825," said he, "our popula-

"tion were fully employed, and yet the whole
"of their productions were carried off into absolute consumption quite as fast as they could be
"made: but in 1826, when we have put our
"workmen at only *half-work*, nearly half the
"goods which they make are manufactured for
"stock. If therefore overtrading exists at all, it
"is when people are at *half-work*, and not when
"they are fully employed!"

But in truth, my friends, all this talk of the Ministers and the public press is perfect nonsense. It is the mere *appearance* or *presentation*, which the contraction of the currency exhibits, when the property is thus made to *overbalance* the money in the markets. Each individual can see the *masses* of property pressing upon the market for sale, but he cannot see the secret *consumption* in the pockets of the population, which renders them unable to *break up those masses* and consume them. The very moment the *consumption of the pocket* is relieved, and the money of the country is rendered equal to its purposes, then "*overtrading*," and "*over-production*," and "*over-population*," instantly disappear. The *masses* of commodities are *broken up* and distributed throughout the country into the uses of the population; the workmen are called into full employment, and if their productive power should be *doubled*, by the blessing of God, it would have no other effect whatever but that of *doubling* the individual distri-

bution of the comforts and necessities of life among the population.

Now there is nothing "*fictitious*" in this state of things. It is the natural and healthy state of a country like ours. It is only when Government reduces the currency that any kind of difficulty is felt in the working of its various and complicated machinery. Suppose our society to be divided into one thousand descriptions of labourers; suppose one thousand masses of different kinds of goods to be the products of their industry. These masses of goods are of no use without the intervention of money. The holder of one of them cannot clothe himself with bars of iron, nor can the holder of another feed himself with pieces of cloth, or with ingots of copper. Money is the *organ* which exchanges them for each other, and breaks them up, and distributes them into the uses of the population. Suppose then that the Government imposes a tax upon each mass of goods, equal in money to *one half* of its selling price; suppose this tax to have existed for thirty years. If then the Government should reduce the circulating money one half, is it not evident that the price of each separate mass must fall within the gripe of the taxation charged upon it? If the taxation thus *takes all*, what motive then can there remain for the employment of industry? Is it not monstrous, in such a state of things as this, that the Government should tell us that our population is

too great? Let them restore the currency to an efficient state, or let them reduce their taxation and obligations in the same degree as they have reduced the currency, and the population will no longer appear too great. A *profit* will again be made by the employment of industry, and industry will again be fully employed.

But, as I have said, *money* is the organ which breaks up the masses of commodities and distributes them into the uses of the population. If this organ is made deficient, all manner of strange *phenomena* present themselves. The population is too great, and the comforts of life are too great at the same time!! The *mouths* are too many for the *loaves*, and the *loaves* are too many for the *mouths* at the same time. The population indeed are left, as it were, like *flies* in a *sugar bottle*, to perish in the superabundance of their own sweets. They want the *organ* which distributes the sweets into their uses, and instead of enjoyment they find their death. *Money* is the *organ* which brings *mouths* and *loaves* into contact with each other. Encrease that *organ*, and there is no superfluity of either. Diminish that organ, and there is instantly a superfluity of both. To diminish the money indeed, without diminishing the taxation and obligation equally at the same time, is like *breaking the right arm* of every labourer in the kingdom. To *break the right arm* is to deprive them of all physical power, and to re-

duce the money, is to deprive them of the *monetary means* necessary to render physical power available for the support of life.

Now *money* is of various kinds. The coin of the realm, the bank note, the country bank note, the bill of exchange, and the promissory note *at a date*, with checks, transfers, and other instruments of many kinds. The bill of exchange, however, and the promissory note *at a date*, are by far the most extensive instruments, and both these instruments are exactly the same in reality, and differing merely in the *form* in which the promise to pay is expressed. In the former instrument the *promise to pay* is expressed in the word "*accepted*," and in the latter it is expressed in the words "*I promise to pay*." But both these instruments of credit are really and essentially the same, and it is probable that at least ninety-nine hundredths in amount of the real transactions of life are effected by them, or at least only assisted by cheques and transfers. You will form some idea of the magnitude of the *bona fide* transactions which are thus annually effected by these instruments of credit from the following fact:—In the Bankers' *Clearing-house* in the City of London, where about fifty of the London Bankers meet daily, for the purpose of *chopping* and *changing* their mutual demands upon each other, it has been proved before the Parliament, that about *twelve hundred* millions sterling

per annum of transactions are annually wound up. You all know that these claims upon each other consist entirely of such instruments of credit, which often circulate through ten, twenty, or thirty hands before they reach the Bankers. I will suppose that they pass through three hands only, on an average, which is certainly a very moderate calculation. Here then are *three thousand six hundred* millions sterling per annum of transactions wound up at the Clearing-house, without the aid of perhaps so much as £100,000 only in bank notes and the current coin of the realm!! Can this mighty system be dispensed with? Undoubtedly it cannot. Mr. Cobbett tells us that he thinks the bill of exchange ought to be abolished. He might just as well abolish the *plough* and the *spade*. The fabric of society cannot be held together without instruments of this kind. Mr. Cobbett is a man of extraordinary powers; he has served his country well in many respects; and I have no desire either to deny his merits or to cloak his faults. But respecting the workings of the *Paper System*, I will assert that he is either *grossly ignorant* or *wilfully wrong*. Upon this most vital subject he has led the ministers astray, and beguiled them to their own and to their country's ruin. He has attributed to the *paper* the miseries which attach solely to the *gold*. He has *dinned* in their ears the most false and delusive calumnies against the *Paper System*. He

has frightened them out of their senses with *bug-bears* about "*prerogative*" and "*blowing-up*," until, like the *Basilisk* in the fable, he has almost fascinated his victims into his power. Mr. Cobbett pretends that the prodigious system which I have just laid bare to you, is fictitious and injurious. Your own common sense will at once tell you, that it is not possible for society to exist without it. He represents also that the whole Paper System generally, and particularly the one pound note circulation, is greatly injurious to the lower classes of the people. Nothing can be more incorrect. Whatever facilitates the production and consumption of commodities is beneficial to *them*. For *their* purposes indeed, *money* ought to *grow up like grass under the cow's mouth*; or in a complicated state of society like our's, I know not how it is otherwise to be surely and sufficiently supplied in the hundreds of thousands of channels through which it's uses are daily and instantly required. I will take the liberty of mentioning an anecdote which came within my knowledge, and which will tend to illustrate the importance of a ready supply of money, in all parts and at all times, in a country where nearly the whole of the transactions of life are effected through the medium of *debt*. The tenant of a nobleman in a midland county owed him £700 for two years' rent. Upon remonstrating with the tenant upon this subject, the tenant answered, that the reason why he

did not pay his rent was, that another tenant of the nobleman, a maltster, owed him £800 for two years' crops of barley. Upon sending for this maltster, and remonstrating with *him*, the maltster stated, that the reason why he could not pay for the barley was, that the nobleman himself owed him (the maltster) £700 for the supply of malt for his family!! Now here, Gentlemen, you perceive three respectable men, all quite safe, and in fact persons of property, and yet all rendered incapable of paying each other, and, in fact, on the very point of tearing each other in pieces by the *fangs of law*, for no earthly cause whatever but the *mere want of the use of the medium of exchange for only half an hour!!* Fortunately for *them*, being thus accidentally brought into contact with each other, their mutual difficulties were quickly relieved. The nobleman drew his *cheque* upon the tenant for £700, and paid it the maltster, who forthwith paid it to the tenant, who immediately *credited the maltster, and debited the nobleman* with it's amount, and thus all was settled. Now, my friends, I must beg leave to remind you that the interests of *little men* are just as important to *them* as those of *great men* are to *them*. I have known cases where individuals have been brought before our Court of Requests in Birmingham, and have even been placed in custody there for small debts of fifteen shillings or twenty shillings only, at the very time when they themselves had similar sums

due to them from other persons who were prevented from paying them, in the very same way as the maltster was prevented from paying the tenant. They have been all inconvenienced in a *circle*. Now if the nobleman in question, or if the poor individuals in question, had been in the habit of drawing their *cheque* or *bill of exchange* upon their debtor as soon as their credits fell due, in the same manner as merchants do, none of the parties concerned could in this case have experienced any difficulty whatever. The bill of exchange for £700 or for 15s. would *of itself have found out its proper channel of circulation*, for you know, that if the nobleman had drawn his bill on the tenant for £350 at the end of the first year, that bill would have been £350 more *of the nobleman's own money* in his pocket, and he would thus have been enabled to pay for the first year's malt to the maltster, who would also have been enabled to pay for the first year's barley to the tenant. The mere *transfer or exchange* of the obligations was all that was necessary, and the creation of the cheque for £700, or for 15s., would have effected this object at once. There are two points here, then, to which I wish to draw your attention:—1st, the absolute necessity of the circulating system existing every where in ample and healthy operation; and 2nd, the importance of small paper money to the little interests of little men. I cannot see what business Government has to interfere in

these matters. I do not believe that they have any just right to prevent the existence of small notes, or of any other kinds of notes or bills which the wants of the people may induce them to make use of. If these humble instruments of credit have the effect of paying debts which otherwise could not be paid; if they have the effect of working the great processes of production and consumption; if they feed the hungry and clothe the naked, what business has Government to interfere? The Government have told us that there were only two millions of one-pound notes in circulation. In my opinion there were ten millions in circulation but a little time before. And observe, these notes were the most active and useful money in the country. They were not the money of the *aristocracy*, but of the *labourers* and *mechanics*. They were, in fact, the *week-day money*, the *bread and cheese money* of the country. Now one would have thought, that when Government proceeded to destroy this vital money, they would have taken some precaution to ensure an equal supply of other money in its place. It was their bounden duty not only to provide and secure this supply of other money, but also to take care that it was *properly distributed into circulation from the same quarters, and through the same hundreds of thousands of channels through which it had been accustomed to act in working the great duties of production and consumption throughout the country*. To

neglect *this* was to neglect every thing. Even if they had provided the ten millions of sovereigns to replace the one-pound notes, without taking *this* precaution, the sovereigns would have stagnated in *inert masses*, whilst the labourers and mechanics were suffering, or perhaps perishing, from the want of them. But Government have attended to nothing. They have neither regarded the *magnitude* of the sum required, nor its healthy *distribution* through practicable and efficient channels. All this they have left to *chance*. Can you wonder then, that mischief and misery should ensue? And can you wonder that the money of the country should now stagnate in inert and unhealthy masses, instead of being scattered throughout the country in millions of vital channels, paying debts which without it cannot be paid, and *purchasing property and labour which without it cannot be purchased*. The American Government never interfere in things of this kind. They know better than to place obstacles between the *mouths* and *loaves* of the population, between the interchange of property with labour, and of capital with money. In *their* country, the freest on the face of the earth, and where the working classes are best provided for, in that fortunate and wisely governed country, every man uses just what kind of money he pleases, with no other restriction upon him than such as the mutual convenience of *buyer* and *seller* may impose. They have therefore not only small notes

but one dollar notes in America, and even half dollar and quarter dollar notes. These are not pleasant instruments, it is true, for lawyers to receive their *fees* in, or for ministers to exact their *doubled salaries* in. But they answer the purposes for which they are intended, they bring the *mouths* and the *loaves* into contact, and they gratify and supply the wants, and modes, and means of the community. The French Government also have adopted these humble instruments of credit at the very moment whilst we are striving to abandon them. I have seen country bank notes issued in France for twenty francs each (about 16s.) from more than one quarter, and I understand that they are rapidly spreading in that country. I lately exhibited one of them to a friend of mine, a man of wealth, and of powerful intellect, and intimately acquainted with business, but totally unconnected with bankers. He regarded this French small note in silence and deliberation for a time. He then exclaimed, "If the French adopt this little instrument, and the English abandon it, in less than twenty years France will be the mistress of England." Now, gentlemen, I will not go quite so far as this, but from what I know of the small notes, and of their efficacy in rearing up and bringing forward a more active and intelligent class of traders and farmers than formerly existed, I think there is too much reason to conclude, that the observation

has a deep and solid foundation. The Government have looked at these things with a supercilious contempt; they have considered it as a mere question of convenience or profit to the bankers, whether the bankers should be required to pay a few millions of notes *in gold* or not. Ridiculous!! It is a question of whether the industry of the country shall be *strangled* or not!! It is a question of whether the *King's throne shall be mortgaged for eight thousand tons of solid gold or not!!* These are the mortal questions which are at issue, and *these* are the very questions which they have madly refused to enquire into!! I have here the Reports of the Committees of Parliament upon which this wild and destructive measure was *made law* in 1819, and both these Reports expressly declare that "the Committees have not enquired into the *policy* of the measure, considering that part of the subject to have been previously decided by the wisdom of Parliament!!" "Wisdom of Parliament indeed!!" I pointed out this fatal error instantly in a printed letter to Lord Liverpool, and I told him that he "*had better send an exterminating army through the country to cut short the miseries of the population.*" With blind and desperate fatuity he persevered in his guilty career. He refused all enquiry! Ten years have rolled on, during which the Go-

vernment has been held together by a continual system of "*tampering with the currency,*" and to this very day *the subject has not been enquired into!!*

But I was telling you just now about the nobleman and his tenant, and about the interests of *little men* being equally important as those of noblemen and rich merchants. If the nobleman had drawn his bill of exchange like the merchant does, for £350 or £700. or if the poor individual who was brought before the Court of Requests had drawn *his* humble bill for 15s. both these parties, and all the other parties connected with them, would have been relieved from serious inconvenience. But people of this kind are not in the habit of drawing bills, nor do they know any thing about them. They only know that bankers exist in most towns who deal in money, and that their business is to borrow money with *one hand* and to lend it with *the other*. By going to these bankers therefore they generally obtain what they want, the means of discharging their own debts, and thereby of facilitating the means of obtaining payment for their own credits. I have known cases in which the very same notes have been lent twice in the same day, and in each case they have come back to the banker after having discharged and paid off two or three different

debts, which without them would not then have been paid. Is there any thing "fictitious" in this state of things? The people come to the bankers to create the instruments of credit, necessary for their mutual purposes, instead of making them themselves. But their purposes are answered; and those purposes are those of the nation. Suppose, for instance, ten individuals, all more or less in a state of *debt*, which is perhaps the situation constantly of ninety-nine men out of every hundred in existence. No. 1 arrests No. 2, who in his turn presses No. 3, who again in *his* turn threatens No. 4, and so on the mischief proceeds until it comes to No. 10, who upon looking over his books finds that No. 1 owes him an equal sum, which he is prevented from paying by the difficulties of No. 2. Can any thing be more clear than that ten respectable men are here put to inconvenience and distress from the mere want of the medium of exchange between them? What right has the Government to interfere in cases of this kind, and to say to the parties interested, "not one of you shall be allowed to create his bill of exchange, nor even to induce the banker to create it for you!" It is the part of a wise Government to place no difficulties of this kind between the *wants* of the population and their *means*. It is the duty of such a Government to

make every possible exertion for the *gratification* of the *national wants*, and the *promotion* of the *national means*.

I was speaking just now upon the one-pound notes, and the trifling importance which the Government have attached to them. Two or three months ago I was speaking with a country banker of great wealth and respectability who had not then drawn in any of his one-pound notes. I asked him how many sovereigns he should issue in the payment of them? He answered, *none!* Upon my remonstrating with him, he stated that the whole of his one-pound notes were issued upon *accommodations to the public*, and that he should *draw in* those *accommodations*, and by that means *draw in* his notes. Here then, gentlemen, you see that the country is deprived of one medium in a reckless and desperate way, without any precaution whatever being taken to provide another!! The house in which I am concerned had formerly £70,000 of the one-pound notes in circulation. I know another house which a year ago had £170,000 of them in circulation. My own experience convinces me that in *drawing them in* sovereigns are not issued, and will not be issued to any thing like an equal amount. If you get *one sovereign* where you had formerly *two notes*, in my humble judgment, you will be lucky. You must

then settle with the tax gatherer, and with your creditors and workmen, in the best way that you can.

The Jews and lawyers would bring us back to the feudal times it seems; they would have every transaction of life to be realized in *heavy gold*, as it professes to be, or otherwise to be effected *in kind!!* Gentlemen, the thing is impossible, and it would be utterly useless if it were possible. There is no analogy between the feudal times and the present times. The feudal Baron paid his retainers and dependants, not *in money*, but *in kind*. He maintained taylor, and shoe-makers, and clothiers, and blacksmiths, and carpenters, all within the walls of his castle, or in some subsidiary dependencies upon it. All these were paid *in kind*. They ate the Baron's bread, and wore his clothing. The vassals around him paid their rents *in kind* or *in service*. There was no *division of labour* known, and there was no occasion for a *circulating medium*. A few pieces of bullion stamped with the King's image to authenticate their weight and fineness, served all the purposes for which money was required. How different is the state of things now, when society is *divided into innumerable trades*, producing each *separate masses of property, each necessary to the existence of the community, but only made available for its support through the action of money!!* In a state

of society like our's *money* is like the *atmosphere*, it is vital every where, and it is required every where. And as I have stated to you before, it is ten times more vital when Government has *saddled* all the labour and all the commodities of the country with prodigious masses of *monied* taxation. What can be more dreadfully absurd than the attempt to force back a complicated state of things like this into the simplicity and poverty of the *feudal times*?

I think I must have sufficiently proved to you that society cannot be held together in England by the exclusive use of bullion coins. But it is perfectly safe and practicable to render the circulating system convertible by law into a metallic standard of value, provided such standard is elevated in price, conformably with the elevation of general prices which took place during the existence of the Paper System. Or if Government will measure out the same justice to the *rich*, as they measure out to the *poor*, and if they will allow to the nation the privilege of paying its taxes and obligations in paper convertible by law, into the present *copper coins of the realm*, instead of the *gold coins*, I will answer with my life that they shall never hear of the want of employment or of distress, or of "over-production," or over-trading," or over-population" again. The poor man is compelled to receive the *copper coins* in

payment of his wages, but the rich man is allowed the privilege of enforcing payment in *gold coins*. Now mark the difference here. The *copper coins* do not contain much more than *one third of the intrinsic weight of metal* which they profess to represent. But the *gold coins* contain the *full intrinsic weight of metal* which they profess to represent!! Aye, and this intrinsic weight of metal contained in the gold coins, is literally *strung up* ten per cent. in value beyond the ancient value of our gold coins!! For hundreds of years together, the laws of England have rendered it a kind of felony to *melt* or *export* the coin of the realm. These laws are now repealed, and this repeal has *increased* the value of the gold coins about five per cent.; and the repeal of the silver standard, which had been our standard for one thousand years until the year 1816, has increased it five per cent. more. Thus then every sovereign that we have in England may be said to be worth in intrinsic value full twenty-two shillings of our ancient standard, and at this precious rate we are compelled to pay for every one pound sterling of *paper* taxes and obligations, which the ministers themselves have acknowledged were contracted in "*worthless rags!!*" Now couple this fact with your *corn laws*, and I am sure you will at once call to mind that passage of Holy Writ which sets a *curse* upon conduct like this:—"Woe unto you that make

"the *loaf small* and the *coin great*, falsifying the balances by deceit. Shall not the land tremble for this?" Certainly, Gentlemen, there must be something wrong in such an affair as this, and most certainly it ought to be enquired into. I do not say that it has been done *intentionally*, but certainly it has been done *suspiciously*. There was a Frenchman some time ago who said, that "every thing in England is *job*," "the first thing in England is *job*," "the second thing is *job*," "the third thing is *job*;" "in short," says he, "it is *all job!!*" Now bear this in mind when you reflect upon the treatment which honest John Bull has received. When the Jews and Lawyers had occasion to *double* their own salaries, and to *double* all the separate payments and expences of the Government, they were continually *dinning* him about the "*depreciation of the currency*," and declaring for twenty years together, that it was necessary to *double* their own salaries, because money had fallen to *one half* its ancient value. Very well. Honest John yielded to this. After a while peace comes, and the Jews proceed very coolly, as if nothing was being done, to restore the ancient standard money of the country. "Aye, aye," says John, "but remember the depreciation of the currency; you surely cannot think of restoring the ancient money, without first restoring the ancient salaries, taxes, and expences!!" "Here's a fellow," say they, "what part of the

"world does *he* come from?" "Why, my good friend," they continue, "*we don't know what you mean by the depreciation of the currency*, the paper money is in all respects full as valuable as the gold money, or at any rate, there is only *a little matter of just four per cent.* between them; and you are too magnanimous to regard that." In this way John suffers himself to be *fobbed off*. After a few years the real truth comes out. The *Quarterly Review*, the accredited organ of the Jews, coolly acknowledges that John's burthens have been increased *cent. per cent. instead of four per cent.!!* And when John goes to his task-masters again, and shews them his perishing limbs and his hungry famished scarecrow face, they coolly reply to him, "*Surely thee wouldst not go back to 'worthless rags' again, wouldst thee?*"

Why, Gentlemen, the time *has* been when John was in his *halcyon days*, or even in his *paper days*, as Mr. Cobbett facetiously observes, "when John Bull was stuff'd with *paper*," "Lord, how he did prance and *caper*;"—I say, Gentlemen, if John had been in his *halcyon days* and had been treated in this way, he would have snapt his bonds asunder, and have broke their heads with a *sledge-hammer*.

But poor John Bull! poverty and hunger, and miseries of many kinds have bowed him to the earth! He is become humble and tame, "tame

"as a robin." In short, my friends, I shrewdly suspect that the cunning rogues have practised an eastern operation upon him!! I trust, Gentlemen, that you will give proof this day, by the way in which you receive my resolutions, that *you* have not been subjected to this degrading operation; I trust that you will give proof that we have yet men among us, who have both sense to know, and courage to defend their rights.

But I was just telling you that in England "*all is job*." I will give you another instance. Mr. Huskisson is a great enemy of *monopoly*. He gives us "*free trade*" forsooth! But mark, gentlemen, he takes care to preserve *monopoly taxes!!* This is much like feeding John Bull at the *spiggot* and plundering him at the *bunghole!!* If Mr. Huskisson had been really the friend of John Bull I should have thought that he would have shewn his friendship by reducing *the taxes* and the *expences of Government to the Continental level first*; for without this precaution the mere reduction of the prices of John's labour, and of the products of his labour, to the Continental level, does but effect a transfer of his property from his own hands into those of *the exactors of tribute!!* If our *trade* is to be put upon a level with that of all other nations, what earthly reason can be given why our *taxes* and our *Government* should not also be put upon the same level at the same time? If the wages of *British labour* are to be brought down to the

Continental level, surely the *sinecurist* and the *placeman* must be brought down also to the Continental level. Or does Mr. Huskisson mean that there must be one law for the *goose* and another for the *gander*?

But whilst I have been telling you these sort of stories I had almost forgotten the painful subjects which we have been discussing. I have shewn that "overtrading" cannot exist, nor "overpopulation," nor "overproduction." It is true indeed that every healthy workman in this kingdom produces on an average more than four times the food and shelter which the humble wants of his family annually require. But this is the *riches of England*; and if the productions of every workman could be increased sevenfold, still it would have no other effect than that of increasing sevenfold the individual comforts of the population, or otherwise that of enabling them to obtain their present comforts with one seventh of their present labour. It is not therefore possible for "overtrading," or "overproduction," to exist. The very process of *production* indeed carries with it its own *consumption*. Take for instance the manufacture of £1000 worth of Birmingham goods. Is it not evident that in this *production* about £800 worth of copper and iron, and of food and clothing, are *consumed*; and does not the manufacturer either *invest* or *expend* his £200 of profit in the *consumption* of £200 worth of other

articles? How then can "overproduction" exist as a general principle? The greater is our production, the greater is our wealth. *We have no other wealth.* What madness it is to pretend that a nation can possibly be too rich!! No, my friends, there is no "overproduction," nor "overtrading," nor "overpopulation," in England, nor in any other country under the sun. But by the bye, gentlemen, if I recollect right, Dr. Johnson gives us rather a curious explanation of the real meaning of some of these curious words. If you will refer to his dictionary, you will probably find that "overtrading" means *overreaching*, and in that case I think you will agree with me, that it may possibly have had some existence. And in looking for the curious word, "overpopulation," I should not be at all surprized if you found its real meaning to be "*too many rogues and fools!!*" And God knows we have had some reason to believe in the existence of *them*.

I remember that the late Lord Liverpool had some very curious ideas. In 1818 he contended that the *prosperity* which *then* existed in the country was made by the *bad* harvest of 1816!! But in 1821 he contended that the *distress* which *then* existed in the country was occasioned by the *good* harvest of 1820!! Mr. Huskisson too, in the Agricultural Committee, gravely argued with me, that this was a main cause of the agricultural distress in 1821. But in 1829 we are told that it is

the *bad harvest* again which has made our distress!! And so we are tossed about from absurdity to absurdity until we hardly know whether we stand upon our heads or upon our legs. Every thing, indeed, appears *distorted* and unnatural in these days. This distortion appeared to me so extraordinary that in 1822, in a letter which I published in the Farmer's Journal, I applied to it the words of the poet describing a state of things in which all principles and all facts are overturned, a state of things in which "*death lives, life dies, and nature breeds, prodigious all abominable things.*" "*Prodigious*" indeed are these "abominable things," when we hear Statesmen contending almost in the same day that the distress is occasioned by *good* harvests at one period, and by *bad* harvests at another!! And, as if to make confusion ten times more confounded, the Courier paper *now* tells us that the distress is "*without any cause whatever that human reason can discover.*" That in fact, in some strange and mysterious way, "*it comes from God!!!*" God grant us patience under the affliction of such teachers as these!! But I can tell the Courier that it does *not* come from God. It comes from *man*; and by *man* it *must* be relieved. At any rate we must have the subject enquired into; *which it never yet has been*; and if we obtain this enquiry I will forfeit my life if we do not prove that there is more of *earth* than of *heaven* at the bottom of our distress.

I will endeavour, Gentlemen, to cut short my observations. I have shewn I think to your satisfaction that the national distress originates entirely in the scarcity of money, occasioned by the substitution of a *dear* medium of exchange, in the place of a *cheap* medium. It has a hundred times over been remarked, how can you complain of the scarcity of money, when money is so plentiful that it can readily be borrowed at 3 or 4 per cent.? The persons who ask this question make a great mistake. They mistake the *use* of money for money itself. They mistake the mere *borrowing* and *lending* of money for the *buying* and *selling* of money. They mistake the *interest* of money for its *principal*. The low rate of *interest* is occasioned by the very same contraction of the currency which occasions the low rate of your labour, and of the products of your labour. For when the circulating money of the country is so far contracted, as to reduce the prices of the products of industry within the *gripe* of the fixed taxation and obligation, what profit can men make in the employment of money, which should induce them to give a high rate of interest, or even any rate of interest, for the use of it? Is it not evident in such a state of things, that all the wholesome *borrowers* of money are *taken out* of the market, and that crowds of unhealthy *lenders* of money are *forced* into the market? All men are *unwilling* to borrow when they can make no profit

by the employment of money, and all men are *ready to lend* and to transfer the danger and the loss of employing money upon others, when they find that nothing but loss or danger can attend its employment. This, Gentlemen, is the reason why money is plentiful in the markets where it is *borrowed and lent*, at the same time that it is scarce in all the markets of property and labour where it is *bought and sold*. In the former markets it is indeed too plentiful in the hands of bankers and brokers, and bloated capitalists, who have neither the means nor the will to give it action upon the national industry. But the manufacturers, the traders, the mechanics, the labourers, find no such plenty of money. They are obliged to sell their labour, and the products of their labour, for about *one half of the money* which they ought to obtain. The great limbs and interests of the country are thus *starving* for the want of money, at the very moment that half the circulation of the kingdom is determined in *stagnant masses* into what is called the money market, in order to *gorge* the monied interest!

But gentlemen tell us there is distress in other nations. How can it be otherwise? England is the heart of the world. We have drained Europe of her bullion, and we have deluged her markets with our cheap manufactures. We first deprive *foreign nations* of their money, and then of their markets, and then we gravely wonder that there

should be *foreign distress*!! I could give you *proof* that this is the real cause of *foreign distress*, but the thing is too clear to require proof.

But, Gentlemen, the Ministers have told us that the *bankers* are to blame. In order to shelter *themselves* from public indignation, they make the *bankers* the *scape-goats* of their own errors. They gravely ordered by their laws, that the bankers should be compelled to pay *two hundred millions* of sovereigns suddenly, although they well knew at the time there was not more than about ten millions of sovereigns in the country. But when this preposterous and absurd measure becomes exposed, and the Government are driven to the necessity of having recourse to the *paper* again, they have not the manliness to acknowledge their error, but they coolly declare that their unhappy victims, the *bankers*, are to blame!! Now how stands the fact? Out of the seventy banks which stopped payment during what is called the *panic* of 1825, sixty of them have already paid twenty shillings in the pound. And respecting the unfortunate house which was obliged to stop payment in this town, I was informed by one of the Assignees a few weeks ago, that he would not give a farthing to be insured 17s. 6d. in the pound. What right then has the Government to criminate men in this situation? This is like *murdering* the victim first, and then *forging* a letter to accuse him of *suicide*. Is it not enough

that these unfortunate men should be *destroyed*, and must they also be calumniated by their *destroyers*? And who are the men who thus calumniate them? Men who cannot pay sixpence in the pound themselves! It is true, that the Government debt is not payable in its *principal*, but it is payable in its interest of about twenty-eight millions sterling per annum, and the payment of this interest is at this moment effected out of the very vitals of the country. But the Ministers have another *debt* of 36 millions sterling, which they owe the Bank of England. And I will tell them that they cannot pay five shillings in the pound upon *this* debt. If they should attempt to pay but five shillings in the pound upon *this* debt, and make it a *real payment*, the very earth would pass from under their feet in a month!! They would instantly come to Mr. Huskisson's "*state of barter*," which, if it means any thing, means a *general dissolution of society in England!!* Does it become men in this situation to scatter fire-brands round the country? Does it become men who, upon their own confession, have converted a mortgage upon their master's throne from a few bundles of "*worthless rags*" into eight thousand tons of solid gold—Does it become men like *these* to accuse respectable tradesmen of *ignorance and incapacity in the management of their own business*?

I feel, Gentlemen, that I speak with warmth. I trust that you will excuse me. I thought that

I had been practising a honourable and an useful trade, in which I had been the means of benefit to thousands, and of injury to none. I thought that I had been practising a trade interwoven with the best interests of society, and without which indeed, society, as at present constituted, cannot exist in England—a trade too which has three times over been placed in the very front of the ruin which the Government itself has let loose upon the country; and after *this* to be criminated and insulted by these *havoc dealing* legislators, is more than I can profess to bear.

I think, Gentlemen, I must have sufficiently proved that all the ostensible *causes* of the national distress which have hitherto been alleged by the Government are perfectly false and futile. The *distress* is *monetary*, and it can only be relieved by *monetary* measures. It is in fact a *question of currency*. I will now therefore beg your indulgence for a few minutes more whilst I give you the real history of the currency for the last forty years. For two hundred years before the late war the prices of property and labour in England were much the same as they were in France. This fact you will find in Adam Smith, and in many other undoubted authorities. In the years 1790, 1791, and 1792, all the great interests of this country prospered. In the year 1793 a *shock* came, or what we now call a *panic*, which, to the best of my information, was quite as severe and

as destructive as that of December, 1825. In the year 1793, however, the Bank of England first issued five-pound notes, at the instigation of the Government, and by so doing, and by otherwise increasing the circulation, the *panic* of 1793 was relieved, that is to say, the *money* was made equal to the *debts*; and when the *debts* could thus readily be paid, there could no longer be cause of alarm among either *debtors* or *creditors*. The stimulus thus applied to the circulating system, was continued and increased during the years 1794, 1795, and 1796, and a very great and real depreciation of the currency, *both gold and paper*, was its necessary result, the prices of property and labour generally having risen from 20 to 40 per cent. in those years. And here it is proper that I should observe, that it is due to THOMAS PAINE, whom I will not name with either censure or applause, to acknowledge, that he was the first individual who discovered and made known the tendency of *paper money* to depreciate and "*carry down*," as he called it, the exchangeable value of the *bullion money* with which it circulates. *This is a most important principle, which must never be lost sight of by persons desirous of understanding this vital subject.* Well, the depreciation of the currency thus effected, combined with the operation of other circumstances, occasioned the *gold money* to separate from the *paper money*, and a great quantity of the gold coins were sent abroad

in the year 1796. It is proper here that I should explain the process by which this *separation* takes place between the *gold* and the *paper*. When the *increase of the paper money* of a hundred kinds, has occasioned the prices of British manufactures to rise, without occasioning a similar rise in the price of gold, *which the law prevents*, then gold becomes the cheapest article for *export*, and of course it is *exported*; but when the *diminution of the paper money* of a hundred kinds, has reduced the prices of property in England generally, without reducing the price of gold, *which the law prevents*, then gold becomes the most beneficial article for *import*, and of course it is *imported*. In this way the gold was driven abroad in 1796. In the month of February, 1797, the stock of gold in the Bank of England was thus exhausted, and the option was left to Mr. Pitt either to come to a national bankruptcy, or to suspend the operations of the war, or to *change the standard of value*, and substitute a medium of exchange existing within ourselves, and independent of foreign circumstances, in the place of that ancient standard of value which had proved itself unequal to the exigencies of the nation. Mr. Pitt chose the latter course, and I am not prepared to say that he did wrong. The whole circulating system, however, being thus released from the metallic standard, and being, in fact, made convertible *by law* into nothing but Bank of England notes, and

those notes being limited solely by the exigencies of the nation, a further and much greater depreciation of the currency very naturally took place, and became *permanent*. In the summer of 1797, it was consequently found necessary to raise the pay of the soldiers and sailors, and I believe that the wages of labour generally were soon afterwards raised in proportion to the increase of prices generally. Ever since this period the prices of property and labour generally in England have been essentially higher than they are in France; and, in my humble opinion, they cannot be safely or justly reduced to the French level again. The late Lord Liverpool declared in Parliament, that under this system the *rents of land* generally were *trebled*. There can be no possible doubt, that on an average of twenty years they were fully *doubled*: nor can there be any doubt whatever, on the average of twenty years, while the paper system was in full operation, that the exchangeable value of money was reduced *full one half*. But whilst all other prices rose generally and permanently full cent. per cent. so as to reduce money *one half* in value, the price of *gold* did not rise correspondently. *Gold* was thrown out of use and out of demand, and of course its exchangeable value furnished no guide to the depreciation of the currency. It was "*carried down*," as Mr. PAINE had previously described it, in mutual depreciation with the paper.

Well, Gentlemen, this state of things went on for about twenty years, and the whole of the relations of society became generally and permanently accommodated to it. The taxation was enormous, and the loans were enormous, amounting, as I have stated, to *one thousand and forty-seven millions sterling*. The country, however, had found its *monied means doubled* by the Bank Restriction Act, and it was enabled to bear such enormous taxation, and to supply such enormous sums, in the *cheap money* then existing. Now when the peace came, if the Government had continued the Paper System permanently, with some *obligation* and *limitation* of issues on the part of the Bank of England, all things would have been right in England. *Peace* would have brought *plenty* and *prosperity*, which it is the nature of *peace* to do. Or if the Government had been content, upon restoring a metallic standard of value, to have depreciated it to a level with the depreciation existing in the actual money in which the *taxation* and *obligations* of the country had been contracted, in this case too all things would have been right in England. But unhappily for this misgoverned nation, the Government has now, for fourteen years together, been blindly and obstinately attempting to convert the *taxation* and *obligations* of the country into an *ancient* and *obsolete* standard of value which is of full *double* the value of the *practical money of the country*, and

which in fact, as I told Lord Liverpool in 1819, "has little more reference to the existing state of society than the *shekels of the Patriarch Abraham*."

I will now explain to you the fluctuations which we have witnessed for the last fourteen years, and that general want of employment, and general distress among the industrious classes which we have witnessed three times over, and now a fourth time, since the year 1814.

When the pressure of the ancient standard of value upon the circulating system was first put in operation in 1816, you will recollect that the distress was frightful. The colliers of Staffordshire were dragging waggon loads of coals about the country, and the blanketeers of Manchester and Glasgow, and the manufacturing districts, were mustering their hundreds of thousands of *pilgrims* for the melancholy march to London. Lord Liverpool had not *nerve* to face this state of things, and he brought forward in Parliament in July, 1816, two measures, one to extend the Bank Restriction Act for two years longer, viz. from May, 1817, until May, 1819, and the other for borrowing six millions of bank notes from the Bank of England, in order to encrease the circulation of *legal tenders*. These two measures (combined with the issue of the gold coins, the bullion of which had been forced into the country by the low prices of 1816 in the way I have described)

quickly restored the prosperity of the country. Men's minds were *elastic* then. *Prosperity* was deemed the *natural* state of the country, and men were not afraid to borrow money in order to employ it in feeding and clothing the population. A small number of *legal tenders* therefore was sufficient to set in operation an immense mass of *instruments of credit*, such as I have before described to you. But in the state of things which now exists men are almost afraid to borrow money, or to employ it, or give it action in any way. "*A burnt child*," it is said, "*dreads the fire*." And certainly the industrious classes of the country have now so frequently *burnt their fingers* by venturing to make use of money, that they almost *dread the very sight of it*. At any rate they are not disposed to borrow it, or to put their credit in operation largely and liberally upon the *strength of it*. Hence the *stagnation of money* which we now witness. The Bank of England notes and gold coins now in the country are probably greater in amount than they ever were before. But the Bills of Exchange, and the instruments of credit generally, never were so small. Men dare not set their credit in operation for the maintenance of the population, because the Government has three times over *silently* and *secretly* removed, as it were, *the very earth from under their feet!!* I mean that the *law* as it now stands compels the gold coins to go abroad as soon as ever the public credit

and confidence are put in sufficient operation to support the population, and that this *same law*, at such a time, when the Bank of England ought to *increase its circulation*, compels it to reduce its circulation; and thus the *basis* of the circulating system is forcibly removed by the *power of the law* from under the feet of those who have been lured on to undertake the duties of feeding and clothing the population. How can you wonder that distress and poverty should exist when such *laws* as these exist? And how can you wonder that fear and distrust should have taken the place of that honourable confidence and enterprize which were formerly the distinguishing characteristics of Englishmen?

But, as I was telling you, in 1816 men's minds were *elastic*. And no sooner was a small encrease effected in the circulation of Bank of England notes and gold coins than *public credit* was instantly set in general operation, and the prosperity of the country was rapidly restored. You may recollect rather a curious instance of the effects of this elasticity of men's minds in comparing the *apparent* effects of the bad harvest of 1816 and of 1828. That of 1816 was not near so bad as that of 1828, and the gold coins and Bank of England notes in circulation were not near so extensive in 1816 as they are now. And yet agricultural prices became prosperous in 1817 and 1818 in the same manner as manufactures and trade generally

became prosperous. Lord Liverpool said it was the *bad harvest* which made the *prosperity*. But I proved to him that it was the *plenty of money* which produced the *prosperity*, and not the *scarcity of property*, which never *did* produce *prosperity*, and never can do so *until the foundations of nature are overturned*. It was in this way, then, that the adversity of 1816 was relieved, and that the prosperity of 1818 was produced.

I will now explain to you how this prosperity of 1818 passed away, and how the adversity of 1819 was produced. In the month of June, 1818, I was desirous of ascertaining from the late Lord Liverpool, with whom I had had the honour of a good deal of correspondence, whether or not it was his intention to make another attempt to convert the taxes and obligations of the country into the ancient coin of the realm. The country was then prosperous in every department of industry. I waited upon his Lordship personally. I reminded him how the distress of 1816 had been relieved by the discontinuance of the measure for restoring the ancient standard, and by the *increased issues of Bank of England notes and gold coins*. I shewed him that the gold coins were then going abroad rapidly; and that if the Bank of England were also to diminish their issues in order to prepare for cash payments in the next spring, the country would resemble a *patient with a main artery laid open in each arm*. I shewed him, that

it was certain that all the horrors of 1816 would return if he again attempted to restore the ancient standard; and I enquired whether he had any such intentions. In making this enquiry I had nothing to gain. I had only to guard against approaching mischief. Lord Liverpool gave me evasive answers. He would not say that he had not such intentions. He would only say that he "thought" "there was no reason to apprehend a contraction of the circulation." These, Gentlemen, were his words. I understood them well. I went direct from him to a friend of mine, then possessed of large capital, and largely concerned in trade. I told him the conversation which I had had. I urged him to *draw in* instantly, and to do no more business whatever. He refused my counsel. He told me that "I *must* have misunderstood Lord Liverpool; and that it was not possible he could "be such an *idiot* after the experience of 1816." In that very winter my friend was ruined.

Now observe, Gentlemen, these conversations were in June, 1818. In the summer and autumn of that year nearly the whole of the sovereigns in the country were *exported*, principally for the purchase of grain. In that very autumn also, the Bank of England reduced its circulation of bank notes, between three and four millions, which was more than one-eighth of the whole. Upon examination in Parliament, the Bank Directors acknowledged that this reduction of their circula-

tion was effected by them with the view of preparing for the restoration of the ancient standard, which was contemplated for the ensuing spring. Here then, the law had put in operation a *double* drain upon the country. As I had expressed myself to Lord Liverpool, "a *main artery* had been "thus opened in each arm." I certainly ought here to complain of a want of candour on the part of Mr. Peel; for some time afterwards, when it was alleged in Parliament that his bill had caused the national distress, he is reported to have replied, "How can it be said that my bill caused "the distress when the distress came on in the "winter of 1818, whereas my bill was not brought "forward until *May*, 1819?" It is true his bill did not pass until *July*, 1819, but the mortal operation of preparing for it was in full effect during the whole of the autumn and winter of 1818!! It was this *preparation*, this "opening of "an artery in each arm," which brought on the distress of 1819, long before Mr. Peel's bill of May, 1819, became law.

Well, in the summer of 1819, you will recollect that the scene of 1816 was *re-acted* to the very letter, as I had foretold to Lord Liverpool both *personally* and in *print*. The armed meetings at Manchester, and the *Northern Cloud* at Glasgow, and the insurrection of Brandreth in Derbyshire, all gave notice that the foundations of society were giving way. But Government had taken warning

in some respects, and when they passed Mr. Peel's bill, in July, 1819, they gave *four years*, viz. until May, 1823, to carry it into effect. They did not proceed, as the Bullion Committee recommended in 1811, to restore the ancient standard at once, but they prudently postponed the full accomplishment of their object for four years. Mr. Cobbett, who was then living in *America*, and I, who had never had any communication with him—both of us instantly *denounced* Mr. Peel's bill *in print*, and proclaimed that it could not possibly be carried into effect without producing *a total breaking up of the whole frame of society!!* The merchants of London and Liverpool and the Directors of the Bank of England also *denounced* this fatal measure. There was not a single petition presented to Parliament in favour of it. Mr. Cobbett's unanswerable arguments upon this subject were read by every public man in England, and I have the late Lord Liverpool's own assurance, that my remonstrances were read by him "with all the attention which their importance deserved." But Lord Liverpool was not capable of tracing *causes* to their *effects*. He fondly flattered himself that by scattering the ruin over a period of four years, he was in fact changing its character. I told him that he was "giving the nation to perish by the tedious agonies of prolonged disease, instead of sinking under the sudden destruction which a bolder policy would have occasioned." He disre-

garded all arguments and all facts. He relied upon the *temporizing policy* which he had determined upon; and it is certain, that by this *temporizing policy* he was enabled, as it were, to keep "body and soul together" until the year 1822. At this period, however, the general contraction of the circulating system had become so great, that the prospect of seeing *rent annihilated* carried with it more terror than the deluge threatened by the "*Northern Cloud*." At this period, therefore, the late Lord Castlereagh, who was a far superior man to Lord Liverpool, and in general dictated to him, took the vessel of the state *in tow*. In the month of July, 1822, he brought forward in Parliament *five monetary measures*, expressly declaring that the distress of agriculture was *monetary*, and that it *must* be relieved by these *monetary* measures. One of these measures legalized the issue of small notes for eleven years to come, which, as I have said, of course meant for ever. Another borrowed three millions and a half from the Bank of England to pay off the *five per cent. dissentients*. A third borrowed about two millions per annum from the Bank of England for about six years to come *to pay the Pensioners*. There were two other measures of a similar character. These measures, Gentlemen, were all brought forward in one day by Lord Castlereagh, who expressly stated that they were for "*the relief of Agriculture*." In this way the game

of 1817 and 1818 was played a second time. The Bank of England circulation was *increased at the very time when the circulation of gold coins was also increased*. Lord Goderich, in his speech in Parliament on the 10th of February, 1826, virtually acknowledged this increase, for he stated the importation of gold and the issue of Bank of England notes, to have been such, as to have increased the circulation of these two instruments of money from about *twenty-five* millions only in the year 1820, to about *forty-six* millions in the year 1825. This increase of the *basis* of the circulating system did not, however, act so rapidly in restoring the national prosperity as the first increase did in 1816. The *elasticity* of men's minds was not quite so great as it was in 1816 and 1817, because, having a second time *burnt their fingers*, by setting *their credit* in operation, they were naturally a little more cautious in "*creeping out of their shells*." However this may be, it is certain that the general prosperity of the country *was* restored by these means in the years 1823, 1824, and 1825. You will all recollect those years, when the whole labour of the kingdom was called into wholesome operation; and, as I have said before, as fast as men were *producing* in one trade, they were necessarily *consuming* equally in all other trades.

I will now explain to you how this boasted prosperity of Lord Goderich and of 1825 passed away. In the summer of that year I was at Aberystwith.

I there received a report to the House of Commons, shewing that from five to eight millions of sovereigns had been entered at the custom-house for exportation. I knew that it was not necessary to enter them at the custom-house at all, and therefore concluded that many more had been exported without entering. I immediately returned home, to "set my house in order;" it was evident that the "*main artery*" was again opened *in the right arm*, and it was by no means certain that the Government would not also again open the *main artery in the left arm*, in order to equalise the circulation!! The Government *did* do so, or at least the Bank of England did so, acting under the pressure of Government measures. During the autumn of 1825 the Bank of England effected a very considerable reduction of the bank notes in circulation. To such an extent, indeed, did they carry this reduction, that immediately preceding the *panic* in *December*, they had reduced their whole circulation to *seventeen* millions only!! You may all of you recollect also, that during this period it was made matter of *boast* in the public papers, that the bank were acting with proper vigour and decision, and that they were rigidly calling in their notes, both by the sale of Exchequer bills, and by refusing discount to the most undeniable houses. It was thus that the *prosperity* of the early part of 1825 was destroyed. It was thus that the *panic* of December, 1825, was

brought on. The *practical money* of the country in which the book debts, the bills of exchange, and the instruments of credit generally, are *payable*, was greatly reduced, and the *necessary consequence* was, that a great part of such instruments of credit must be *unpaid*. Here, then, was cause enough for *panic*, without having recourse to the nonsense about "overtrading," with which the public press *dinned* the country. Every *creditor* was alarmed lest his *debtor* should become insolvent, and every *debtor* was alarmed lest he should be called upon to pay his *debts suddenly and generally*, when not a tenth part of the money existed in the country wherewith to pay them.

I will now explain to you how this *panic* passed away; or was relieved by the direct acts of the Government. About a month before the *panic* occurred I had taken the liberty of writing to the late Lord Liverpool, in order to warn him of the then approaching state of things. I reminded him that the sovereigns were going abroad, and that the Bank of England possessed no one-pound notes, and that consequently the country one-pound notes could not much longer be paid, unless the Bank of England was prepared with a stock of one-pound notes to issue *instantly* in the place of sovereigns when the *crisis* should come. I reminded him that it would take many weeks for the Bank to supply itself with this necessary stock of one-pound notes, and that the *crisis*

when they would be required was approaching rapidly. Now I will not say that this letter of mine produced any effect, because I do not know that it did. I only know that within a week after I sent it the carpenters were employed in putting in order the long deserted one-pound note office in the Bank of England. I also know that the Clerks of the Bank of England were forthwith *set to work all night* in the manufacture of one-pound notes; and that by these means, when the *panic* came, the stock of one-pound notes was ready, and was issued at a time when no more sovereigns were left. But these one-pound notes did not of themselves *blow away* the *panic*. They acted as a kind of *wet blanket* upon it; but they did not remove it. It was the issue of the £1000 notes in the purchase of Exchequer Bills which removed the *panic*, by again rendering the money equal to its duties. By returns to the House of Commons it appears that the Bank of England increased their circulation of bank notes from seventeen millions to twenty-six millions in the course of ten days during the *panic*. In addition to this they issued also from five to seven millions of sovereigns during the *panic*. Here was thus an increase of fourteen or sixteen millions of money thrown into circulation in the course of ten days!! Is not this enough to explain the removal of the *panic*? This increase of fourteen millions of Bank notes and gold coins in circula-

tion paid debts to an equal amount perhaps three or four times a day until the debts were paid, and of course there could not long be much occasion for *panic* among either *creditors* or *debtors*.

Now I do not know for certain that I had any thing to do in this purchase of Exchequer Bills which removed the *panic*. All that I can say is, that I recommended it strongly to the Ministers before it was adopted, and that I have some reason to believe it would not otherwise have been had recourse to. However in this way the panic was removed. *Masses of money* were thrown into the market to meet the *masses of debt* which were pressing upon the market for payment; and thus the *masses of debt* were provided for, and the *panic* was relieved.

Immediately afterwards, in the month of January, 1826, I published a pamphlet, in which I pointed out to the Ministers that there were two lines of conduct for them to adopt in the event of their determining to persevere in the destructive and unjust attempt to restore the ancient standard of value. 1st, the straight forward, or "*decisive policy*," and 2d, the middle, or "*temporizing policy*." By the former I shewed them that they would bring back *panic* suddenly and swiftly, with anarchy in it's train. By the latter I shewed them that they would bring back the calamities of 1816 and 1819, by gradually enabling the richer capitalists to contract their debts and engage-

ments, and to throw the burthen upon their work men and dependants. I shewed them that, by "acting upon a system of *palliatives*, by throwing in assistance from time to time into such quarters and under such parts of our circulating system as were in the act of giving way," they might by means of this kind certainly *shove off panic*, but that they would be equally certain to bring on the calamities of 1816 and 1819. And I told them that, "in my judgment, it was much better to adopt the *decisive policy* at once," and not place the country in a position in which "hundreds of thousands of victims must toil early and late, and reap ruin as the reward of their labour." Now, my friends, is not this the situation of the country now? Has not the Government acted upon a system of "*palliatives*" for the last three years? Has it not kept body and soul together by continual tampering with the currency, and by nothing else, from the panic of 1825 to this very day? In the month of July last, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer stated in Parliament that the gold coins and Bank of England notes then in circulation amounted to *forty-two* millions sterling, exclusive of about *six* millions of private *balances* in the hands of the Bank of England, which made the total circulation *forty-eight* millions. It is by this enormous issue of gold coins and bank notes that the Go-

vernment has propped and bolstered up the country. If they had *pulled in* their *bank notes* as fast as they *issued out* their *gold coins*, which they ought to have done if their standard of value had been just and practicable; in this case, they would have had nothing but universal anarchy in the country long before now. But this is the *third time* that they have been *playing again the game of 1816 and 1817*. And if it were not as I have said before, that "*burnt children dread the fire*," and that men's minds have lost their *elasticity* now, we should long ago have had back the prosperity of 1818 and 1825!! But instead of "*prosperity*," we have now got *adversity* for the fourth time. The gold coins have been again exported largely in the autumn of last year, and once or twice the Bank of England has given intimations of an intention to reduce the bank notes correspondently. I am given to understand that the Duke of Wellington has put a stop to this "*opening of arteries in each arm*" however. But is not this "*tampering with the currency*?" Our situation is but *bad* as it is, but it would evidently be ten times worse, if it were not for the continued "*tampering with the currency*," which the Government is compelled to have recourse to, in order to break the intolerable pressure of its own measures. It is but a few months ago, when a

Quaker bank stopped payment in London, that the Duke of Wellington was at the Bank of England himself on the next morning at ten o'clock. I do not blame the Duke of Wellington for this. I respect him for it. But what a situation is *this* for the chief minister of England to be placed in!! The system which feeble hands have transmitted to the Duke of Wellington is so excessively *rotten*, that he cannot *slumber* for an hour without the fear of waking in a *panic*!! The Duke's predecessors have called this a "*healthy currency*." How can there be any thing *healthy* in a state of things like this? The Government are like the Irishman, who had just succeeded, as he thought, in the *healthy* object of making his horse live without food, *when the horse died*! And so must this unhappy country die, if "*healthy*" measures like these are to be persevered in!!

Here then, Gentlemen, I have given you the true history of the *seven* fluctuations, consisting of four depressions of prices, and of three elevations of prices, which we have witnessed during the last fourteen years. You must not call it vanity in me, because, as I have told you, it is *my trade* to understand the *nature and operation of money*. I therefore do not hesitate to tell you, as I *can prove to be the truth*, that *I have foretold each of these seven fluctuations in print, before they occurred*.

How then can I entertain any doubt or distrust when I tell you that this fourth depression will be ruinous to the people and *fatal* to the Government, unless timely counteracted by the Government abandoning their measures, and producing a *fourth elevation!!* If the Government will do *this*, they may yet be safe. But if they will not do this; if they will not *lift up the means* of the country to a level with its *burthens*, what other alternative remains to them but to cut down the *burthens* to a level with the *means*? The salaries of the King's ministers and those of all the public servants of the Government were *doubled* in *paper money*. Therefore they must be reduced *one half*, now that they are payable in *gold money*. The whole of the expences of the Government must be cut down in a similar degree. The *National Debt* itself must be reduced in the same degree as its *value* and its *burthen* have been unjustly increased by the change of the money in which it was contracted. It is out of all reason to expect that the income of the fund-owner shall continue unreduced, whilst that of the manufacturer, the merchant, the farmer, and the trader of every description, are all brought down to the metallic level. Without doubt much misery and distress will be occasioned to the fund-owners by such reduction of the national debt. Let them be paid then in *just money*, and there

will be no occasion to reduce it. They will still have their consols at 87, and they will receive their dividends *in full*, and the prices of property and labour generally will not be higher than they were in 1825. But if we are to speak of *misery*, what a deluge of remorseless misery has not the attempt to restore an *unjust money* scattered three times over throughout all the industrious classes of the community. The "*General Confiscation Act*" of Mr. Peel, which was passed in 1819, has *three times over* deprived labour of its *employment* and *industry* of its *reward*, and carried misery and desolation into hundreds of thousands of houses. These useful and vital classes of the community have been denounced and sacrificed without remorse. They have been put, as it were, out of *the pale* of Legislative protection, whilst the fund-owners have been nourished and pampered with the national plunder. But I have no desire to pull down the fund-owner. If the Government should think that *public faith* is more strongly pledged to the *fund-owner* to protect the value of his *stock*, than it is to the *labourer* to protect the value of his *labour*—if the Government are disposed to give the fund-owner a *free gift of four hundred and fifty-six millions sterling in solid gold*—I will not quarrel with them upon the subject. But I will insist that they must do this out

of the *pockets* of the *rich*, and not out of the *bread of the poor*. The working classes are no longer in a condition to pay *paper taxes* in *heavy gold*; and when their wages are brought fully down to the metallic level, they will be still less in a condition to do so. If their wages are to be brought down to the *continental level*, it is necessary that they should have *continental taxes* also. In *France* the taxes press principally upon the *rich*; but in *England* they press principally upon the *poor*.

Now I will just mention a few taxes to you, in order that you may judge how harshly they press upon the working classes, particularly in the present state of things, when, either by *reduction of wages*, or by *deficiency of employment*, those important classes of men are reduced in their former means of paying them. *Tea*, for instance, is an article of universal consumption in *England*. If a poor family lay out *two-pence* in the purchase of *tea*, they are compelled first to pay *sixpence tax*!! *Beer* is the just and proper beverage of the people of *England*, and nine-tenths of it are probably consumed by the working classes. If a poor man gives three-pence for a pot of *beer*, he must pay another *three-pence tax*!! In the case of tobacco, he pays a tax of *three-pence* upon *every halfpenny*, or just *six hundred per cent. tax*!! The rich man pays *thirty per cent.* upon his *wine*, but the poor

man pays *one hundred per cent.* upon his *beer*!! Is this justice? This state of things ought to be redressed whether the general distress is relieved or not.

But political economists may tell you that the removal of the taxes from the *poor* to the *rich* would give no redress to the working classes, because the rich would have so much the less money to expend in the maintenance of labour. I answer, that if the *beer* and *malt* tax, which produce about seven millions per annum, were taken off, and if that sum was taken annually by the Government out of the pockets of those individuals among us who, luckily for themselves, have more money than they know what to do with, it would make no difference whatever in the maintenance of labour which those individuals now afford. The working classes thus released from the payment of a tax of seven millions per annum, would have seven millions per annum more in their pockets, which they would expend in an additional consumption of products of labour generally. The Government would then draw its seven millions per annum from quarters where it now stagnates in *inert masses*, instead of drawing it from vital quarters where it is employed in feeding and clothing the population of the country.

We come then to the alternative, which the necessities of the country require. We must either *lift up* the *means* to a level with the *burthens*, or

we must *cut down* the *burthens* to a level with the *means*. Mr. Peel may perhaps say "this is like offering me the dagger or the poison'd bowl." Be it so. But then I tell Mr. Peel that he must retreat. He must *bolt* the bill of 1819, as he has done the Catholic bill. It is more honourable to confess an error than to persevere in wrong. Unless he adopts this line of conduct, as I told Lord Liverpool ten years ago, I would not give him a *rush* for the *fee-simple* of his master's throne. Let justice be done throughout the country; let a honest bread be secured for honest labour, and every thing is safe in England. But if distress and poverty are to supersede honourable industry—if the elements of society are to be stirred up and disorganized—if there is to be no peace for the *cottage* there can be no safety for the *palace* long. Now it is my duty to say to you, that the *cutting down of the burthens* would not give to the country so great relief as the *lifting up of the means*. It is an act of justice and of necessity, that the expences of the Government should be reduced in the same degree as the profits of trade and the wages of labour; and it is a still more just and necessary act to charge the taxes upon the *superfluities* of the nation, and not upon its *distresses*. But if the Government should adopt this line of conduct in the fullest degree, still there would be distress general and severe. Until the habits and calculations of society gene-

rally, should also be forced down to their ancient level, a general derangement and disorganization would be experienced in the action of the whole social machinery. It is therefore better to lift up the *means* to a level with the *burthens*; it is better to accommodate the currency of the country to the existing state of society, rather than to *force back* society into conformity with an ancient and obsolete currency. Now there are two kinds of currencies which are safe, just, and practicable. First, a *non-convertible paper currency*, like that we have had from 1797 to 1819, with proper *limitations* and *obligations* on the Bank of England; and secondly, a currency regulated by a metallic standard of value, advanced in price in a degree necessary to render it a just and an adequate measure of the values and obligations of society. Either of these measures will effectually and securely restore the prosperity of the country. Each of them will give us back the state of 1825, and render that state permanent. It is proper that I should here declare to you, which I do most sincerely, that I do not care a *rush* which of these measures is adopted, or whether any other measure is adopted, *provided only that the prosperity of the country is restored and secured*. This is the object which I have in view; and if I can but see it accomplished, the means of its accomplishment are a matter of perfect indifference to me.

It is proper also that I should repeat to you

that in a country like our's, overburthened as it is with taxes and obligations of a thousand kinds, money cannot well be *too plentiful*, or *too cheap*. Whether this *plenty of money* is made by the importation of *bullion*, as was the case in the "*golden days*" of Elizabeth, or whether it is made by the assistance of paper money "*carrying down*" and depreciating the metallic money, as was the case in the years 1818, 1824, and 1825, or whether it is made by a direct reduction of the metallic standard of value, or by the permanent substitution of a *paper system*, is a matter of little comparative consequence. The thing that is wanted is *plenty of money* diffused throughout the whole community and *its consequent depreciation*. This nourishes and encourages the industrious classes, and leaves a proper proportion of the fruits of their industry in their own hands to reward their labour. Such was the state of things in 1824 and 1825. But the recovery of the value of money, or rather its *re-appreciation*, produces exactly contrary effects. It abases, degrades, and destroys the industry of the country, and leaves little or none of the products of industry in the hands of the productive classes, nearly the whole being silently "*transferred*" into the pockets of those who have monied claims upon the country. The value of money may be recovered or restored in feudal times, or in *semi-barbarous* countries, without much injury to the community. But to restore the

value of money in a country like our's in any considerable degree is literally to *strangle the industry of the country*, and thereby to involve both the productive and the unproductive classes in one common and universal ruin.

What then are the results to which we come. *The whole of this important subject must be re-considered*. I remember when the Bullion Report came out in the year 1811, I read it over and over again with unfeigned amazement. I could not believe my eyes when I found it gravely laid down by the band of Jews and Lawyers who drew up that Report, that what was found impossible in 1797 had become perfectly easy in 1811!! I could not believe my eyes when I found it stated virtually, that although we could not pay a taxation of *fifteen* millions per annum in paper money convertible into heavy gold in 1797, yet it was perfectly easy for us to pay a taxation of *sixty* millions per annum in paper money convertible into heavy gold in 1811!! But if this was a cause of surprise to me in 1811, what must Mr. Peel's bill have been to me in 1819? The whole was such a matter of unfeigned amazement to me, that I believe I have almost lost the faculty of ever being amazed again. As I have stated to you before, this celebrated bill was adopted without any enquiry into its "*policy*;" therefore *it must be re-considered*.

I will detain you but a moment longer. But

it is necessary that I should allude to *Reform*. I had occasion to ask a gentleman of great talent and influence to sign the Requisition for calling this meeting together. He refused to sign it, saying to me, "If you succeed in this Requisition you will relieve the *distress*.—Let the distress go on. By so doing we shall get *Reform*. And we shall bring great criminals to judgment."

Now I am a *Reformer*, and a *Radical Reformer*. Blind indeed must the man be whom the events of the last fourteen years have not convinced that something is wrong in the representation of the people. But I would not wade to reform through an ocean of blood and tears. I conscientiously believe that if we get *reform* during a period of national distress, when men's minds are inflamed by wrongs and injuries of many kinds, reform will under such circumstances terminate in long years of anarchy and revolution. Therefore I desire first to restore *prosperity*, which the present Government is fully competent to restore. When we have succeeded in this great object, when we shall once more see the industrious classes of the community flourishing under the shadow of the King's throne; then if my fellow townsmen desire it I am ready to co-operate with them with heart and hand in every just, legal, and constitutional exertion to obtain a radical reform in their Commons House of Parliament.

But it may be asked, why do I want *reform* if the present Government is competent to give prosperity to the nation? It is for this reason. I do not believe that the rights and interests of the working classes, and of the inferior classes of tradesmen, are justly and efficiently represented in Parliament. I have no fault to find with the House of Lords. Nor have I any fault to find with the House of Commons (whom I would call a House of *Little Lords*) so far as the rights and interests of the aristocracy are concerned, or even so far as the interests of the upper classes of tradesmen are concerned. The House of Commons represents these rights and interests well. But it does not properly represent the rights and interests of the working classes, and of what may be called the inferior classes of tradesmen. Look for instance at the trespass laws, the game laws, the vagrant laws, and at some parts of the criminal laws. All these have a tendency to curtail the just rights and interests of the working classes. The poor man can scarcely *set his foot upon the earth without trenching upon a law*. If he ventures into the fields, which in the ancient language of our law are called "*the people's farm*;" or if he but gather only an *oakball* or a *blackberry* from the hedge, he is seized under the *trespass laws*. If he wander but a few miles in search of the bread which is denied at home, he is seized under the *vagrant laws*. His *children*, in the innocent

sports which their age requires, driven out from the fields into the turnpike roads, and back again from the turnpike roads into the fields, with the whip of the police officer resounding over their heads!! What can be expected but the rearing up of a nation of slaves?

Now these are the kind of things which I want to see redressed in England, and it is to redress these kind of things that I seek a *radical reform*. The kind of *Reform* that I should wish to see would be, first to repeal the SEPTENNIAL ACT, and then to abolish or buy up about one hundred of the *Rotten Boroughs*, and to introduce in their place, in the House of Commons, about *two hundred Representatives of the working classes*, chosen by some kind of universal suffrage among the people. This is the kind of reform that I should wish to see. But *reform* is not the work of a day. The Duke of Wellington has taught us how to *command* reform. By *union*, by *organization*, by *general contribution*, by *patriotic exertion*, and by *discretion*; keeping always within the law and the constitution. *These* are the elements of *reform*. By the peaceful combination of means like *these* the Irish people have lately obtained a glorious and a bloodless victory. By the peaceful combination of similar means, if our public spirit is equal to the task, we may also obtain a similar victory in England. We may shortly bring forward such an

array of moral and of physical power, peacefully and legally displayed, as no Government can disregard. In this great work I am willing to participate, and at a proper time I will cordially contribute my humble assistance to set it in operation.

But, Gentlemen, I have the fullest confidence that the Duke of Wellington himself will grant us reform as soon as ever he finds himself enabled to do so. I have not the honour of the slightest acquaintance with this illustrious nobleman. I only know him by his *public acts*; and upon this authority alone I will assert, that it is not possible that a man of *his* intellect can be otherwise than a friend to *reform*.

But there is another subject respecting the Duke of Wellington. During the existence of the *paper system*, the nation made him a *grant*, and most justly and properly made him a *grant* of £700,000. Now I will say that the Duke of Wellington has no right to receive this £700,000 in the *present money*; and I will not believe that he will consent to receive it. The grant was made when *money* was worth only *one half* of its present value, and therefore *one half* of that sum is all that the Duke of Wellington is entitled to, unless, indeed, the nation should think proper to make him a still further grant, which I should not disapprove when the prosperity of the country is restored. But *as things are*, the Duke of Wellin-

ton cannot receive the full grant of £700,000 without injustice and dishonour, and I am well convinced that he will not consent to receive it. " Shall *he* who struck the foremost man in all " this globe, but for supporting robbers—shall *he* " contaminate his fingers with base bribes, and sell " the rich renown of his large honours for so " much trash as may be grasped thus?" Gentlemen, the thing is utterly impossible. The Duke of Wellington is no *Jew*, no *Lawyer*, no *Priest*. The Duke of Wellington is a soldier, a gentleman, and a man of honour—aye, and he is a man of *humanity* too!! Who could be otherwise than sensible of this—who indeed could avoid being deeply affected, but a few weeks ago, at hearing this veteran soldier, grown grey in fields of blood and victory, lifting up his voice in Parliament against the horrors of civil war, and reading lectures of humanity to the Bishops?

Gentlemen, I will trouble you no more. I thank you for the kind attention which you have paid to me. I will now read the resolutions which I have to propose. They are long. They go thoroughly into the subject. They are armed at all points, and will defy the ingenuity of either Lawyer, Jew, or *D*—I to contradict them. And I can safely promise you, that whoever may attempt it, will, like the viper, *break his teeth upon the file*.

One word more for the Duke of Wellington.

The difficulties of his situation are great and imminent. *They all virtually originate in the mortal subject which I have been explaining to you.* These difficulties have brought Castlereagh, and Canning, and Liverpool, to untimely graves. Aye, and they will bring the Duke of Wellington to an untimely grave too, unless he quickly bursts through the *thraldom* which surrounds him, and *retreats*. In accomplishing this great work he ought to be supported by the public voice. Without this, he may not be able to overget the difficulties with which he is surrounded. Let *us* then do *our* duty as far as in our humble power lies. Let us support the Duke of Wellington in the great task which is before him, and I am confident that he will yet succeed in rescuing the country from a thraldom a hundred times more degrading, and a thousand times more galling, than any from which he has lately emancipated the Irish Catholics.

THE END.

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