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AGRICULTURE
CONSIDERED AS A
MORAL and POLITICAL
D U T Y;
In a SERIES of LETTERS,
INSCRIBED
TO HIS MAJESTY.
AND RECOMMENDED
To the Perusal and Attention of every Gentleman
of Landed Property in the three Kingdoms,
AS THEY ARE CALCULATED
For the ENTERTAINMENT, INSTRUCTION, and
BENEFIT of MANKIND.

Nonnunquam horreis preclusis populo famem indixit.

By WILLIAM DONALDSON,
Late Secretary to the Government of Jamaica.

L O N D O N :

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A G R I C U L T U R E

CONSIDERED AS A

MORAL and POLITICAL DUTY,

L E T T E R I.

Introduction—Addresses to great Men dangerous and unprofitable—Libels, from a Malevolence of Mind only, encouraged—Portrait of a wise Prince.

To His M A J E S T Y,

S I R!

THE clamour of the factious, but more the complaints of the distressed, at the present exorbitant prices, imposed upon every sort of provision, are such honest, such persuasive remonstrances to rational policy, such appeals to humanity, that a man must be negligent in the moral and political duties of life, not to

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offer

offer his sentiments as an expedient for removing an evil, at once so alarming and so piteous. An evil, that unnerves our national commerce; dispirits the poor, from the apprehension of famine; exposes many, of small incomes, to difficulties they are unprepared to encounter; arms *Typhæus* with plausibility to assist his malignant designs of throwing the state into confusion, and exposing our governors to the resentments of a deluded, desperate people.

However inadequate to the vast design, exemplary merit must be allowed to those who attempt an *under-part* in it. I view myself in that *inferior* capacity. Self-approbation, arising from the intention, is the only recompence I expect: Royal munificence, I leave to those whose ample discoveries may accomplish an end so devoutly wished; for however satisfy'd I may be, from an opinion of my own importance, I am ever charmed with a man more excellent and worthier than myself.

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I address this compendium of the evils, which the most valuable subjects of this kingdom groan under, to a prince, who apparently estimates his power, only, as it is the intermediate agent of gratifying his inclination to do good, and of rendering his government subservient to the happiness of his people.

Here the malevolent will take the alarm, and upbraid me for this tribute of my zeal. If avarice had any share in the inscription, I should not have been so daring. The man who has no other support, than an intellectual property, writes truth at the hazard of famishing. It is too fatally known that we live not in the Augustan age, when the seeds of genius were cultivated, and called forth by the fostering hand of a Mæcenæ, whose high appointment of perpetual Prefect strengthened his inclination to countenance men of learning and abilities. I mean that Mæcenæ who liberally advised Augustus to

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confer the same privileges upon the conquered Britons as the citizens of Rome enjoyed, and to rank those brave people with the *Socii* of the Roman empire. Neither do we live in those delectable times when ladies chose rather to kiss the lips of a superannuated unlaced scholar, than listen to flattery from the mouth of embroidered, smooth-faced ignorance. Margaret, queen to Charles the seventh, of France, was a lover of the *belles lettres*, and manifested the warmest, yet immaculate, affection for men of genius and learning; passing one day through the saloon of the palace, she observed Allen Chartier, the king's secretary, asleep in a chair; old and unfavoured in his person, but the most learned and eloquent man of his time. The princess approached and kissed him! This unprecedented action gave an alarm to those who attended her, but she explained away their astonishment, by telling them, it was not the *man* whom she had saluted,

but

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but the mouth from whence flowed so many oracles. Those were the seasons propitious to men of genius, when the partiality of nature was approved, by countenancing her favourites; but now, when the jargon of political recrimination is read with more avidity, than the language of elegance, an author must be satisfied with less honourable expectations; he can depend only upon those who patronize scurrility, and abuse. This neglect of literary merit, has given an ungenerous turn to the mind, and produced so many readers and writers of libels.

Kings are the servants of God; they are invested with dominion, from a predilection in the Almighty to mankind, the favourites of his creation: His attributes are instructions to those imperial governors; and so far as they observe and imitate those divine precepts, they fulfil their high commission, and maintain the dignity of their office. On the contrary, when they de-

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part

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part from moral excellency, and become neglectful of their duty, in that instant they forget their rank, and forfeit the condition of their appointment.

Xunchi, the Tartar, founder of the family who now sit upon the throne of China, when death was about to revoke his commission, called together his children; and after convincing them that the end of his greatness was approaching, he enquired who among them had fortitude enough to undertake the burthen of a new-conquered empire? His eldest son, with a diffidence seldom understood by princes, declined the succession, declaring himself too weak to sustain so weighty a charge! Kamhi, the younger son, as if by divine inspiration, prostrating himself before his expiring father, and with a constancy never heard of in a child only nine years of age, told the emperor, he felt himself strong enough to undertake the administration of an empire, which the courage and virtue of Xunchi had

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had restored to, and was about to leave in, peace and tranquility; that the conduct of his ancestors should be an invariable instruction to him: that while he kept such noble examples in view, he doubted not but he should govern the nation to the satisfaction of his people!

What parent could withstand such intuition? He appointed Kamhi to the succession, under the regency of four of the wisest, and most virtuous men in his confidence. Kamhi's mind was disciplined to the arduous task of governing his own passions, as the first step to his knowledge of mankind; it is therefore no wonder that by controlling them, he knew how to manage the tempers of his subjects. Human passions arise from the same incentives, and only differ in the degrees of operation from some constitutional frailty, so that the action of every mind, if properly consulted and understood, is a convex mirror,

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in which you may behold the epitome of all mankind.

Kamhi demonstrated very early in life great strength of body and of mind; he retained both; and how?

He avoided the allurements of women; and though, from a national mistake, he was allowed the indulgence of many wives, he was scarce ever seen, with slothful dalliance, loitering away his time in voluptuous effeminacy.

Wine he used with Spartan moderation, and was of opinion that every drunkard should be exhibited in the same manner as the Lacedemonians exposed their slaves, for an example, to deter others from so shameful and unnatural a practice.

He was an early riser, and by imbibing the fragrance of the morning air, he preserved the bloom of health, which vermilioned his cheeks with a natural beauty, far excelling the false colour of the most artful and pernicious impositions. Exercise
and

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and temperance are the best face-painters; they only want encouragement to be universally known and admired.

Princes are luminaries, and, like the sun, must be gazed on at a distance, and thro' some medium: Kamhi had not altogether shut his mind against this splendid idea; he preserved some shew of eastern magnificence, but it seemed rather in compliance to the general inclination of his people, than to gratify the insolence of self-admiration.

The jesuits (a proscribed people in our days) had the credit of enriching the mind of this young prince; it was owing to the industry, care, and abilities, of three ingenious and patient men of their college, that Kamhi was qualified to examine the Chinese upon their own books, the Tartars in military exercises, and the Europeans in mathematics.

He inured his countrymen to hunting, shooting, incamping, and other warlike
exer-

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exercises, to secure to them their natural powers, and prevent their becoming effeminate, like the Chinese, through idleness and inactivity.

He was intrepid, wise, and fortunate: He subdued the most formidable conspiracy, before the traitors had caused any commotion in the empire.

No minister, however powerful, from interest or fortune, escaped his resentment, if justly accused.

Calumny was never suffered to approach nearer than his ear, and the slanderer was never recompensed for his disobedient reproaches.

He promoted industry, by encouraging the industrious: He often remitted the taxes to the provinces, in time of dearth: He distributed money to age and imbecility: He gave labour to the necessitous husbandman.

He was a friend to commerce, and endeavoured by bounties from his own revenues

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to give a spirit to trade: The Russian merchants frequently experienced his munificence.

He was strict and liberal to the soldiers; he kept them constantly employed, and paid their debts, when the scarcity of the times exorbitated an expence above their ordinary allowance.

He maintained his paternal character, by his elevated virtue; by the dignity and civility of his government he preserved a respect, and subordination, to the authority of magistrates; encouraged a return of affection from them, and marked out the reciprocal duty from the subject to the emperor.

Such was the representative of God in China! His fidelity as a servant, was manifested in the wisdom of his administration; he was grateful to *his* sovereign; affectionate to his subjects; benevolent to all mankind. His moral, and political virtues

virtues were amply rewarded; he enjoyed long life, and his people happiness.

This is the faithful outline, from an highly finished original, and worthy to be studied by those royal artists who wish to excel in the vast design and execution of government. I could here forego the usual jealousy of cotemporary writers, and assimilate many of those virtues in your majesty; but to avoid commentitious slander, I will be influenced by Pescennius Niger, who forbid a panegyrist of his day, to write any thing in his praise, and advised him, if he valued the safety of his person, or character, to exert his talents in reciting the actions of the dead, who could neither injure him by their resentments, nor recompense him thro' vanity. Thus the zeal of an honest affection is restrained, and the most grateful employment consigned to posterity, who having no interest, but in truth, will do justice to your Majesty's character, and future patriots,

patriots, finding no gratification, no purpose answered in besmearing the portrait, will approve your virtues, by imitating them.

Here is another political mistake; for panegyric not being the favourite of the present day, the encomiast is exposed to the rudest interpretation; he no sooner offers a tribute of praise to his sovereign, but he is slandered as a political general, using the meanest artifices to betray the royal garrison into a capitulation favourable to his own particular interest: I acquit myself of this imputation, when I assure these commentators, whose promptitude I am aware of, that I set too high a value upon my integrity, and too mean a price upon my abilities, to prostitute the one, or expect reward for the other; yet at the same time confess, if the meaner passions should actuate my mind to a design of making advantageous terms with the crown,

crown, I so far disapprove the usual mode, adopted by our present patriotic engineers, that I would sooner attempt it by negotiation, than by storm. As this prolepsis is co-incident with the times, there needs no apology for obtruding it.

This first letter may be considered as the proem, or prefatory address to your Majesty; in which the motive to this undertaking dawns upon the mind, and faintly promises to illuminate the subject, with intellectual prospects, hitherto unobserved in the walks of agriculture: Confident that Agriculture, the great object of my present concern, must have suffered various changes from the earliest times of moral impulsion, through the different ages of heroism and refinement, to the present day of political absonance, I strolled heedlessly through the annals of mankind, and caught the different appearances which Agriculture put on, at those favourable or

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unfavourable seasons of flattery or neglect, which in the course of these letters I shall endeavour to describe. I am,

S I R,

Your most faithful,

and in that fidelity,

Your MAJESTY'S

most undesigning subject,

and servant.

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L E T T E R II.

Agriculture recommended as the great Object of Attention—its Antiquity illustrated—its relative Divinity explained—The Dignity of Agriculture maintained by the most eminent People in the earliest Times—and celebrated by the wisest.

I Mean in this address to recommend Agriculture as the great object of your Majesty's attention. Antiquity sanctifies the election. Husbandry was the first temporal idea that possessed the mind of our earliest parents; for when the Almighty had catered for the present meal, and furnished their larder with an unsparing hand, he ordained that they should hereafter earn their bread by the sweat of their brow; indicating thereby, that sloth was an ungrateful affection, and labour, the most essential attachment to keep the
animal

animal machine in health and vigor. By this precept it must appear evident to every thinking person, uncorrupted by the vices of a city, that men were designed to dwell in fields; to contemplate nature; to follow her through all her works, and to assist her benign intentions.

Noah, who had prosecuted his studies in the university of nature, was perfectly skilled in the noble science of husbandry, before the ingratitude of man brought such universal devastation upon the world; he found how necessary it was, after the waters were removed, to exercise those talents, in forwarding the fruits of the earth, for the common maintenance of his family, and the creatures he had preserved; as well as for the future prospect of securing wealth and power to such of his posterity who should merit that pre-eminence, by toiling for it, conformable to the original precept, revealed by the great Mandator, for the instruction of mankind.

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The ancient policy, under the immediate interference and authority of the legislator of nature, knew no greater distinction among men, than the herds of cattle they maintained, and the lands they cultivated; this land-mark of nobility continued for many ages after societies were formed, and chiefs were approved, the necessary evils, to check the power of avarice, and of all those concomitant passions, which force themselves upon dominion, and opulence.

The earth was the *protocol*, or first legible volume, which nature unfolded for the exercise of the human mind; no wonder opinions prevailed under such instruction, that all the blessings of this world sprung from her prolific womb. Men were necessarily actuated by interest and gratitude to assist the labours of the earth in bringing forth her fruits, so essential to their existence. And when inquisitive speculatists had reasoned away the simplicity of
its

its original language, their assiduity became a moral, as well as political duty; men not only toiled in her service, but they invoked Pluto, as the ruling principle of terrene œconomy, to lend his assisting grace in so beneficial an operation. It is the wisdom of nature to adore the nutritious elements, which furnish us with the necessaries of life; it is the folly of refinement totally to disregard them. The inhabitants bordering upon the *Mare glaciale*, give credit to this position; those contented people being supplied from the bountiful ocean, place their elysium in the abysses of the sea; their *Tornsgarsfuk*, or good spirit, with his mother, dwell in the briny caverns of the deep.

The earth was considered as the foster-mother of mankind; and for these natural reasons; she receives us upon our first coming into the world; nourishes us whilst we remain in it; and when we are summoned to retire, takes us to her bosom,
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and covers our mortal part with her maternal veil. The ancients thought they could not make too much of so indulgent a parent. The Christian system adopts the same idea, but does not seem to entertain that lively sense of the obligation.

The *earth* was one of the *deities* the ancients *swore* by; and they placed their *elysium* in the fields: nay, the old Germans trusting to the soil for the desirable things of this world, believed their god *Tuisco* to be the son of the earth.

The Athenians wore little grasshoppers of gold in their hair, to indicate that they were born of the earth, like those insects. And the Latins, upon the testimony of Ovid, fashioned mankind, as sculptors model them, with clay and water.

The idea of husbandry was so forcibly impressed on the minds of the ancients, that they used the word *plant* metaphorically for the generation of men, supposing them formed of earth, and the first elements:

And

And we continue to this day the same word, in the same acceptation; we plant colonies, when we people and settle them.

Moses was a friend to Agriculture, for as Philo observes, he prohibited the cutting down fruit trees: He expressly interdicted the destroying unripe corn, that by preserving the nourishments as well as the delicacies of life, nature might not be interrupted in her generous intention of bringing her tribute unto man as well as unto princes.

That husbandry was held in great veneration by the earliest people is beyond all doubt, when we recollect, that they paid divine honours to such curious and industrious men, who made any useful discoveries for the improvement of Agriculture. The Egyptians worshipped Isis, under the name of Ceres, for discovering the use of corn: And Osiris for his knowledge, and information, in planting of fruit trees. The

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Egyptian god *Apis* was worshipped by those people in the shape of an *ox*.

Every external mark of distinction was also conferred, by the ancients, on those who contributed to the great plan of husbandry. Bacchus was painted with bull's horns, because he instructed the conquered nations to plough with oxen; and ornamented with clusters of grapes, for propagating the vine. And they honoured Neptune with the names of *Asphalius* and *Gaiocchus*, as the establisher and supporter of the earth.

In succeeding ages, when the human faculties expanded, and the mental powers were upon the stretch, gratitude, assisted by superstition, enrolled those extraordinary labourers, who had contributed so wonderfully to the public good, in the number of their divine agents; thus, by making gods of peasants, they looked up to the husbandman, with an awful regard, as the
first,

first, from being the most useful, man in their community.

Theseus divided his common-wealth into three distinct ranks; the noblemen, the husbandmen, and the artificers. To the nobility he committed the care of religion; the choice of magistrates; the teaching and dispensing of the laws; and the interpretation of all sacred matters. The husbandmen were respected from their usefulness to the public; and the artificers were important from their numbers. He considered Agriculture as so essential to the good of his country, that he stamped upon his money the image of an ox, to excite in his people a due attention to the yoke, and the plough. Theseus was the steady and invariable patron of industry, for the labourer never solicited in vain, his countenance and protection. When dead, the Athenians, in grateful memorial of his patriotick virtues, inurned his remains near the Gymnasium, in the center of the

city, and as the afflicted found a refuge in him when living, they continued the same shelter to them under his sepulchre; for they decreed, his tomb should be a sanctuary, to such helpless people who were oppressed by the persecution of men in power.

The soil was considered of such value, that when Piety influenced the Greeks to raise the Tumuli over their dead heroes, to an unlimited height, Plato recommended barren places for the burial of their dead, and restricted their immoderate expence of soil, on their monumental turrets, or mounds, to the size of five men's labour, in five days.

Agriculture, was the favourite subject of the bards of old; Hesiod wrote a didacted poem, pointing out the properest season for the plough, the seed, and the harvest; for felling of wood, and planting of vines. And when virtue had bribed the pleasures into the country, Theocritus celebrated the happiness of a pastoral life.

Homer

Homer ornamented the shield of Achilles with the implements of husbandry, to remind him, that valour was not bestowed upon him, only for the purpose of triumphing over cities, but that he was also to subdue habitual idleness, and improve the lands he was to conquer.

And further, to illustrate the dignity of Agriculture, from the same authority; in those times, when wisdom took some part in directing the studies of men, husbandry appears to have been the science of princes. And that the most exalted personages in those heroick days—when the attention was turned to the noblest achievements—improved their leisure and their talents in following the plough, and assisting the efforts of nature, is not to be doubted, as Homer makes Laertes, not only plant, but manure his own land.

Your Majesty, from the foregoing testimonies, will be convinced that in the earliest period of existence, when the

world

world was in the vigor of youth, Agriculture was equally the exercise of the mind and body; and that those various objects which bore a part in the great scheme of cultivation, were idolized by the wisest and best of men.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R III.

How Agriculture was attended to by the Romans, thro' every change in their Republic and Empire—The singular Advantages arising from it—That it was a favourite Science with Men of Wisdom and Virtue.

SUCH glorious pursuits as those which are submitted to your Majesty's attention, in the preceding letter, could not be put out of countenance, so long as men remained faithful and honest to themselves; we, therefore, trace the same laudable attachment to industry, when a reverence for the gods, was a recommendation to the notice of men; when heroic virtue gave strength and vigor to the Roman common-wealth; when the nerve was felt in their arm, and seen in their language; and liberty, the great charter
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of nature, was the peculiar care of the state. Men, who were called forth to the greatest commands, retired to their pastoral vocation, as soon as their authority expired. Cincinnatus, after subduing the enemies of his country, by his valour and conduct, raised his reputation still higher, by humbling himself to the more moderate, yet not less significant, employment of cultivating his own farm, which consisted of no more than four acres of land. The fasces were to this great and good man more showy, than honourable, and the lictors only necessary, where vice was to be kept in awe: He seemed to think little of an appointment that required such splendid trumpery to mark its pre-eminency. And Cato, the most austere man in the Roman senate, joined the science of Agriculture, to his political investigations.

Temperance and industry were the characteristic marks of the most illustrious heroes in those days: Sloth and debauchery were

were the brands which stigmatized their useless prodigals.

The end of the Roman wars, was the honour and advantage of the state: The spoil of the enemy, was generally devoted to the pious purpose of erecting temples in thankfulness to the deity who gave them victory: They were monuments of gratitude and magnificence; and at once testified their piety, and their opulence.

The soldier, who deserved well of his country, had a present of corn, or a piece of land, given to him in reward of his services: The prisoners were decreed the common perquisite of all, they became predial slaves, *adscripti glebæ*, and annexed to the land their owner occupied.

The constancy of these people, persevering in the noblest purpose of cultivating their land, notwithstanding their most arduous endeavours were frequently disturbed by the jealousy of their neighbours, the infidelity of their allies, and the unsettled temper

temper of their new subjects, shew of what importance husbandry appeared to them; for when their thoughts were hurried from improvement to devastation; from the blessings of peace, to the destruction of war; Agriculture had still a place in the mind, the rural occupations were the object of sollicitude and attention: Notwithstanding the inroad of the enemy often defeated their most judicious plans of operation, and the horrors of famine frequently gave an alarm to their fortitude; but as the credit of those times hung upon the faith of industry, and public virtue, they had resources from that industry, and that virtue, in which they so much confided.

The long war which the Romans maintained against the resentment, and military abilities, of Hanibal, would have proved fatal to the common-wealth, had not their most zealous and faithful friend and ally, Heiro, of Sicily, furnished their magazines repeatedly with corn. That prince establish-

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ed his empire in the happiness of his people: He recommended industry as the only friend that could secure them health, and supply their wants; and while they continued in friendship with virtue, they were convinced they could not substitute a better: The fruitful soil of Sicily, by the fostering care of Heiro, not only produced abundance for his own subjects, but was a grainery for the Romans.

The produce of the earth, is the natural revenue of every nation; it is a benevolence, or free gift from God, as the proper, and immediate maintenance of his creatures; and a thrifty management of it, settles the tempers of the people to an affection for their rulers: it opens a credit with foreign countries, and multiplies resources, to supply every *artificial* want; it is the soul of commerce, and the sinews of authority. It preserved Rome, and secured Heiro in the possession of Sicily.

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When dominion expanded itself over half the world, and power was distributed and let loose; every man set a value upon his own services, and claimed a recompence adequate to that partial estimation; disappointment quickened their sensations; they felt a rotten part in the state, from the corruption of their own minds: Those putrescent humours, generated a myriad of patriots, who, under the colour of liberty, degraded the dignity, and weakened the power of the senate, gave involuntary strength to ambition, and by one great cast for empire, overthrew freedom, and established tyranny!—When this mighty revolution had inflamed the spirit of the Roman people, and the fermentation of jarring principles had subsided, Agriculture preserved its rank under the Despots.

Virgil exerted the whole force of his talents, to prove, he delighted more in husbandry than in war; and that the manage-

ment of a farm was of more importance than conducting an army. The credit he was in with Augustus, and the reputation he acquired from his pastoral writings, afford us ample reason to believe, that husbandry was the ruling passion of those times.

And further, when tranquility was restored to the empire, and the din of arms no longer worried the minds of those brave, and thinking people, Agriculture became the object of speculation. In this national cause, appeals were lodged in the minds of the greatest, and wisest men: The decision was thought too momentous to be referred to the arbitration of common husbandmen, who, by being passive to practical impressions, acquire accidental knowledge, which they cannot explain, nor do they understand. The moral philosopher reasoned upon the divine intention: The naturalist experimented the properties of each particular

k D grain,

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grain, and the probability of fertilizing the earth; new discoveries were made, and considerable advantages accrued from them.

Pliny asserts, if you sow wheat upon its natural soil, such as Byfacium, a particular field in Africa, it will aggregate every year, one hundred and fifty times the original quantity sown: Nay, he tells you that a procurator sent the emperor Augustus from thence, near four hundred grains springing from a single one; and at another time, Nero had three hundred and sixty sent him from the same place. If from comparing the *present* production with the above account, we *should* dispute the veracity of Pliny, it nevertheless makes out *something* to favour my position; for if Agriculture had not been an object in the first degree of estimation, the philosopher would not have ventured his reputation, by exciting emotions in favour of it.

To

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To assist still more the important object of my pursuit, let us look into the simplicity of former times, when the dead were honoured by the living; when sepulchres were erected over the ashes of worthy men; or cenotaphs raised to their memory: Officers of the highest rank would, in those pious days, lay the first turf, with gentlest hand, over the tomb; and the friends of the defunct would repair to them every year, to offer sacrifices to their manes, calling upon their spirits, and sorrowing their absence from their families, friends, amusements, and *business* of life. Lucian introduces a father following the exequies of his son, lamenting that he had left the world, unexperienced in the pleasures of a wife, the comfort of children, and the *blessings* of *husbandry*. Many pagan countries, to this day, approach very near the same ceremonies: Nay, the Irish have their *præficcæ*, or screeching women, to howl over the deceased,

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ceased,

ceased, and with the like *ethnic* lamentations, upbraided him for giving them the flip, and depriving them of his *corporal agency in the field*, or otherwise.

What remained of the shattered power of the Roman empire, varied according to the vices or virtues, the wisdom or weakness, of succeeding emperors. Antoninus Pius, who adopted the apothegm of Scipio Africanus—that he had rather save the life of one subject, than destroy a thousand enemies—produced the most persuasive evidence to demonstrate that he was capable of feeling the operations of so illustrious a precept; for the historians, who blazon his character, carry the climax of his many princely virtues no higher, than that he was a great lover of husbandry.

Pertinax, who succeeded to an empire impoverished by the disorders of Commodus, his predecessor, as the most effectual means to satisfy the minds of his
sub-

subjects, and to strengthen his authority in their affections, enacted, that all waste grounds in Italy, and other countries, though of the prince's demesne, should be freely given to them who would manure, and improve them; and further, to invite men to industry, he granted the husbandman ten years immunity from all taxes, and security from all other trouble during his reign. By this wise and provident expedient, he found employment for the soldiers, who were become licentious from idleness; and by encouraging the industrious, raised the dejected spirits of his worthier subjects.

Four years after Dioclesian had retired from the toils of government, to enjoy the tranquility and ease of a private person, Gallerius warmly solicited him to resume the throne; but Dioclesian, with a philosophical indifference, stopt his importunities, by this simple, but significant interrogation: “Did you see, Gallerius,

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the *plants* raised with my own hands at Salona?" Could language convey a stronger proof, that Dioclesian was better satisfied with his vegetable dominion, where all his subjects were governed by one principle of action, and directed to the end for which they were designed, than with the empire he had quitted; where, from the depravity of human nature, nothing but disappointments could be expected? Or, perhaps, Dioclesian was disgusted to see men slaves to his humour, only because he could propitiate the present hour; and traitors to God, because they saw his blessings in reversion.

Thus upon a cursory review of the state of Agriculture, through different ages, from the earliest time, we find it a favourite science with men of the most sublime and accomplished virtue, in all nations: It was a relaxation from the toils of war, and the severer study of epic magnificence. An attention to husbandry is
a com-

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a compliance with the inclination of God, for the produce of the earth is interpretatively an intimation from the Almighty, to cultivate it; and by making the most of his bounty, we not only estimate its value, but manifest our gratitude for his paternal indulgence.

I am, &c.

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LETTER

LETTER IV.

How Agriculture suffered by the Pride and Ignorance of the Romish Church—The Vain-glory and Tyranny of the Feudal Lords—Character of Lewis XI. of France—A Sketch of Henry VII. of England—The Vanity of those Politicians who neglect a Business they understand, to attempt a Science they never can arrive at.

LET us step aside from the heathen dispensation, pursue our researches, and look into those times, when the covenant of grace had instructed men to be subservient to reason, and virtue; when that emanation of divine light promised to give spirit to every action, by representing to us such vast, such universal benefits! and had we been angels, instead of men, the promise, no doubt, would have been amply fulfilled; but mortal felicity was too valuable a property to be distributed,

distributed, and human nature too frail, not to produce many who would struggle hard for a neighbour's proportion; not considerately to encrease their happiness, but arrogantly to break down the barrier of equality, and so lift themselves above the level of mankind.

The great founder of the Christian religion, partook of the divine essence; those who succeeded Christ, and his Apostles, in the grand mission, were composed of grosser materials; as those men *felt* no advantages arising from humility and forbearance, they were unwilling to *see* any; they had no idea of making discoveries, and publishing any important truths of the next world; they had passions which had been long under restraint, and they as long wished to indulge them; the precepts of their masters were no longer binding, they now began to think for themselves: They explained those rebellious emotions, as effusions of divine grace, and

and found an interest in gratifying them; they gave a loose to pride, to avarice, and to every infernal importunity; they aimed at dominion, and by opposing the strength of religion to the weakness of human nature, they acquired it. Theology was now the pernicious study of those who saw the advantage arising from it; they suggested new systems, and deformed the old; metaphysical subtilities, and unphilosophical wonders, were imposed upon the world, while credulity was prepared to receive the most monstrous novelties! The simple, intelligent language of nature, yielded its persuasive eloquence, to the jargon of interested priests; men no longer saw the image of God in his own works, but were searching for the character of a supreme Being, in the postulatium of some favourite Evangelist!

To exalt the ecclesiastical supremacy, it was thought necessary to degrade the Almighty to the idea of a temporal monarch,

monarch, who subjected the souls and bodies of his creatures, to the government, or controul of such men, who arrogated to themselves the title of his ministers; those divine officers took the trouble of dispensing favours from their celestial master, and became the monopolizers of all his blessings; pardons for every offence had each its peculiar price! indulgences to sin again, were likewise to be purchased! and dispensations from every obligation, whether sacred or profane, were objects of religious commerce! thus transactions, dishonourable to God, as a bounteous, all-wise Being; and insulting to man, as a rational creature, were consecrated, by the authority of these pious impostors.

When ignorance, and superstition, saw so much power delegated to the church, and so many comfortable things at the disposal of the pontiff, no wonder they lost the pure worship of God, and introduced the

the idolatrous worship of man: the opulent wanted in every excess of cruelty and oppression, from possessing the means to unburthen their consciences, when cooperating with divine justice, they became insupportable to them! the meaner sort indulged their lesser villainies, having little to apprehend from the torments of another world, so long as their punishments could be moderated by penances in this.

Those devotees, who were slaves to their intellectual abominations, they precipitated to heaven, as assistants to the Almighty, to receive petitions, and to patronize the absurdities of those who paid tribute to them! By this imposition, saints were multiplied without end, and almost every day in the year was made holy, for the adoration of those canonized prostitutes!

Such a sanctimonious *indulto* gave countenance to laziness; and the spiritual exactions imposed upon labour, discouraged the husbandman; he could not with that
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alacrity follow his team, while his assiduity and care were taxed, to support in voluptuous ease, men who contributed so little to the benefit of the common-wealth. When Saint Augustin displayed the excellencies of the Christians, and set them in opposition to the Jews, he exhorted them to manifest their superior virtue by acts of exemplary charity; he hinted, in terms very intelligible, that expropriating the tythe of their goods for the relief and support of the poor, would be a very acceptable offering; and if they consented, he assured them the clergy would give the time, and the trouble, of decimating their property, and distributing their benevolence; the superstitious fears of mere mortal men, yielded to the persuasions of the saint: the church unwilling to weaken the credit of so divine a concession, gave force to the intreaty, by liberal promises to the obedient, and severest punishments to the refractory; and never left off flatter-
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tering and terrifying the poor souls, till they had perverted the benevolence of a voluntary donation, to the rapaciousness of an absolute demand. By this chicanery a mitre became such a desirable thing, to all those who valued the revenue more than the duty or dignity of the office, that popes and princes wrangled for the induction; and—but your Majesty knows best—a mitre preserves its terms and stipulations even unto this hour.

They also counter-acted every principle of sound policy; for those men sought to strengthen themselves, by the means which weaken every other body, or society of people. They established convents for the reception of idleness, and gained profelytes by discouraging industry! Agriculture suffered a severe shock, under the influence of those spiritual drones; the fertile soil of Sicily became an unprofitable desert; and the territories, subject to the papal jurisdiction, were laid waste, and
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continue to this day, a frightful evidence of the Almighty's disapprobation.

And further, in those days of superstition, when heaven had no will of its own! when the angels, and dignitaries above, in a fit of idleness, left the government of nature to the churchmen below; then the pope, like most favourite servants to great men, exercised his delegated power, with the most authoritative severity; he laid a curse upon every man's land who doubted his divine authority; and vegetation, in obedience to the interdiction of these prime ministers, left the fertile vallies, and with infinite fatigue climbed to the tops of mountains, where she had scarcely strength enough to warrant an existence.

These substitutes from the God of mercy, to exemplify the inherent qualities of their master, established the Inquisition! Nay so faithless was their administration, that they renounced the most engaging cir-
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cumstances in the religion of Christ, despoiled it of its ineffable beauties, and left not a single feature by which its primitive face could be distinguished!

The *bulimia*, or insatiable appetite for rule, which predominates in the Roman church, prevailed over the meekness of the primitive doctrine; the vicar of Jesus Christ, not satisfied with subduing to his will, Potentates confounded in the mistakes of his own propagating, but his holyness must let loose his bulls to rouze, by arietation, the martial spirit of chivalry—the vanity of those unpolished days—to tofs and gore all who did not, with unre-served obedience, conform to those ab-surdities, in which he had established his dominion.

Thus these enemies to Christianity pretended to invoke the clemency of the most benign Being, by acts of outrage and barbarity! The merciless crusades defeated the end they proposed by them; the mi-
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series they encountered, in those preda-tory expeditions; the discomfitures they suffered; the losses they sustained; and, what was no less expressive, the dis-union among themselves, declared the Almighty's displeasure. His reprehension was severe, but significant; superstition was shook, the mental eye began to dilate, and many were convinced, that infalibility was not the portion of man.

In the depravity of human nature, hy-pocrisy maintains her empire; she deceives the conscientious in the affectation of vir-tue, and flatters the malevolent by avow-ing her duplicity: It is her prerogative to multiply *saints* and *patriots*, and those *divine* characters establish their *popularity* in her *countenance*—Cromwell has cleared up this proposition beyond a doubt—I have attempted to explain to your Majesty what disorders agitated the state of man, when hypocrisy usurped the administration of the Christian religion; in those civil

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commotions, when the passions were suborned into an alliance, to ballance the power of reason, philosophy lost her credit, and mankind her protection; hypocrisy, instead of seeking advantage from sowing the fields with corn, saw a more promising harvest from planting the road to heaven with briars, and forming those unshapely thorns into a labyrinth, as a decoy for her own profit, and as she knew the candidate always bribes highest who has the least pretension to a feat, consequently the clue was reserved to compliment those who least deserved her protection.

From the fate of these religious miscreants, we may infer, that God is satisfied when men acknowledge him in truth, and sincerity; whether in simple compliance to the dictates of unrefined nature, or obsequious to the arbitrary dogmas of conceited theologians, various in their theory, and contradictory in their practice;

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or why should so many nations of the earth, untainted, and unconfounded by the sophistry of interested divines, be permitted to enjoy all, perhaps more blessings than we can boast of, under the protection of the same Being?

This was the epocha, from which industry may date its revival. However astonishing it may appear to us, Potentates in those unlearned days, when philosophy was in confinement, were such dupes to ecclesiastical authority, that, tho' they wished to enslave all mankind, they discovered not the least inclination to loosen their own fetters! They weakened their own sovereignty, to strengthen the Pontif's! The feudal barons, mighty in those times, were under the same infatuation! an invisible agent locked up their senses, and kept their minds in bondage! Those tremendous lords, who shook the throne of their princes, trembled, in their turn, at a spiritual anathema! A fulmination from

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the vatican, was more dreadful to them, than a storm of thunder from the heavens! Wonderful, that those very men, who behaved like bears to the lions, should yield like lambs to the wolves! The leaders of that celestial, blood-thirsty militia, sold charters of liberty to their vassals, to enable them to undertake, with formidable cruelty, those savage, and impious invasions! The richest blood in Christendom atoned for the sacrilege.

The chain that linked all Christian powers, in one fatal mistake, was now slackened; as the pope's interest in heaven grew apparently less, princes grew more bold; they ventured to withdraw their allegiance from him, and tho' they still respected his character, as head of the church, yet they no longer stood in fear of his spiritual interdictions; they accepted his prayers, but would not be governed by his counsels, nor awed by his threats.

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The feudal lords, deluded by religious promises, had, in the pontifical juggle, ruined their own real estates; in search of visionary ones! The Pope deceived them with the prospect of heavenly kingdoms, but what was infinitely more alluring, he insured them principalities upon earth! and as disappointment to ambition generally puts irrational creatures out of temper, those knights-errant, by missing the possession of one, lost that faith which gave credit for the other; they found the Pope had led them into a wilderness, but had not, like Moses with the children of Israel, conducted them to the land of promise. They became disgusted with his monitories; they deserted his banner; and by dismissing old prejudices, left an opening for the approaches of truth.

As those petty tyrants grew weak, industry gathered strength, and every prince who understood his interest, connived at

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the revolution; every day took a link from the chain: property was alienated to discharge debts, or redeem vanities; manumissions were sold for temporary ostentation, or daily subsistence; and retainers were enfranchised, having neither fortune to maintain, nor service to employ them: men began to look up to sovereign power for protection; and princes encouraged that confidence by grants, and immunities; the husbandman had now hopes, not only of tilling his land, but enjoying the fruits of his industry. This dawn of liberty animated them to useful exercises, and new sources of domestic comfort sprung from their labour. The Germans no longer lived like savages, upon the wild beast they worried; Corn-fields, and vineyards took the place of gloomy woods, and dreary wildernesses; social industry civilized mankind, and human nature began, once more, to re-assume its wonted distinction; the aristocracy, that rampart
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of authority, which had kept Europe so long in fetters, began to totter; the people grew in power with their kings, and *monarchy* gave freedom to Europe.

Monarchy is a frightful word, in the language of a free state, but, however the idea may alarm the jealousy of many, I am fully persuaded, from the present emulation in commerce, and the pride of nations, monarchy is best calculated to maintain the spirit of the one, the honour and dignity of the other, and (but this is sporting with improbabilities) could wisdom and virtue be always united in the same person, the republican would not lose by the innovation; for the *radii* of power being contracted, as it were, into one focus, from the circumference to the centre, acts from that collected force with more vigour than any other form of government whatever; but every man should try this proposition in his own mind, without consulting the contradictory hu-

mours of society: it was the restless tempers of society that destroyed the first common-wealth, and entailed those different degrees of subordination which more or less enslave, or restrain the active powers of the subject to every dominion, in whatever spot of the earth it may be established.

Princes were now tenacious of their privileges, and as they were become formidable, by the means which nature directs, they struggled for prerogative; and inferior states, from the same motive, asserted their rights: Sweden, long oppressed by the tyranny of Denmark, obtained independency; Spain, by uniting the crowns of Castille and Aragon, was no longer subordinate to the will of France: the house of Austria strengthened itself by an alliance with the Burgundian: James Sforza, the son of a peasant, usurped the Milanois, and ruled in full sovereignty: the family of Medicis, established a dominion in Florence,

rence, by their wealth, and popular virtue: the Helvetians, with sentiments of heroic bravery, struggled for liberty, and obtained it; they threw off the Austrian yoke, and strengthened, by their wisdom, the power they acquired by the sword: and their fidelity to their allies, gave them credit in all nations. Princes now dared to dispute the canon, and prescribe laws themselves; justice began to shew herself in every state; industry was now protected and recompensed.

Lewis the eleventh, of France, was fashioned to the times he lived in; those exigencies, which the weakness of preceding reigns had left him to encounter, forced him into stratagems, and wiles, dishonourable for a great monarch, and which can only be vindicated by the tempers he was to govern; his duplicity must be considered as political wisdom; he knew the danger of attempting to establish his grandeur by a *coup de maitre*; rash actions are

are illustrious only when they succeed; he had restless neighbours to amuse, and ambitious subjects to subdue; he was determined to be KING, and he took the surest method to accomplish his resolution; he curbed the nobility, and unbridled the common people; the restraint he laid upon the first, gained him the affection of the latter; having great competitors to contend with, he had the more need of his subjects esteem; the attention he ever paid to the freedom of Agriculture fixed it: Lewis entered into the minutest particulars of the police; he prohibited the exportation of corn, that his people might enjoy the abundance that was due to their labour; he punished the bakers who had combined to raise the price of bread: thus happiness increased with their freedom; and thus, by giving liberty to his industrious subjects, he enfranchised himself, and by increasing their power, he augmented his own. *Husbandry* was an auxiliary in this favourable change,

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and may be considered as a *collateral agent* in establishing *his* greatness, and in securing the *grandeur* of the *French monarchy* to his *posterity*.

As diseases in plants conduce to the health of the animal, so the vices of princes are sometimes efficient which give vigor to the political body; fear, jealousy and avarice, so predominant in the temper of Henry the seventh, of England, gave liberty to his subjects! Henry's title to that crown his valour presented him with, was very disputable, but what was wanting in justice, was supplied by stratagem; he had recourse to every method which wisdom, or artifice, could suggest, to establish his pretensions: his avidity for power, and his dread of losing any part of it, impelled him to unite himself with the house of his avowed enemies by marriage, (the most unnatural violence humanity can consent to) only to secure his regal authority, against attempts from that family. His

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suspicion of the nobles, put him upon the expedient of emancipating the common people; to check the tyranny of the lords, was to strengthen his own. He amused the minds of his subjects by employing them, either upon Agriculture, or commerce; and having a personal interest in all his actions, he saw his advantage in giving encouragement to both. He filled his coffers, by sacrificing to his avarice the wealthiest men in his kingdom, only because they were so; he kept his nobles in perpetual dread, by his severity, and the commons in hope, by his partial attachment to them; so that during a reign of twenty-four years, though frequently disquieted, the Yorkists never could strengthen their party so as to appear formidable to Henry, notwithstanding their oppressions were manifold, and their grievances real; and with all this, abetted by a lawful prince—as they imagined—in the person of Perkin Warbeck, who appeared in arms

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to assert his own natural claim, and to remove the yoke his subjects had put upon their own necks; and what was still more promising, this artful impostor was assisted by a matrimonial alliance with Scotland, the friendship of Ireland, and the good wishes of several foreign powers! the reason is obvious, those idle people, who are always the victims to proud, or seditious spirits, were not to be found in that necessary abundance; the blessings of industry were explained to them, by their different feelings, and the unusual smiles of their wives and little ones—for plenty is ever accompanied with cheerfulness: husbandmen, and manufacturers, were satisfied with the terms on which they existed, and beheld, with satisfaction, those tyrants enslaved, who had so lately shackled them; they were no longer vassals to men, who abused the authority which the feudal tyranny had given them; nobody had a claim to their service, but their country, and

and their families, and they were amply rewarded by both. Henry found it much easier to win the gratitude of his plebeian subjects, than to secure the allegiance of his nobles; this aberration, in politics, proved his wisdom; and though he was virtuous only for his own sake, his subjects, nevertheless, profited by his hypocrisy.

Thus when industry was encouraged, kings were most powerful: pastoral politics is the safest study for princes; every one may be in the cabinet of nature, very few in the secrets of government: and as truth explains itself, fallacy, on the contrary, requires the most violent, and deceitful arguments, to give it circulation. This axiom is illustrated by the intemperance of the present times; our political gentry, by not employing their talents in what they understand, make a most ridiculous figure in attempting a science they can know nothing about.—Socrates walking

walking upon the bank of the *Ilissus*, with one of his disciples, stopped by chance at the spot from whence, as ancient fable reports, *Boreas* ran off with the nymph *Orithya*.—The young man recollecting the story, and wishing to know Socrates' opinion of mythology, asked him earnestly what he thought of that legendary tale?—"My friend, (replied the philosopher) I can find no leisure for such enquiries; and the reason of it is, that I cannot, as yet, in obedience to the god of Delphi, *understand myself*. Now it appears ridiculous to me, to be searching after other matters, while I am ignorant of this."

I am, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER V.

Agriculture revived upon the Reformation of the Church, and the destruction of Feudal Tyranny—The Pride and Injustice of the Popes, the Ignorance of the Bishops, and the Lewdness of the inferior Clergy—The mistakes which established the new Doctrine of Martin Luther.

I Have led your Majesty, by long and heedless strides, from the aurora, or first dawn of authority, to the vesper, or last twinkling of papal supremacy; to the feudal system; and to an æra, even threatening to industry itself, which was beginning to flourish, upon the ruins of both.

As apostates, from a shaken, and unsettled mind, are generally most rigid, so Constantine, when he embraced Christianity, severely adhered to the discipline of the Latin church; that emperor was so bigotted

bigotted to his new credenda, that he sent for Paphnutius, whose eyes Maximinus had pulled out, and kissed the hollows: and, as a certain worthy divine expresses his veneration of so pious an act, “made much of the sockets, even after the candles were extinguished.” This emperor’s goodness of heart, deceived his judgement of those men, who *appeared* better than himself; and, from a mistaken zeal, he gave horns to the bull, when he invested the Pope with temporal power: however those polite churchmen, not to be backward in civility, have done justice to the compliment, by exercising their jurisprudence in the absolute controul of secular, as well as ecclesiastical affairs; till folly, by going out of bounds, betrayed her truant disposition, and lost that credit, which so long maintained her temporal jurisdiction.

The insuperable pride of the Popes, together with their aversion to œcumenical

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cal councils; the irregularities in the conclaves; the ignorance of the bishops—who were so shamefully illiterate, in early times, that we find Alfred translated many useful books into the Saxon tongue, which he caused to be read to his bishops, and priests, for his people's instruction; and his reason for taking upon himself this trouble, was the lamentable ignorance of his clergy, not to say much in favour of the bishops themselves: “To this end I
 “caused (said he) copies to be made of
 “my translation, that they might be sent
 “to certain of my bishops, to whom they
 “were very needful, they not understanding the Latin speech.”—And by an ecclesiastical capitulary of Charlemain, the bishops were enjoined to learn the Lord's Prayer, so as to understand it! and that prince, with great difficulty, brought them to make some little kind of exhortation to the people! For this purpose schools were established in the bishopricks,
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and abbies, to instruct those dignitaries in the lower duties of the church, that bishops might not continue the most unlettered people in the diocess.—But to proceed with the causes of this great revolution: The immoralities of the lower clergy, and the shameful indecencies publicly exhibited by most, disgusted all virtuous, and sober men, and inspired Martin Luther, a bold determined monk, to leave the cloyster; to expose the fallibility of the Pope, the frailties of the cardinals, and the lewdness of the priests. His system of morality discountenanced their profligacies, and ridiculed their impositions; and under the protection of John Frederick, elector of Saxony, a prince significant in power—magnanimous when deprived of it! who was obliged to his misfortunes, for shewing to all posterity, as sublime a character as ever immortalized the greatest hero of antiquity—Under the sanction of this excellent prince,

Martin's ethics were established; his exemplary conduct gave persuasion to his precepts; a doctrine so appositely applied, could not fail of inviting converts of all ranks, and degrees; the new religion soon forced itself into the minds of princes; it spread over Germany; it crept into France; and assisted by private resentment, it got footing in England. Thus *un moine defroquè*, by maintaining his thesis with admirable fidelity, overthrew the papal theomachy!

When these giants were tumbled from the presumptuous heights they were towering, it became as necessary to the authority of the prince, and the safety and happiness of the subject, to curb the harpies of another complection; the feudal tyranny, by disturbing the harmony between the government, and the people, appeared equally vexatious, and humiliating: those lords fought to establish their despotism, by humbling their sove-
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reign; to resist them by force, required the labour of Hercules; another kind of strength was to be tried, and all princes, within the circle of Europe, seemed to take courage, from their mortifying subordination to the pride of their vassals, and united to undermine this arbitrary phantom; artifice, and intrigue were critically appointed, and they succeeded to the advantage of mankind, and themselves.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R V I.

Agriculture alarmed at the Advancement of Commerce—Novelties, how they operate upon the different Passions of Mankind—Commerce fatal to Morality—Henry IV. of France, and his Minister Sully, their Characters—A slight Sketch of Cardinals Richlieu and Colbert—The Portraits of Commerce and Agriculture attempted—inferences drawn from them—Agriculture how essential to Commerce—Lord Chancellor Verulam a Friend to Husbandry.

AGRICULTURE had scarcely felt the salutary effects of these auspicious changes, before industry was alarmed by the pernicious discovery of the mariners compass: this mighty revelation, presented us with new worlds, and new ideas! Ploughing the ocean was more thought of, than ploughing the fields! The simple Hind, whose irresolute spirit dared not
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visit a church yard, by moon-light, now hardened his mind against the frightful impressions of the tremendous deep! They were talked out of their fears, and out of their senses too! They heard of treasures in the womb of foreign soils, which they could never expect from their own: Agriculture made them happy, but did not make them rich; and wealth was to let them into some secrets they were most desirous to know: therefore, no sooner had avarice set up commerce as the tutelary deity of the nation, but her shrine was crowded with adventurers. Associations were formed to animate the spirit of trade: monopolies were obtained, to repress it! all was in a flurry! and blunders must occur, before a scheme of such importance can be properly digested.

Trade soon became an object of respect, and opened a new path, to fame, and distinction: foreign effeminacies were imported, and when the idol of fashion had

fixed a criterion, for ornamenting the body, nature was no longer consulted in embellishing her own works: men were more esteemed for their fopperies than their virtues; for good clothes met with more adulation than good sense! and until mankind look, as formerly, into nature for instruction, the coxcomb will maintain his ascendancy. Those gaudy flowers which reflect such colours to the eye, owe not their beauties to any outward application, but to the juices circulating, or fermenting, within them; so man derives no intrinsic merit from the external ornaments of his body; it is the action of the soul, that must determine the excellency of his character.

To accumulate wealth, was the emulation of the times, and luxury multiplied characters of opulence: merchants, and men in trade, rose upon the ruin of the land-holders: property changed hands, and when rich families were preferred to
good

good ones, the haughtiest peer thought it not beneath his dignity to court the alliance of the humblest mechanic! thus the highest blood in the kingdom, was commixed with the basest; from which depravity you may date that lowliness of sentiment which impoverishes the mind of our first nobility; softens their affections to the impression of plebeian vanities, and furnishes the great world with so many unworthy representations. Honour must lose its ideal consequence, when a peer of the realm demeans himself, by hanging upon the arm of a pick-pocket, at Newmarket, and squanders away his time, his fortune, and his reputation at a gaming-table. Unhappily, gaming is the favourite science of this day; it is in higher credit than the mathematicks! and if Sir Isaac Newton was now living, he must yield pre-eminence to the sharper, or desert the tables of fashion, and—I was going to say—politeness; but I ask
pardon,

pardon, good breeding is too delicate in the choice of company.

Commerce enriched the nation, but wasted its inhabitants: the country was drained of its most useful people, to furnish cities and towns; London in particular tumified to an alarming size, by the charms of voluptuousness, and the attraction of manufactories. Peasants being familiar with health, were ignorant of the mighty blessing! Those deluded people, with an unreluctant carelessness, left the active business of the field, to encounter diseases at the loom, and other sluggish employments! Innocence lost their affection, when the country lost their assistance; and their minds, and their blood were corrupted in the same moment.

This desertion from the cause of industry, encreases the bills of mortality; multiplies hospitals; furnishes the temple of justice; and what is most melancholy, supplies her altar with victims! Against
these

these alarming truths, Commerce maintained her ground: she found powerful friends in every government, and no wonder, as she poured immense sums into their respective treasuries: *Fiscal laws* are the political estates of every prince; and the paps which nourish the ministerial polygarchy. Commerce, encreased by encouragement, grew unweildy by an injudicious indulgence; and declined, by humours of her own generating: Commerce, like other prodigals, never adverted to her constitution, but relied upon faithless auxiliaries, for spirit, and vigour.

Permit me, Sir, to engage your attention for a moment, to look back upon France, at a period when she was blessed with a King, and a minister, formed for each other. Henry the fourth was a prince of pleasure, and sentiment; Sully, an indefatigable statesman, of genius and integrity: Henry never departed from those royal principles, which engage the
mind

mind in the interest of the people; even when the rude commotions of the league for public mischief, obliged him to take a part in his country's distractions; and Sully posted himself the sentinel upon his master's honour, to watch his actions, when nature threw him off his guard. His vigilance, and assiduity, filled up those intervals, which the king's gaiety would sometimes produce, that administration might not suffer from his levities. In securer times, when leisure called in every thought, national improvement was their uninterrupted study: Agriculture maintained her primordial rank in their minds; Agriculture was the foundation for Commerce to build upon; they saw to what an elevation she might rise, from so solid a basis! and had not good policy expired with those truly great men, France, in all probability, would have dispensed laws to the universe. That kingdom is said to contain one hundred and forty-five millions of

of acres: what population might be expected from such a tract of country put into motion! and if the temper of the people were as generous as their soil, what immense treasures must flow from the fruits of industry, and cultivation! But providence does not shew her liberality every day, in bestowing upon kingdoms such a minister as the duke of Sully.

Cardinal Richieu, was like our cardinal Wolfey, or like every other priest in power, a minister for his own ambition; and Colbert, the celebrated financier to Lewis the fourteenth, would have been a great minister, if Lewis had been a great king: to gratify the extravagant humour of that monarch, Colbert ruined his country; he gave premiums to the manufacturer, and laid imposts upon the husbandman; he filled the king's purse, but emptied those of the subjects; vast sums of money were expended upon these new-invented fopperies, while the most useful part of

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mankind, had none to purchase the most ordinary coverings; a few were fluttering in silks, many were half naked; the cities looked gay, but the country appeared like a desert.

Commerce is an avowed enemy to mankind: kingdoms have been plundered, laid waste, and the inhabitants butchered, to push her interest! How much blood has been shed to humour her jealousies! How many millions have perished in her service, by endemial diseases, or swallowed in the ocean! and how many thousands have been flattered out of the world, by her deceitful luxuries! Commerce gives countenance to every extravagancy, by transmuting the vices of mankind, into relative virtues.

Agriculture received *her* appointment from the hand of nature, and, like a faithful servant, has conformed to the instructions of her great patroness; she is a friend to mankind, she secures him
health,

health, and appetite, and provides him food to maintain one, and gratify the other; she gives strength to his body, and furnishes him with materials to cloath and preserve it: as an attentive handmaid; she dresses up the face of nature in loveliness, and feasts the eye of man with her incomparable beauties; add to all these real excellencies, she by restraining his passions, entails upon him long life, with the enjoyment of peace, and abundance.

From contemplating the before-mentioned portraits, I am fully persuaded, that if Commerce had never broke in upon the integrity of mankind, we should have been much happier under the mild influence of Agrarian politics, than under the domination of an endless code of laws, invented upon the innumerable frailties our enlarged imaginations have introduced amongst us; every precaution which the security of trade requires, points out the evil it is intended to guarantee!—When
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perjury and theft were unknown in Athens, there were no edicts, rules, or law to explain, or punish such crimes.—And it is not very favourable to the reputation of this country, to say with Theophrastus, “The good need but few laws.” However, as commerce, by the connivance of every state, is now become so essential to the dignity of government; the security of the state; and, by winning over our passions to her interest, is considered as a principal, in every party, thro’ the walk of life: sound policy calls upon wisdom and œconomy to visit the patient in her decline, to solicit nature to throw off her distempers, and perfect her recovery; the prescription lies open for the instruction of those, whom the partiality of fortune has qualified to apply the remedy; let them restore, by every effort of generosity, a vigorous cultivation of the land they inherit; the manufacturer will then have labour at a cheaper rate; the merchant will

will be supplied with goods, on more reasonable terms; your Majesty’s army will be recruited with soldiers, nerved for every service—(for a starved veteran will agree with Procopius in opinion, that courage and famine can never dwell together; it being more than nature can bear, to pine with hunger, and yet to play the part of a stout and vigorous man) your subjects will be relieved from every apprehension; necessity, like the vapours, will be no more than a mental fume, and felt only by such whose indolence of mind, and body, brings those flatulencies upon themselves.

Husbandry is the vital stream of Commerce; it circulates through every part; it is the medium that tempers the whole; the artizan must be fed, and labour is valued by the liberal, or parsimonious produce of the earth; when cultivation is neglected, trade stagnates, and is only kept in motion by our own vanities; the

consumption of other countries, must be supplied from a more reasonable market. Plenty helps the staple trade of this country, in another view; when provisions are cheap, the poor are enabled to lay by some part of their wages, for the comfortable purpose of cloathing themselves, and families—Ostentation rises with abundance—Wretchedness is the companion of scarcity.

Agriculture reared up her head, in England, at the accession of James the first to the throne; that monarch passing from Scotland, in his way to London, was met at Godmanchester by seventy teams of horses, traced to new ploughs—How grateful most such a salutation prove to a prince who justly estimates the natural wealth of his country! Indeed James manifested his approbation, by bestowing upon their village some honorary privileges, and told them, at the same time, he was mightily rejoiced to see so many good husbandmen,
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in one town. But, possibly, his Majesty lost that generous, though simple, idea, the country had given birth to, in the show and bustle which Commerce exhibits in the great emporium: for the impetus of trade, is an over-match for the tame, sober plan, of rural œconomics, and, like a torrent, sweeps away every thought that may obtrude itself in favour of husbandry. Commerce, like an undutiful child, endeavours to remove every obligation from the parent who gave her life, and the means to support it.

In must not be forgot, in this place, that Lord Chancellor Verulam, now and then applied his wisdom to the public good: and that the sparks of virtue would sometimes scintillate from the cloud of self-interest. That wise lord advised King James to publish, among others, the following common-wealth commissions, in which the king's honour, and the national advantage, were patriotically considered:

viz. Commission for the provision of the realm, with corn and grain, and the government of the exportation and importation thereof: and directing of public granaries, if cause be. Commission to prevent the depopulation of towns, and houses of husbandry, and for nuisances, and highways. Commission for the better proceeding in the plantations of Ireland.

Yet I hope to see the glorious day, under the auspices of your Majesty, when men will be persuaded, that the decadency of our relative trade, is imputable to an ungenerous inattention to our pastoral interest; and that husbandry and commerce may be comprehended in the same idea; that every unaffected patriot may encourage the union, and contribute his assistance, for the common, and mutual advantage of both.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R.

L E T T E R VII.

Agriculture declining under the gripe of Avarice—Bounty upon the Exportation of Corn, a wise measure among virtuous People—Eastern Plunderers, a most hateful Idea—Disbonesty the promoter of Suicide, illustrated in the Portraits of Integrity and Moral Turpitude; these Pictures, taken from the Life, should be studied with Attention.

WE are now entering upon the present state of the great theatre, the dramatis personæ, in the political exhibition, are uncurtained to our view, and exposed to censure, or applause, as each actor fills the part which accident has allotted him; the most ingenuous court of criticism is in our own breasts; let us study the character we are to perform, and our impartial feelings will determine,

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whether

whether the execution equals the idea we are to represent.

Whoever suggested giving a bounty on the exportation of corn, was a true friend to his country; but I am afraid most of those who concurred in the motion, had not the same patriotic spirit; they did not behold it in that extensive, generous view, which opened upon the mind of the person who proposed it: I mention my apprehension with more confidence, since that measure so obviously calculated for the public good, proved in the end injurious to it. The first agitation of this political catholicon, gave a jog to the ruling powers of Agriculture, and cultivation began to move with alacrity; vast abundance of all kinds of grain, flowed in upon the markets; Malt was exported to Holland in prodigious quantities; English wheat drove famine from every country! and, notwithstanding the drain was opened, still the face of plenty was seen smiling

smiling in every corner of the kingdom. Our neighbours, the French, having so ample a market to be supplied from, threw every attention upon the vineyards, and manufactories; and had public virtue flourished in England, we should, to this day, have been the cornfactors, and the clothiers of Europe; while France, not feeling the throbs of necessity, would have dozed on in the same lifeless pursuits: we have let go the opportunity, and I am afraid we shall find this axiom true—It is easier to prevent a mischief than repair it—This was too great a blessing for an Englishman to be satisfied long with; the farmer, tempted by avarice, advanced the price of grain above the ratio of the demands, for the different sorts of it; the factor, unwilling that industry should run away with all the advantage, the times so favourably offered, set a profit upon the farmer's advance; these people growing so suddenly into wealth, alarmed the jea-

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lousy of the landholders, and they, to be upon a par with both, augmented their rents: this was the first shock—When soon after the commissaries, contractors, and pay-masters, from the North and West, together with the mighty plunderers of the East, gushing into England with a confluence of wealth, compleated the ruin of this salutary scheme!

I do not mean, Sir, to throw an odium upon those military gentlemen, who enriched themselves with the spoils of the enemy; I have only in view those chymical miscreants, who extracted gold from the tears of their friends! Who, in outrage to all civility, oppressed the inhabitants whom nature had planted in India! Who seemed to think every moment thrown away, that was not marked with the most flagitious depredations! Who—I shudder while I repeat it—by a most unseasonable monopoly of the unforbidden fruits, and by other acts of power and inhumanity,

manity, too atrocious for the credit of this country to explain by an enquiry, exposed thousands of the unoffending natives, to perish by famine! Their ears were deaf to the cries and groans of expiring men, women, and children! and—O infinite justice!—God will be deaf to theirs. The fate of these much injured people would excite our compassion, did not their pagan virtue make their death more to be envied, than the splendid advantages those anti-christian executors got by it. In the dunghill were these vermin hatched. Lowly bred, and lowly educated, they had no other sentiments of honour, or social honesty, than what the Spectator has described in the detestable character of Inkle; they amassed wealth, upon the abuse of confidence, and the ruin of that delegated trust, they were morally, and politically bound to defend! These *homines novi*, purchased estates at any price; and wretches who were not to be restrained by

by humanity, would not be withheld by the divine periphrasis of public virtue: they advanced the rents, to the value they paid for them: such a lucrative precedent could not fail of playing the fool with the various passions of mankind; almost every gentleman of landed property in the three kingdoms, though differently affected, followed the unworthy example.

Wealth, honourably obtained, and generously appropriated, is a benevolence from the Almighty: it furnishes every delight for the feast of life, and he who enjoys this peculiar blessing, never stirs from that delicious entertainment, 'till he is invited to a better. But the man who makes moral turpitude his agent, in the acquisition of riches, is unprovided of the intrinsecal object of his pursuit; he is deceived at his first setting out; Voluptuousness flatters him with endless pleasures; the promise exhilarates his spirits; he accepts the invitation, meets her with
infinite

infinite joy, but leaves her with regret and aversion: temptations are still thrown in his way; he expects much, but is disappointed in all his expectations. Thus constantly allured, and perpetually disgusted, he abruptly leaves the gluttony of this world, without waiting for any recommendation to the next.

Suicide is too much encouraged in this country; but to remove the dishonour from our own door, let it be remembered, that she is known only to the wicked and ungrateful; the honest labourer, who sees wealth in contentment, revels like a mote in the sun beam, a stranger to those dusky regions of impure delight, that temper the mind to such horrid partialities: In this view I can never acknowledge any national connection she has with the general character of England: like the Jews, (who murdered the vital principle of moral rectitude) she is naturalized to no country: that she is closeted with people of rank
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and fashion, no one can dispute, but she is admitted into their company with the same heedlessness as they admit an Almack, or a Newmarket gambler, to *kill time*, by terifying their minds with a recital of the *bets* they have *already lost*, and the *important stake* depending on a *future day*.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VIII.

The Ingratitude of Avarice explained—a Passion the most unprofitable to those who most encourage it—The Hardships of those poor People who are compelled to be Industrious, described.

LUXURY and avarice seem to have armed one part of your Majesty's subjects against the other, and as the ingenious arts of deceit are never more fatally practised, than when human creatures exercise them on themselves; so in this, as in other civil commotions, they are resisting the motive that induced them to this outrage!—I will look more narrowly into the evil.

To maintain luxury, and gratify avarice, rents were advanced to a most enormous degree; farmers, to keep pace with their landlords, advanced the price of the land's pro-

produce, in an unreasonable proportion: In this unpropitious change of affairs, industry became the dupe of opulence, for the few who ruled the markets, were the only gainers by the imposition: the needy farmer, who has no greater interest than in doing justice to his farm, is obliged to send his goods to market, as his family must be maintained from day to day; his penury cannot resist any prices that may be offered him; his corn must be thrashed out, when he has money to hire labourers for that necessary service; and his land remains untilled, until temporary assistance can be purchased, for which extravagant wages are exacted; thus raising his crops at the greatest expence, and selling them at the lowest prices, he is unprepared to resist an additional tax upon his labour; he sinks under the oppressive weight of an advanced rent: he is in arrears with his landlord, who being impatient under the difficulty of getting his money, removes the

the unhappy pauper from his farm, and, without allowing himself to feel for his distress, drives the victim from his home, and consigns his wife and children to languish in a workhouse! From this dishonest treatment—dishonesty is not sufficiently understood in the idea of a house-breaker, for *he* is infinitely more ignominious, who, by destroying the industrious husbandman, robs the public of his service, and can, with deliberate barbarity, deprive humanity of those features which give a character to the nation!—I repeat it again, from this dishonest treatment, the family, who but lately was of service to the public, is now become a burthen to it: his few acres are given to a wretch, who had too many before, because he will be more regular in his annual payments.

Selfish ideas are the *præstigia* of avarice; the miser loses by such solitary maxims; for doctrines established in the mind, unconnected with the principles of society, are

are most pernicious and deceitful, as no real good can subsist independant of that fellowship which unites mankind: It is the interest of us all to be humane and virtuous; our various feelings verify this axiom, which is thus elegantly explained by a modern philosopher—"It is (says he) the supreme Being who proclaims aloud to the guilty, that their secret crimes are detected; and gives assurance to the righteous in obscurity, that their virtues are not without a witness."

Again, the extravagant Profligate, alarmed by his own wants, makes choice of wealthy tenants, that his distresses may find a temporary relief, by an anticipation of rent. But wretches like these are examples of reproach, rather than imitation; therefore little danger can be apprehended from them. The prodigal has ever been considered as an enemy to his country, and the wisdom of the twelve tables provided a guardian to take care of

of the person and estate of such shameless citizens.

Thus rents are raised; provisions advanced; and the wages of labour augmented; to the injury of the commonwealth, without any real, or substantial benefit to the landlord, the tenant, or the labourer! If the landlord receives more money, he is not the richer, as he has involuntary laid the above tax upon himself; for if he has a genius for calculation, he will find his prodigality is rated higher than he has provided for, in his additional revenue. Besides, as we are generally disposed to value our importance upon the sum we annually receive, an augmentation of income will be apt to make us play a bolder game at the hazard table!—multiply the number of our mistresses!—encrease our plagues, in the encrease of servants!—and surfeit ourselves upon the addition of twenty more covers every day upon our table. Or, in the other

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extreme, Avarice takes from the value of his hoarded treasure, and dispatches sollicitude and suspicion to invite anxiety, to be the chief guest in their miserable party. The tenant is under the same infatuation; *his* mind expands with his fortune, and he is visited by passions, that competency was a stranger to; or he buries the useless savings, wrung from every enjoyment of life. And the labourer works less, and lives more intemperately.

These ungrateful truths open to the mind another cause of enquiry, how far the scarcity of provisions may proceed from the waste of them?

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L E T T E R.

L E T T E R I X.

The Genius and Trick of Grazing discriminated in the generous and parsimonious Treatment of Nature—The Voluptuousness of Tradesmen one Cause of the present Scarcity—Lamb and Veal not to be sold as Dainties in the Markets—The Case of the Poor considered—Example expected from the superior Order of Men—The Breed of Sheep, how differently managed.

AS your Majesty can have no idea of the mischiefs which arise from the many impositions we blindly consent to, permit me to explain one, which owes its favour to the delight it affords, and the pleasing disguise that puts a stop to our suspicions: Your Majesty will be pleased to observe, there is the genius of grazing, and the trick of it; the first acts upon the generous and extensive plan of serving

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the public; the latter is narrowed to the view of private interest, which is found in humouring the sensualities of mankind. As the last is the evil, I will explain it.

In the counties bordering upon London, the great theatre on which every ingenious villain acts his part with success, the farmer puts his ewes to the ram at the latter end of the summer, that they may force a breed of lambs at, or a little after, Christmas, when the town is fullest, and all kinds of unseasonable viands are invited to the markets, by the high price which voluptuaries are eager to give for these pernicious delicacies! Thus, in many articles of luxury, nature is *compelled*, to satisfy the depraved appetites of the rich, and what is still more to be lamented, to gratify the vanity of ordinary tradesmen, who, in these ostentatious times, have an emulation to equal their superiors! The like inanity of mind ruined the mechanics in Edward the third's time; the
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folly of banquetting prevailed to that alarming excess, the king found it necessary to put a stop to so ruinous a practice: in the seventeenth year of his reign, he passed certain ordinances, forbidding men in trade to have dainty dishes, or costly drinks, at their table. Upon enquiry your Majesty will find that the character of the present times is bloated with the same disease, and requires the same remedy to stop the progress of it. Three-fourths of this early breed of lambs perish by the inclemency of the season, as also many of the parent ewes, not having strength to sustain the untimely charge; the grazier gets by the loss, for as the mortality is general, the surviving one will bring him in more clear profit than if the other three had not died. What an inhuman trade! Let those who know how to respect the unfortunate have compassion for the poor; they are equally comprehended in the scheme of providence, they have an

equal claim to the protection of mankind: It is the poor who are the greatest sufferers, and we should not forget that the labourer, though he is inferior to us in fortune, in nature, he is equal to the proudest lord in the universe.

How abundantly would the markets have been supplied, if avarice had not introduced a contagion to lessen that abundance! There will be no difficulty in checking the destructive practice! Lamb should not be valued in the market at more than four-pence a pound: the best joints of veal (at certain seasons) at the same valuation; and pigs two shillings: this self-denying method so consistent to good manners, would effectually answer the purpose, and the unnecessary slaughter of calves and lambs would be prevented. Solon said to the Athenians, "No man shall kill a lamb of a year old."

Gentlemen who have nice palates, and the means to indulge them, may nurse up those

those delicacies upon their own estates; such rarities may do honour to their rank: Vitellius may banquet; but feasting insults the credit, by discountenancing the indispensable frugality, of men in business.

Moral excellency, and depravity of mind, owe their good and their evil tendency to the force of example; the lower orders of men must therefore look up to their superiors for that instruction so essential to the public good; those in the higher stations of life are to set a form for the conduct of the lower; and the various evils that disgrace the integrity of this country, must be placed to the account of those heedless beings, who for want of pride, I mean the elation of a noble, generous mind, are strangers to the condition of their existence. Whilst the Spartan *Rhetra* expressly forbid the Lacedaemonians to pamper their bodies by the butchers and cooks, and to fatten in private like carnivorous beasts; the *Ephori* destroyed the effect of

that wise law by their example; their wallowing in luxury did more mischief to the public, than the terror of the law could correct.

These long and frequent digressions, tho' they arise from the subject of complaint, yet they almost lead us out of sight of the complaint itself; but to bring it again in view, I will explain to your Majesty the œconomy of distant counties in the management of their breed of sheep. These thrifty people, tup their ewes the beginning of November, consequently the height of their lambing is the beginning of April, when the season is generally temperate, the days are lengthened, and vegetation is put into action. From such benign advantages the dams recover strength every day, to nourish and support their manifold young. From these counties we are fed: country-towns have their *irritamenta gulæ*, their incentives to gluttony; lambs must be butchered to pamper their pride, or provoke

voke their appetites: indeed their taste has not reached such refinements in eating as to require *house lamb*, and that at an earlier season: so they have their number, though but one-third the quantity of that kind of meat, which *Providence* annually bestows, for general subsistence. Their conduct in this affectation of elegancy, is reprehensible, as *her* generous intention of maintaining all, is defeated, by feasting a few with the immature third, that is so greedily sought after. Here commerce must also prefer her complaint, as she sustains a very considerable loss, by thus diminishing the growth of wool, and rejecting those subsidies, which nature so liberally offers for the friendship of mankind.

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LETTER X.

Farmers having too little Liberty, and too much Land, very injurious—Confidence from the Landlord, and Judgement in the Tenant, would answer every generous Purpose—Why the Crops of Grain have not been so fruitful as the Seasons promised, accounted for—A Division of large Farms particularly recommended—The cruel and destructive Consequence of investing Farmers with too much Influence.

THE nature of our soil and climate, requires men of quick, lively, and generous tempers; lazy dispositions are diametrically opposite to the impulse of both, and the public suffers by prejudices arising from apathy and ignorance. I will inform your Majesty, how negligently Indolence goes through her part. Many gentlemen of landed estates not knowing, and above enquiring into, the nature and
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property of the soil, are ruled by caprice, not directed by judgement; they have one idea, and can never be brought to depart from it; they have heard that nothing impoverishes land more than ploughing, and however vague the postulatam, they are ready to believe it. From this deception, they bind up all their tenants not to plough any, or if they have the liberty to plough one or two pieces, they are suffered to torture those for forty years without intermission, till the land almost worn out, has not strength, or nature, left to nourish the rudiments of vegetation, consequently the grain wants its legitimate property; the fields may be as showy, but the crops often belie their appearance. When the same quantity of grain produces a less quantity of meal, the difference must be in the quality; that difference does not proceed from more unfavourable seasons than formerly, but from injudicious restraints,

straints, not leaving the farmer at liberty to display his management.

Farmers, like subordinate states, should in some degree be subservient to their lord, but I can never wish to see the landed gentlemen of England exercise a tyranny, like the Carthaginians, over their dependants: Those Africans prohibited the inhabitants of Sardinia, and Corsica, from sowing, on pain of death, that their distresses might secure their subjection to Carthage; on the contrary, I hope to see every labourer have his share of the bread he raises himself, and enjoy every decent freedom, which morality has prescribed for the government of mankind.

To separate the tenant from the landlord, is as great a solecism in pastoral, as to divide the subject from the prince, is in national, politics; the interest of the landlord and tenant, in the spirit of husbandry, is reciprocal: if the land is neglected, both must suffer; therefore if the
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landlord, wanting that confidence he should repose in his tenant, forbids the necessary use of the plough, he wrongs the public, the tenant, and himself; for his land will grow mossy, and unhealthful, for want of exercise to refresh it, and his farm must sink in its value. He may not feel it immediately, for like an inward bruise, the mischief may be gathering some time before it makes its appearance; whereas, if a vigorous cultivation was encouraged under proper and judicious restrictions, estates would improve in their value to the industrious farmer, as well as to the landlord, and the increase of grain would effectually remove the distress which all orders of people so loudly complain of. Labour would then find employment, and if every large farm, or tract of country, was divided, and put under the management of many, instead of being left to the ill conduct of a few, graziers would then be obliged to breed, as well as fatten,
sheep

sheep and cattle; every article of subsistence would then fetch its value, and the wealthy tyrant have no longer the means to lower or advance the market, as he may be inclined either to buy, or sell.

To illustrate what I have hinted against the baneful influence of monopolizing graziers, examples are seen at every market in England, where lean beasts (the property of poor graziers) always sell at a low price, when the fat cattle are advanced to an immoderate high one—they bear no proportion to each other.

Industry meets with the same discouragement, in the small parcels of wool their little flocks afford them: the poor man will get only twelve shillings a tod, when the rich grazier, who can afford to wait the turn of the markets, or compel the wool-buyers to his own terms, will get twenty shillings. The public is not benefited by this imposition; as the small quantity

quantity the wretched have to dispose of, can have no influence at Norwich, Leeds, Hallifax, &c. The wool-drivers, or owlers, are the only persons who profit by their necessities.

It is owing to the egregious mistake of suffering a monopoly in farms, that Idleness lolls in ease and opulence, at the expence of Industry, the public, and the landlord: and, like fish of prey, will continue this destructive pursuit, so long as the Pikes are intrusted with power not only to destroy the Jacks, or little ones of their own species, but even to threaten the gold and silver fish with their voracity.

These princely farmers who lord it over such an extent of territory, are the legislators of every village, and their formula's act by courtesy with as much force, as the prerogative of laws! These petty tyrants, like the monster *Caligula*, proclaim

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claim a famine without scarcity! The abuse of this exorbitant power is the more alarming, as the statute to restrain that unnatural influence, is in the hands of those who gave it.

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LETTER

LETTER XI.

Giving too much Land to the Mismanagement of one Man, further considered, and reprobated—Luxury dangerous to the Integrity of Husbandmen—Young Men should be encouraged to Sobriety and Industry, by the Hopes of getting a Farm in Reward of those Virtues—The consolidating small Farms destroys that much desired Emulation.

THERE should be no gentlemen farmers, except those who manage their own estates; the genius of our country never meant to entertain such heterogeneous characters; no man should rent above three hundred pounds a year, and but very few of them; and no man, who means to act with justice to his landlord and the public, would wish it; it is employment enough for one man; a greater quantity requires more care, or admits of

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more *neglect* than any man should be *entrusted*, or *indulged* with.

The Romans, sensible of the waste which too much land in the possession of one person occasioned to the public, considered that man as a dangerous citizen, who was not perfectly content with seven acres.

Solon, to prevent individuals becoming powerful from the possession of too much land, passed a law, that the Athenians might not be permitted to purchase as much land as they pleased.

And when the land of Laconia was engrossed by a few, the city of Sparta was overcharged with a multitude of necessitous persons. Lycurgus availed himself of the great disparity between the number afflicted by poverty, and the few who were made unweildy by too much land: to heal the inveterate state of the commonwealth, he divided the whole country into equal shares, allowing the pre-eminence
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to virtue only, and considering no other difference, or in-equality, between one man and another; but what the disgrace of doing base actions, or credit of doing worthily, created.

It is obvious, from the opinion of the wisest men of antiquity, that too much land in the hands of one man is injurious, and I am persuaded that a farm of three hundred a year to one tenant, would call forth all his industry, and all his management, to cultivate it for the advantage of himself; and in that advantage his landlord and the public would be comprehended. He would preserve his health, by his labour; and his gains, by his œconomy; his four wheel, or his one-horse, chaise, would be no longer necessary to carry the *loon* to church, or his red-fisted drudge to a party at cards; foreign wines would be treated as strangers; and the wholesome brown bread, and brown beer, have as much credit at a farmers entertainment, as they

had in those happier days, when England was envied for enjoying the blessings of industry, and abundance. But the *ton* has made its way into the complexure of rural gentility; the good old custom of living as they ought to do, is proscribed by the prodigals of the present day; and too many are vain enough to submit to the interdiction.

If farms from forty to one hundred pounds a year, were prudentially appointed, the young and willing Hind, inured to labour, would be encouraged, from the expectation of sharing one of the many farms so parcelled among the number of those whose sober conduct might recommend them to confidence; but having no flattering views of that kind, he becomes dispirited, and impatient of toil; many sell themselves to the militia to avoid it, and are irrecoverably lost in that School of debauchery; for the militia law has been the bane of industry! the perverter of
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simplicity! Many disadvantages to the kingdom have been thereby purchased at a great expence to it*! The most thinking peasant is discouraged from matrimony, as he sees no prospect of providing for a family; and thus reflection, which should bind man to an obedience of the divine and political mandate, in the present unnatural and alarming neglect of his common interest, serves to depopulate! Surely every generous method should be pursued to encrease and multiply: some who are influenced by their passions, rush heedlessly into those endearing engagements, which encrease our poor, are a load upon our parishes, disgrace our rural œconomy,

* Whoever casts his eye upon the *Calendars*, at every county-assize, and observes the encreased number of criminals which appear there, will be convinced that some cause or other has occasioned this sad and melancholy alteration; and if a more rational one cannot be found, some credit must be given to what I have ventured to assert.

and are a check to the industry of all; for not having the most distant view of any comfortable change in their condition, they yield to a profligacy of manners, which retards the work of cultivation, and in the end brings shame upon the army, that looks for no other qualification, but youth and size to recommend them for the service. A combination of virtuous and public spirited men might remove their despair, and give such a spirit to industry, and population, that distress would be unknown in this country, and *want* become an expletive in the language of our manufacturers.

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LETTER

L E T T E R XII.

Large Sheep Walks, or Tracts of unenclosed Ground, a material Loss to the Public, and to the Owners of them—A Plan proposed for the Advantage of both—The Value of a good Soil opposed to the Mons Argentarius.

AMONG the many losses which the public sustains, from the want of judgement in some, and honesty in others, (for I must trace the mistake home to the master, or the steward,) permit me to mention the absurdity, and evil tendency of extensive sheep walks, which, like deserts, afford no protection for the stock that is turned loose upon them. In this unsheltered state, they are of little value to the tenant, of less to the landlord, and a loss to the public; for those immense tracks require more attention than every shepherd

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can, or *will*, give to his master's interest; they are too dreary in bleak weather, too fultry in the Dog-days, so that many old sheep, and lambs innumerable, are destroyed by the cold, (if the spring proves severe) or smothered by the drifted snow in winter; many are overturned by the weight of their wool, and perish for want of assistance in that helpless state; and many are devoured by maggots, before their situation *can* be discovered. But if these neglected wilds were enclosed in pieces of twenty, or thirty acres, pared, burnt, and ploughed up, what quantities of turnips to feed their sheep! what labour to employ their poor! what crops of corn to nourish them! and what future pastures to breed and maintain all kinds of cattle! Every honest farmer can best explain these important truths. Let the gentlemen of landed estates attend to this hint; their time will be well employed; they will encrease in opulence, and grow rich in the people's opinion:

opinion: they will be patriots in the most faithful meaning of the word. I speak with authority, I have seen many sheepwalks, in Lincolnshire, so extensive, that if divided, and inclosed, they would be improved to so many considerable farms, but in their present forlorn condition are of little worth, even to the tenant, when the loss of sheep, and loss of time, are considered in the estimation of his farm.

To give a clearer idea of what I wish to recommend, suppose the downs in Suffex were the property of one person; in that supposition, let the contemplative mind skim over that extent of country, and proportion its value, if cultivated, to what it now yields to public, or private interest; then suppose the proprietor, generous to himself, divides it into comfortable farms of two hundred acres each; searches out sober, industrious men; grants each a lease for twenty-one years; exempts them

them from rent the first three years; furnishes them with materials for temporary cottages, barns, &c.—And those *Decumani* who wear the livery, and like dutiful servants, adhere to the instructions, of their divine master, will, no doubt, assist the poor, by giving up their tythes for that time; more especially when they consider it is dispensing with what never existed, or ever would, unless by such encouragement industry should rouse this dormant land into life and motion;—then the heart's-blood of the soil may circulate through the aorta, or vital principle of the clergy.—For the above indulgencies, the landlord obliges each farmer to enclose his allotment in plats, from twelve to thirty acres. Now conclude what would be the advantage of such a resolution; I will not presume to ascertain the real improvement, but I should suppose the land that does not at this time pay two shillings an acre, would, at the expiration of the three years, afford
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twelve or fifteen shillings. And from calculating the value of each man, by the price he fetches in the army, which is not his utmost worth, we may form some judgment how much the public would gain by population, and the encrease of produce.

A good soil is of more real worth to a nation, than the *Mons argentarius*; it produces gold, and multiplies mankind; whereas, scooping of mountains is exchanging people for silver. Riches should be obtained by labour, that the poorest man might participate the effusion; this singular blessing arises from it, for every difficulty the farmer encounters in the struggle, is the appetite, which gives a relish to the enjoyment of wealth so honourably acquired. These, with many other oversights, will be looked into one day or other; but as an excellent writer observes: “Men are generally so tenacious of their errors, that they acquiesce to truth as late as possible.”

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LETTER XIII.

Enclosing Commons upon the present partial inattentive Mode, of no public or private Utility—The Mischief that followed upon enclosing Deepin Fen, explained—That every Injustice may be removed, is recommended, and the Advantages arising from Sentiment are pointed out—An Attachment to our native Soil natural—why it should be encouraged—Pride a deceitful Passion.

BISHOP Burnet tells us, in his history of the Reformation, that the greatest number of the proprietors of land, finding more profit in selling their wool than their corn, enclosed their estates; on which the rustics, ready to perish with hunger, rose up in arms, and insisted on a division of their lands. The young king even wrote on the subject, and proclamations

tions were made against those who enclosed their land.—Our passions are in like manner unfaithfully represented in the Senforium: we are at this time envenomed with the same poison.

The present furor of enclosing common lands is a sort of Lycanthropy; it opens such a field for avarice to wallow in, as deprives men of their natural propension: it deadens those generous sensations which discriminate the gentleman. The same charity which is alarmed at the cry of a single pauper, hears not the united lamentations of men, women, and children! the heart that palpitates at the distress of a common vagrant, is not moved at the ruin of many industrious families!

The like torpor benumbed the proprietors of the Lincolnshire Fen, whose obstinate, injudicious opposition to natural justice, drove hundreds of that deserted neighbourhood into want, despair, and resistance: it was like besieging the country!

try! It was the giants warring against heaven!

So far as humanity may be allowed to interfere, I feel myself interested in the welfare of those hapless people, being one of the few who ventured against the fury of their resentment, when the flag of defiance was unfurled, to explain their mistake, and advise them to patience. I heard their complaints and pitied them: and at the time could not but think those distressed creatures might be made happy, obedient, and useful, by a becoming concession on the part of the proprietors of that new acquired possession; for humility in great men carries such weight, that it sinks into the hearts of the lower order of people: much mischief, most assuredly, might have been avoided, and much advantage obtained.

But when these terrene lords had impetrated from the public, permission to enclose, and authority to shut out those
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natives from the means of subsisting, they were unjust to themselves, in not manifesting their gratitude, by some return of kindness, for so generous an indulgence; unluckily, in the hurry of explaining away those peoples claim by an act of parliament, they forgot a statute, as old as nature itself—the law of humanity—which I hope never to see repealed in this country; and if generous examples were effectual in their operations, we never should, so long as your Majesty's beneficent temper instructs the minds of your subjects. The vices and follies of a prince are adapted to the flexuous humours of many, but his virtues are only fitted to great souls.—The men I have been speaking of, mighty only from opulence, in the idea of still adding to the heap, secluded thousands from their usual means (time immemorial) of earning a scanty subsistence, without any succedaneous plan of providing for their necessities, leaving despair to turn the
hearts

hearts of those useful people from their loyalty and obedience, to acts of violence and mischief.

The dispassionate looker on, must, without any manner of doubt, pronounce it an unjust proceeding: and if a rich man be unjust, says Demosthenes, it is fit that he should be much more severely punished than a poor fellow whose poverty forces him to be so; for before judges who have a due sense of humanity, necessity pleads strongly for pardon; whereas they who in affluence and plenty do an act of injustice, can have no tolerable excuse.

Whereas, if some generous remedy had been applied to have brought the fever of avarice, or pride, or—let the patient call the distemper by what name he pleases—to a *metabola*, or intermission, that healthful interval might possibly have produced some sentiment in favour of these forsaken people: they might perhaps have whispered to themselves—Why should we be liberal

liberal to one man, and withdraw our protection from thousands?—Why should one man revel in abundance, while a multitude perish for want?—Let the unhappy find a refuge in us.—Or, when such people presume to offer a petition to the Almighty, they might, in that moment of humility, be affected with the same grateful sentiments as a monarch of France, who being surfeited, or disgusted, with his appointments in this world, was soliciting of God the *gratia expectativa* in the other. While he was at church, forwarding this devout business, a poor clergyman came, and told him, that after having languished in prison for a debt of fifteen hundred livres, he was again going to be arrested for the same sum, which he was absolutely unable to pay. The king paid it instantly, and said to him, “You come in good time; it is fit I should have compassion upon the miserable, as I was desiring God to have pity upon me.”

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If these fen lords had, in like manner, submitted themselves to an audience, and communed with their own hearts, they might, in moral justice to themselves, have been persuaded to the resolution of parcelling out that vast country among many, if it was only to give interest and humanity fair play: but—and I have Cicero's word for it—to raise our fortunes upon the spoil and ruin of other people is repugnant to the law of nature. If they could have seen their own felicity, in the good of their fellow creatures, they would have continued happiness to thousands, by securing them bread, and preserving them in the soil, to which they were rooted.

An attachment to our native soil is unaffected, it is fashioned by wisdom, and only fools dissemble to alienate the affection: it is a divine principle: the Greenland, who lives in a state of nature, affirms it; when he ventures upon a long voyage,
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he always says he has left his soul at home; for as he supposes the soul may be separated for a time, so the disagreeable sensation he suffers when divided from his fruitless sands—his smoky hut—his train oil—his putrid fish, and every other wretched object of his affection, proceeds from the dereliction of the soul.

This natural attachment should ever be encouraged; sound policy recommends that we should employ, and encourage, the natives of those swampy regions, in the fen in which they were nurtured, otherwise the settling that unhealthy country with strangers, will prove as expensive a sepulchre to the common-wealth, as the American plantations have been. Again, the people being satisfied in their minds, the state would have been assisted by the increase of families; the produce of the land augmented for public advantage; and the landlords would have found an addition to their fortunes, and their full property se-

cured to them by the affection of the whole country. I think I see multitudes of men, women, and children, croud to meet, and invite their benefactors to their estates; I hear their virtues extolled by the most ingenuous acclamations. No—I am mistaken—Hark!—Women curse them aloud!—the children lisp an inarticulate execration! and the men are prepared to assassinate them, should they attempt to approach their own territories! Several innocent men have been shot in their own houses, only because they were favoured by them! stacks of corn and hay fired, houses destroyed, and desolation threatned were peace and abundance, under the influence of a generous master, would have taken up their eternal residence! It is not too late—let them recall their labour and affection; resistance, by compulsion, is a traitor to their natural inclinations: Xenophon explained the privilege of human misery to the Sinopenes; “Where-

“ ever

“ ever we come (said that great man) and
 “ have not the freedom of a market, whe-
 “ ther in a Barbarian or Grecian country,
 “ we take what we have occasion for, not
 “ out of insolence but necessity.”—Let
 submission fall from the compelling powers,
 the motive will be amiable, and the end
 answerable to the motive; but above all
 things, let them remember, that to be starved
 is a cruel, lingering death—to be hanged,
 is to be relieved from it—This is the ar-
 gument of every poor man who is tor-
 mented with a sense of feeling.

I am aware that to humble ourselves to
 those beneath us, is too sublime a virtue
 for pride to aspire to; Pride is ever so
 meanly tenacious of her own opinion,
 that she revolts at moral excellency, and
 by affectation, degrades the dignity of
 human nature, and interrupts the design
 of the Almighty in his perfection of it.
 It is the submission we exact from our in-
 feriors, that makes us lose sight of our

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own dependance; but we ought to remember, that every man bleſſed with an eſtate is a fiduciary to God, that he holds his fortune in truſt for the benefit of his fellow-creatures, and if he oppreſſes them, he is guilty of a more criminal reſiſtance, than thoſe poor wretches, who ſtruggle for the preſervation of their lives. This is a doctrine hitherto unpractiſed, but let thoſe monopolizers of the Fen, invite public virtue to a ſhare in their private councils, and they will experience the benefit of it; their improvements will then be conducted with every honeſt advantage, and public approbation would eſtabliſh an intereſt in the country; and what is more ſatiſfactory, an intereſt in themſelves, which rapacious tempers will never underſtand, and can never enjoy.

The many bills for enclosing common fields, intended by the legiſlator for public benefit, have, by an unlucky inattention, proved the reverſe; if any future
petition

petition ſhould be preſented, it will be conſiderate to have a report made to the houſe, what quantity of the common was arable, that the excluſive proprietors may be obliged to plough up a certain proportion, laying the tenants under particular reſtrictions, as it is not to be diſputed but lands that were worth ſowing when in an open field, may be greatly aſſiſted, and muſt produce amazing crops when enclosed. Under ſuch conditions the poor would find work ſufficient to keep them in conſtant employ, and greater plenty of food to purchaſe from their labour, which would be ſome conſideration for the little advantage they loſt, by being ſhut out from the common-field. Paſture lands are of little help to the labourer, a corn country is the ſeat of induſtry and population.

I am, &c.

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L E T T E R X I V .

Lands cultivated in America, politically considered—What Dominion may be attained—what Wealth acquired—and what an encrease of Naval Power is to be obtained from such an Attention—Sentiments of Liberality recommended.

THE lands so liberally granted in America should be cultivated, that the inhabitants might be employed, and the mother country supplied from their industry; what magazines of corn might we hope to see from such resources! Our home consumption amply provided for, and commerce again revive in her once favourite object. What a supply of excellent butter and cheese would the islands in the West Indies receive from her dairies; besides beef from her pastures!

pastures! What an encrease of people! What towns and villages would rise to secure our settlements, and to awe our enemies in the western world! and by settling the back country, what a trade would be opened with the Indians! What new regions would be explored to encrease that trade! Our navy would gather strength by an additional number of seamen: our shipping be multiplied; and the credit of that country have a quick circulation, by opening this vein of commerce, in a constant remittance to the merchants here, for the variety of commodities they would require from hence. As the Americans grew rich, their wants would be augmented, and England *must* be the market to furnish them with vanities: our manufactories would flourish, and our artificers be maintained by their own labour, and no longer wound the ears of the compassionate, with the afflicting story of their distresses.

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Perhaps your Majesty will be alarmed for your faithful subjects in Ireland. I have too great a respect for that part of your Majesty's dominions, to exclude them from a child's proportion of every national advantage: the Irish not having so good a market for their beef and butter, would turn their thoughts to a more profitable cultivation, which would employ their poor at home, and stop their emigrating to foreign countries. When I was in Dublin, eighteen years ago, an ingenious calculator told me, that thirty thousand souls left Ireland every year, in search of labour, and twenty thousand only returned. What a waste of people! a consumption more to be lamented as it weakens *our* body-politic, and strengthens our enemies, as the Brigades in a neighbouring kingdom demonstrate. Not to mention all the mischiefs attendant upon want of employment, your Majesty should know that leisure makes every cobbler a politician—

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We should have no Liberty-tree in America, or White Boys in Ireland, if idleness had not left a vacuum in the minds of those mistaken people.

Every subject, however remote, clings to your Majesty for shelter: the idea of paternal protection then, should be diffuse and generous; it should expand to the utmost stretch of your Majesty's dominions; an extensive imagination is adapted to the magnificence of your character; the vast Atlantic should no more intercept your benign influence, than the *Tweed*, or the *Bristol Channel*; the ascendancy of princes should be known in all nations—Liberality should represent your Majesty every where—Excuse the admonitory insinuation; I am an advocate for my fellow-creatures, and wish to see mankind as happy as their best endeavours can make them, in whatever climate they may labour.

Socrates

Socrates being asked of what country he was, did not reply, "of Athens," but said—He was "a citizen of the world"—How liberal the sentiment! How generous his affections! he was in friendship with virtue, and all good men had an equal claim to his attachment—Although I have no relative pretensions to class myself with men of such exalted virtue, yet suffer me to attempt, as far as my feeble efforts will admit, that line of perfection, set before us by so illustrious an example; permit me to adopt the philanthropy of Socrates, and, in imitation of his beneficence, call myself a citizen of the world, and invoke the protection of the universe: indeed I have no local prejudices, it is not *this*, or *that* accent I am partial to, it is the sentiment that determines the character: I set no particular value upon the colour of the face; the complection of the mind fixes the estimation; if a jewel

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has lustre it matters not, with me, whether it was ripened to that perfection in the Highlands of Scotland, or in the mines of Potozi: a pebble, or a diamond, is distinguished only by the name, and and estimated by opinion; Montezuma admired the first, Cortes knew the value of the latter: It is the drawing, the colouring, the composition and expression of a picture which I admire, and not the school that produced it: an honest judgement will be equally astonished at the fire and spirit of a horse, without regarding whether it was executed by Stubbs, or Protogenes.—I am very well convinced that Temperance is to be found in Germany: Humanity in Portugal: Industry in Spain: Fidelity in France: Politeness in Holland: Discretion in Ireland: Temper in Wales: Loyalty in Scotland: Gratitude in America: Patriotism in England: and Friendship everywhere, notwithstanding Malevolence has

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characteristically endeavoured to divert me from that expectation. Enough—I am complimenting myself, where I aimed to compliment mankind, with my assiduity and assistance.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R X V.

Why the Use of Steers in Waining and Ploughing should be promoted, and the Breed of Horses discouraged—Sumptuary Laws necessary to reclaim the Manners of our Youth.

IT has been a puzzling proposition to many, why the price of butchers meat should advance with the price of bread! for, say they, if the high price of bread proceeds from a less quantity of corn being sown, butchers meat would necessarily fall, from the arable land being laid down with seeds for the maintenance of cattle. But when they consider the unthrifty breed of horses so necessary to furnish the multiplicity of post chaises, the mischievous increase of stage coaches, the extravagant number of private ones, the vanity of young men of fortune, who must

must have their studd, the impudence of young men of no fortune, who will have their gelding, together with demands from abroad—the difficulty of resolving the cause must vanish, as they clearly see that the pastures which formerly fed such herds of beasts, and flocks of sheep, are now appropriated for the run of brood mares and colts, and that the quantity of oats so necessary to supply the consumption of this monstrous encrease of horses, interferes with the growth of other grain, allotted for the consumption of men.

Substituting horses for steers in ploughing, and waining, is a material loss to the public in the article of meat, for it is well known oxen spread, and encrease considerably in weight, from labour; besides, they get into flesh with more ease, and less expence, by feeding kinder. Not many months ago, I was much pleased to see an heavy laden waggon pass thro' Turnham Green, in its way to Herefordshire,

shire, drawn by six oxen, with one horse only as a leader: if my family could have spared so much of my fortune, I would have franked the owner thro' every toll-bar he should ever pass with so acceptable a team.

To diminish the evil we complain of, let us discourage the breed of those horses which neither give reputation to our country, nor are of general use; and to convince us that judgement has had something to do in the reformation of this abuse, let breeding of fine horses continue the *amusement* of gentlemen; the breeding of draught horses the *business* of graziers.

If additional imposts may be proposed, without giving too great an alarm, a very heavy tax should be laid upon every horse sent out of the kingdom.—In the Anglo-Saxon time, the exportation of horses was prohibited, as appears by a law of Athelstan—“No man shall send

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“ any

“any horses over-sea, but such as shall
“be presents.” Also a duty upon every
horse sold for upwards of twenty guineas:
this method would probably have its
effect, by depressing the pernicious am-
bition of breeding blood horses: but
should the disorder still rage, in spite of
this remedy to abate it, the money arising
by this duty might, by encreasing the
revenue, lighten the weight of some more
unweildy tax.

Within the plan of lessening the breed
of horses, some regulation should take
place to keep within bounds the licenti-
ousness of stage-coachmen, who, upon
their present unrestrained liberty of load-
ing their coaches as they please, counter-
act the many laws contrived for the
preservation of the roads; besides, many
lives are lost, and many valuable people
rendered useless to themselves, and fa-
milies, by broken limbs; from the num-
ber of accidents which happen within the
year,

year, from those over-loaded carriages;
and the number of idle profligates they
croud on the box, the roof, and behind,
is a nuisance to every sober person who
travels upon, or lives by, the road they
pass, as their ears are sure to be assaulted
by the most vulgar, and indecent jests.
Add to these offences the number of horses
that are destroyed by the avidity of the
owners, and the cruelty of their servants.

James the first was too much of a mer-
chant to allow sumptuary laws to operate
against the ostentation of trade, while
he had influence with his faithful com-
mons to repeal them; but surely the
morals of young people, particularly,
should be taken care of, and the extra-
vagancy of unthinking men be under some
decorum, if it was only to discountenance
so dangerous an example. The absurd
gaiety of the present times, I could wish
was moderated by some means or other.
Apprentices, in the opinion of good sense,

should be only as upper servants in the shop, or warehouse, as the wise conduct of former days appointed them, and wear the apron, or any other symbol of their different occupations; but now every apprentice boy, unmindful of his relative consequence, affects the appearance of an idle fellow, and squanders away his master's time, in disguising the most respectable character; and masters in general are become such coxcombs themselves, they connive at the loss, rather than put their own folly out of countenance. The liberties which youth now take, are very alarming to integrity; every honest man must shudder to see a boy, before he is let loose from his indentures, gallanting his lass, on a Sunday, in a one-horse chaise, or a phaeton, to Richmond, or some other neighbouring place of resort: or rioting away the sabbath with equestrian heroes of his own class, dressed in the expensive foppery of the times! What

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confidence can be placed in such servants? Our national credit suffers from the follies, and indiscretions our young men are indulged in; we should copy the examples of the wisest states of antiquity, who placed their greatest security in the uncorrupted virtue of their youth.

What falls in with my present plan I will point out. If minors were not permitted to keep, or hire horses without a written licence from their parents, guardians, or masters, much mischief would be obviated; students, at both universities, would attend more to their learning; clerks and apprentices to their profession, or business; and the demand for horses being so much taken off, hay and corn would necessarily sink in their price, and draught cattle be maintained at a less expence. From this restriction, trade would derive most notable advantages; the application of our youth would give it credit; and lowering the markets would

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quicken

quicken that ancient spirit which gave perception and energy to commerce.

While I point out many resources from which abundance may flow into this country, I have my eye upon the danger that may attend lowering the produce of the earth, beneath the value of labour. My mind has taken the alarm, at being told, that Julian's reducing the price of provisions, at Antioch, was the cause of a most terrible famine. And in the ninth year of Edward the second, the same calamity befell this kingdom, from the same cause. There is a medium which if seriously attended to will remove every apprehension from every efficiency. Labour, at this time, is too highly rated. My scheme only urges that plenty should proportion its value; at the same time my most ardent wish is to see industry encouraged, not depressed: it is therefore, I look with disapprobation upon all mechanical improvements which interfere with the laborious

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occupations of men; the ingenuity may be admirable, but the contrivance is deceitful; a machine artfully constructed may be profitable to individuals, but society must suffer from it, as a complication of wheels may do the work of many families. The momentous transactions of life should be regulated by sentiments of generosity; and as abundance, operating with gratitude, enlarges the mind, I would recommend a trial of every expedient to secure plenty in the land, if it was only to investigate its operations—I will pledge my life upon the success of the experiment.

I am, &c.

LETTER.

L E T T E R X V I .

The Importance of the Poor, and their natural Dignity maintained, in an Estimate of Man.

I Have led your Majesty through a long and devious track, and however the fatigue may be deceived, by strewing the way with flowerets, culled from the hedge-rows as I fauntered on, it is at best but rough, and uncomfortable travelling over ploughed lands; and to say the truth, I have had as little compassion on your Majesty, as the opiniative citizen has on his Sunday visitor, when, with ardent impatience, he drags him through his *unfractuous, virmiculated* walks, dwells tediously upon the prettynefs of his *shrubbery*, his *verdant mounts*, his *rills*, his *fountains*, and every other *improvement* in his country villa; when perhaps his friend has so much of the *natural* about him,

him, he can only see *beauty* in *rocks!* *cataraets!* *lakes!* *black-embowering woods!* and such *magnificent, horrid* objects, as would frighten a *brocaded-brained* mercer out of his senses!

If the plan of my design should fall under the same predicament, and be slighted by sublimer wits; I can say with my honest common-council man, I have been trifling to please myself, and to amuse such, whose similarity of taste, may give them a relish for my fantastical conceits.

Doubts such as these may in some measure startle and perplex my arrogance, but they shall not discourage me from detaining your Majesty to the end of this rural expedition. The harvest of my toil is the public good: your Majesty has repeatedly assured us, you have no other; I shall therefore engage your assistance till I have housed my corn; till I have brought home the produce of my endeavours, not to be kept in my grainery, to gratify myself

myself alone, but to be threshed out for the common benefit of mankind.

I am more solicitous to associate your Majesty a party in my favourite purpose, as a royal harvester will give *grace* to industry, and *fashion* to the labourer: from that prevailing idea, we may hope to see our men of fortune pry into the soil. Men, of the most elegant taste, are by nature peasants, but are too refined to avow it; they will build palaces for the vanities of life, but erect cottages in their gardens for the pleasures of it. And Socrates thought it a reproach for a man to be conversant in the geography of foreign countries, and be ignorant of the properties of his native element.—Men of the first quality may, in time, adopt the sentiments of the first in wisdom, who thought it not beneath the gentleman, to exercise his abilities towards the supplying of his own wants, or the necessities of others. Admonished by wisdom
they

they *will*, no doubt, exert their *aratory* powers, and restore Agriculture to its ancient dignity; by becoming husbandmen themselves, they will be taught to respect the character; congenial love will beam its divine effluence upon the industrious poor, from the part they are observed to take in the favourite novelty: then pride will be a stranger on the plains, and supercilious ignorance no longer detrude the guileless peasant, beneath the order of human beings.

To protect the poor is a physical affection; it is nature; for nature extends *her* care to the meanest production.

To sympathize with the poor, is a moral excellency. “To be religious and “good-natured (says Philo) are qualities “of the very same kind; and where-ever “you meet with piety towards God, you “will always find justice, and humanity, “towards men.”

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To be guardian to the poor, implies nobility, distinction. The senators of Rome were called Patricians, to signify that the rich and great should extend their paternal care to all those in an humble station; and that the common people should neither fear, nor envy the power of their superiors, but love and respect them as their fathers, and cheerfully apply to them for assistance.

Is it not most astonishing that so many should lose their way in the high road of life, when the beaten track lies so conspicuously before them? Their mistakes, how very absurd! how contemptible! Can any thing be more vain, and disgusting, than that a creature should be distinguished in the works of nature, only because he can produce a testimony, authenticated by some deceitful genealogist, that he is descended from a Norman plunderer, who, with hostile violence, pillaged our Saxon progenitors? When, without

without fatiguing his mind in such imperfect researches, or defiling the stream with such a polluted spring, he might go much farther back, and trace the common ancestry of mankind to an earlier epoch. But if antiquity is to impress the stamp of quality, it is the only instance where an old fashion is so right honourably cherished: besides, to maintain so important an action upon such *level* ground, is giving a very unusual advantage to the humblest vassal; for upon their own principle, the labourer that plashes the quickset, has a disputable claim with the lord who employs him; and we join issue to that involuntary confession, as *they* are alike descended from the same divine original.

The oldest, and most illustrious, families the world could ever boast of, had no armorial absurdities; no golden lion, no silver fields, to distinguish their greatness; their shield was the heavens, and their

their blazonry was to be explained in the earth they had improved.

To advance the dignity of human nature, every man, in what condition of fortune soever, should contemplate the relation he bears to the great Author of his existence; but such who consider themselves as partially distinguished by the bounty of providence, should be full of the vast idea, and never discredit the adoption, by an undutiful inattention to his fellow-creatures—Should accident put us in possession of Potozi, or the mines of Peru, those *concaes* of wealth, can make us *great*, only as they *magnify* our *virtues*.

Opulence in a good man, like the *gloria*, or circle of light, around the head of a saint, diffuses a beneficent gleam upon the faces of those who surround him, and discriminates the divinity of his character.

This, may it please your Majesty, is my estimate of man.—If any unscientific
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blockhead, ignorant of the Almighty structure, should suspect my integrity, and accuse me of putting too *high* a value upon the *lower* materials; let the Sciolist pursue his vanities, separate the *capital* members from the proud column, and try how it will be supported without the assistance of the *base*.—Remove the *architrave* and *frize* from an *entablature*, what a forlorn appearance the *cornice* would make without them.

The common people *are* the strength of every state; the noblesse *should* be the ornament.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R X V I I .

The Nerves and Sinews of a great King exhibited—A Plan of Reformation proposed to his Majesty—Ingratitude the inherent Quality of base Minds—The Abuse of deceitful Influence, how dangerous.

S I R !

AS sovereign, you represent the Majesty of the constitution! You are acknowledged supreme in every department of the state! You are respected in the court of ordinary as head of the church! Navigation courts the wind at your command! By your authority the legions are in motion; and the law considers you as the protector of your people!—What a magnificent idea!—It challenges from your Majesty the exertion of every public and private virtue to maintain its constitutional splendor.

Hercules

Hercules was extolled by the ancients for having, to the honour of human nature, freed the earth from the most enormous evils and oppressions.—And Valerius Maximus pays the most significant compliment to Theseus, when he tells us, that mighty hero subdued every thing that was monstrous, or wicked, by the bravery of his mind, or strength of his body.—Your Majesty's virtues are equal to the most arduous attempt, and we have monsters of our own, to match those of Egypt or Greece.

What is to be done? Open a way for truth, and every difficulty is removed. The fashionable vices of the present times *outglare* the distresses of virtue; and *outclamour* her complaints. They multiply vagrants of an higher class, and make begging courtly!

Here ingenuous truth could render the most grateful services, by unmasking their battery; the discovery of such traitors to

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moral

moral rectitude would save your Majesty's money, and the nation's credit.—But, unfortunately, princes, like planets, are surrounded by halos, or luminous circles, concentric to one another from the same dependence; the annulus of one is blue; of another green; and the third red: such glare of colouring so contracts the intellectual pupil, that should the deep shade of affliction lour behind the tear which the warmth of compassion exhales from the soul of majesty, the iris may be permitted to bend to the resplendent drop; it is the gayest livery of grief, and allures the attention of those who see no other. Objects of a sublimer hue weep unregarded. Vulgar sorrow has her peculiar tints, but they are beauties which are only understood by nature herself. Your Majesty's feelings require not the force of mathematical reasoning to explain the fidelity of this implication.

When

When England was the school of morality, the bordering nations flocked hither to be instructed in the interpretation of virtue. Religion, in those days, was unacquainted with hypocrisy, and the service of God was not confined to the knees. The Druids, as the most virtuous men, were chosen the expositors of the unextended code; if any crimes were perpetrated, any unjust obtrusion upon the bounds of an estate, or upon the rights of the poor, those sages were the only judges to examine, and determine the cause; they would, according to their judgement, decree rewards and punishments, and the culprit who would not abide by their sentence, was excommunicated, and interdicted from their sacrifices and solemn feasts; a punishment the more severe, for they who were thus excommunicated being reckoned amongst the vilest, and most notoriously wicked, were

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carefully shunned, like a dangerous infection, by every one.

If your Majesty was to establish a tribunal in your own breast, and, like the Druids, expel such monsters your court, whose reprehensible conduct must diminish the grandeur of it; from such a revulsion the drawing room at Saint James' might perhaps grow thin, and decline for a time, but when the peccant humours were entirely discharged, it would recover its constitutional elegance, and shine out with redoubled splendor.—Good breeding would, in such a change, be only seen in the doctrine of good manners.

Begin a reformation—let not a beggar of quality disgrace the drawing room; expell them your royal presence; but should the task be irksome, and uneasy to you, give them a pension, and they will save you the trouble; supply their wants, maintain their extravagancies, and you erect a battery against yourself: their ingratitude

gratitude will be a comment on your Majesty's munificence.

Men who enjoy sinecures, or pensions, like the Mendicant friars, eat without working; they are the drones of the hive, and should be expelled the republic, lest such a criminal example should infect the swarm, and make them as slothful, and as useles as themselves.—Lewis the eleventh of France, did not look upon any person as a gentleman, or even as a citizen, who was useles to society.

If reptiles like these are encouraged, they will gather strength with their encrease, they will multiply into power, and establish a grievance beyond the influence of government to redress; they will lacerate the bosom that warmed them into being; they will renounce the friendship they have no further occasion for; and from securing the public voice, by their resistance, they will be an overmatch, even for the language of truth

M 3 itself!

itself!—When idleness was sanctified by the Roman church, William de St. Amour wrote a book called *De periculis novissimorum temporum*, in which he proved, by the authority of the Holy Scriptures, that men were commanded, by the sacred law, to earn their livelihood by labour; but notwithstanding this work was approved by men of sense and learning, as consonant to the divine instruction, the churchmen had *imposed* themselves into such power that the words of benediced, over-weening priests, were in so much more credit than the word of God, that this book was condemned and burnt: *Non propter hæresim quam continerit, sed, quia contra religiosos seditionem et scandalum concitabat.*

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L E T T E R X V I I I .

A Board or Great Council of Agriculture, recommended as the only Establishment to arrive at the true State of national Opulence, and national Distress—The Newspapers described—The Progress of an unfeeling Heart—The Council Chambers of the Antients—The Mind how enlightened and instructed by Truth.

WHAT then is Truth? Whence comes she? Truth is an embassadress from the highest power, and requires a person of rank and address superior to Sir Charles Cotterel's, to introduce this *foreign* minister to your Majesty.

Where is Truth to be found? Not in the public prints; Vice and Virtue find there an equal advocate: Bolland was defended, and Lord Dartmouth reprobated, in the same paper! *Freedom*, the genius

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of

of this country, should be as chaste as a guardian angel, and should not, by criminal indulgence, encourage the press—her darling child—in all the *indecent liberties* of a common prostitute, lest her blandishments should become terms of reproach, and her censures be considered as the note of civility.

The news-papers, at this time, are the precursors of confusion; they are the vehicles of deceit; and your Majesty can no more judge of the state of your kingdom, from their information, than of the state of the weather, from a sheet almanack! One paragraph tells you, that the Lord Mayor is an *upright* magistrate; the next assures you that his lordship is a *downright* ****; the worst word in their mouth is too good for him! The adulteress, *if she has interest*, is vindicated, and the much-injured husband, *if he has none*, made a party in the crime! Men are robbed of their good name in one paper, and are abused for punish-

punishing the culprit in another! and such indeterminate confidence is placed to mankind, by our news-writers, that *they* are only fit to be trusted with an office, who are by the *nominee* thought unworthy of employment! Nay, they insinuated that a powerful and persuasive orator, opened the lachrymary sluices of his auditors at one place, and strained their risible muscles in another; that is, he broke their hearts at Bristol, and split their sides in the House of Commons, upon the *cheerful* or *melancholy* subject of America! Dissipation invites you to the most expensive amusements in one place; several unhappy families, perishing for want, solicit your relief in another! Masquerades and charity sermons equally attract the eye, but not the attention! and, we are flattered at one time with the promise of vast crops of every kind of grain; at another, vegetation is an imposter, and the friendship she pretended, existed only in appearance.

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In this political labyrinth, every circumstance of information is intricated by the most improbable suggestions; the most unnatural insinuations; and the most palpable contradictions. Permit me, Sir, so far as relates to my immediate design, to open a passage to the altar of truth, that when discovered, suffer me to hope, your Majesty will surround the shrine with a temple of your own consecrating; be yourself the high priest; purify the temple by sacrificing to the just resentments of your people those *anthropophagi*, who prey upon their own species: such expiatory rites will be the most acceptable to the God of mercy, and the tears of repentant sinners the most grateful illustration a prince can offer.

Let the temple be dedicated to industry, and named The BOARD, OF GREAT COUNCIL, OF AGRICULTURE. Here your Majesty will preside as the imperial citizen of your realms: here, in the pure,
refined

refined and elevated temper of monarchy, you may meet your subjects upon even ground, and raise your throne in their affection, firm as the pyramids of Egypt; and here, like the clients of Minerva, you may associate to your assistance men of honour and sentiment, whose liberality, and judgement, whose wife and prudent œconomy through every duty, every transaction of life, enable them to dress up the face of the industrious in smiles, and make all those subordinate to their wealth, as happy as the richest of them. Men, like these, are generous from principle, their munificence is perfectly understood. They do not, like the vain, or prodigal, confound generosity in ostentation, or intemperance. Such men had rather see a farmer thrive, than a vintner; a plough-boy, than a Newmarket-jockey: and promise themselves more real pleasure from employing a labourer, than a waiter at a bagnio. But, no wonder, the munificence

cence of good men is amply repaid in the heart-felt joy they receive from it; the anxiety and repentance which fall into the account of the vicious, add to their expence.

Let an emanation of this divine establishment be seen in the metropolis, or every shire, or district in England. Vouchsafe to suffer the respective Lords-Lieutenant to represent your Majesty in every county-association, and let a correspondence be kept up, that every necessary information may be communicated to the great council in London. Invest this noble confederacy with powers to call upon the rector, church-wardens, or any other person, of every parish, to transmit to the Board an account of what number of acres in *tillage, grazing, meadow, or waste land*, there may be in his or their particular parish. The number of *beasts* kept, *generically* described, distinguishing *fat* from *lean*, and to *whom* they belong. The quantity of
corn

corn sown, and the quantity *reaped* by each farmer respectively, specifying the *particular grain*. The quantity of corn, and of what sort, *sent to market* from time to time, and the quantity *kept in hand*. The number of *farmers* in each parish, the *rents* of each man's possessions, with the *names* of the *landlords* and *tenants*. An account of the *advanced rents* of each farm for the last twenty-five years, and the different periods at which they were augmented. The number of *families*, how many *souls* each contain, distinguishing their *sex* and *age*, how they are *maintained*, and what *manufactories* are carried on in each parish.

The Egyptians had a law, obliging every man to give an account once a year, to the magistrate, where he lived; how he was sustained; and what he contributed to the public-weal. If such an account was demanded, and faithfully returned from the people in London, what *frightful!* what *shameful!* and what piteous scenes would be disclosed!

and

and no doubt many iniquities prevented, and miseries removed, from their being revealed—The *poors rate*, and the number of *paupers* in each parish, distinguishing their *age, sex, and condition of health*. From such a return, your Majesty will be much alarmed; you will there see that your subjects in England are taxed with three millions a year, to maintain a number of people, rendered useless from the present mode of parochial management! When the state of the kingdom is thus laid open, your Majesty will be able to reform the innumerable abuses, which, tho' known in part, are still encouraged, or at least suffered from inattention; you will be a competent judge yourself how the poor may be employed, to ease the load which their *misconduct, or misfortunes*, have heaped upon the industrious. Facts thus faithfully, and uniformly related, will furnish your Majesty with ideas, which may be digested, and combined into forms,
pleasing

pleasing to your subjects, and beneficial to the common-wealth. These, with many, many other accounts, the inquisitive mind will suggest as necessary to the perfection of this national engagement.

From such an open council, inviting the thoughts, and solliciting the assistance, of every good citizen, your Majesty would be informed of the true state of your nation, with regard to its natural revenue; and your subjects instructed to manage with integrity those loans which nature has so partially distributed in this country. Virtue finding easier access, you will no longer be a stranger in your dominions: you will have the groans of your people faithfully explained, when speedy and effectual measures may be adopted, and pursued, to silence the affliction. By the light of sovereign truth you will pierce the deep recesses of the heart, and develop those folds which avarice has so
skilfully

skilfully entwisted; then, when the mine is open, you can see how the veins run, and direct your operations as the objects present themselves. Thus, by seeing with your own eyes, and hearing with your own ears, truth will introduce you behind the scenes, and reveal novelties that will astonish your Majesty; you will there see the machinery of the Bucolical Drama, and the various actors, who have exhibited the most tragical parts in it.

In the reign of Charles the good, Earl of Flanders, a great famine happened in his dominions; upon which some very rich men, among whom was Bertoff the chancellor, thinking to reap advantage from the misery of the times, bought up all the corn they could find in the land, with a design to sell it out again at an extraordinary price. The Earl, abhorring so detestable an avarice, by his authority, caused the corn to be seized, and sold it to the people at a reasonable rate—Mark
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the sequel, men who are steeled against the lamentations of the poor, have hearts tempered for the most atrocious undertakings: Bertoff and his associates were so incensed at the injury which *justice* had done them, that they assassinated the Earl, at his devotions, in the church, on ash-wednesday, in the year 1127. But the horrid miscreants suffered in proportion to the heinousness of their crime, for human invention was racked to torture them. The like gradation of wickedness will be the same, in men of the same infernal complection; and we have Bertoffs in this country, who only want an opportunity to display their unnatural propensities.

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L E T T E R X I X .

The Advantages to Society from the Council of Agriculture considered—How political it is to be Honest—Lord North a Friend to his Country—Copyholds oppressive to the Subject—Conclusion.

A Council of Agriculture carries no novelty but in the name: all nations had their peculiar assemblies, to discipline, and keep within bounds, the passions of mankind. The Athenians had their *Prytaneum* to collect the wisdom of the wisest for the common benefit of the republic: from seeing the cause of every distress they provided against them. They had their *Σιτωναι*, to furnish corn for the use of the city, and their *Σιτοφυλαξες*, to prevent imposition in over-rating the sale of it.

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The Romans had their *Senaculum*; their *Fora Venalia*, where the markets were kept and regulated: the *Prætores ceriales* were magistrates to inspect the wants of the people, and to see that the city of Rome was amply supplied with corn; and the office of *Præfectus frumenti* was to inspect the corn markets, and to report the true state of them to the *Præfectus urbis*, or chief magistrate, who, as guardian of the city, was to see that no imposition, no fraudulent reports, might set the agents of avarice at work to distress the people.

Charlemain, from his regard to justice, established the *missi dominici*, thro' every province in his dominions, with instructions to hear complaints from the lowest, and full power to punish the loftiest, subject, who should be convicted of oppression, or any other enormous crime against his people, the state, or the church; and from a respect to industry, the cause of the labourer was first heard and determined.

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The *grands jours* was an early establishment in France, and had for their object an enquiry into the abuses which might escape the notice of Parliament.

And when princes were more at liberty, and less incumbered with the avarice of office, the kings of England used to visit the distant parts of their kingdom: Justice, unconfounded by the points of Law, was then administered faithfully; magistrates were punished for neglect, or partiality; dishonest men found no protection; and the poor were assisted and relieved.—The *Troylebaston* was an inquiry upon all men bearing offices, who had abused their power, to the injury of the people.

Princes looked so narrowly into the necessities of their lower subjects, that their distresses were removed as soon as they were discovered. When mechanics, and labouring men, were satisfied to travel from town to town on foot, Edwin,
king

king of Northumberland, caused ladles of brass to be fastened to the clear springs and wells, for the refreshment of all such passengers; a benevolence, however the luxury of our day may have lessened the value, worthy of a prince; and the police, or discipline, of his time, preserved such integrity in his kingdom, that had the ladles been gold, not a man would have taken them away.

And it is also observable in Elfred's reign, the moderation and industry of the times had made men so continent and honest, that a virgin might travel through his kingdom undisturbed! and though bracelets of pearl were hung by the road side, they would have been more secure then, than they are now upon the wrist of virgin elegance!—What an alarming change!—All our ancient ideas are degenerated: sloth and voluptuousness take up too much room in our affections. Nature, in that beautiful simplicity, which

fo became our Saxon ancestors, is unknown to us ; and we differ as much from them in the fashion of our minds, as in the cut of our cloaths.—The causes will appear to your Majesty : prodigality, and idleness must undergo a scrutiny.

In the Saxon heptarchy, all those who contributed to the necessaries of life, were, in a particular manner, protected by the law : in those backward times, before the invention of man had contrived water and cattle-mills, for grinding of corn, when that material service was performed by maidens, I find in a law of Ethelbert, king of Kent, it is enacted, that any man who should debauch the king's grinding-maid, should be obnoxious to a very severe, and heavy fine ; from such a national protection, the chastity of a meal-maid appears to have been of more importance to the state, than a maid of honour ; but I am rather inclined to believe the law interfered to supply the
place

place of education ; for the meaner people, untutored, and unarmed, were alone exposed to such low gratifications ; ladies of honourable birth, and well-instructed, were then too *modest*, and too susceptible, to stoop to actions unbecoming the character of their sex : the mind of a Saxon lady revolted at whatever was indelicate. In this present age of refinement, lewdness is countenanced, the ladies have stipulated with the men, and gallantry is now become a female accomplishment.

Your Majesty is upon as good terms with virtue, as were the most excellent of our former kings ; but your subjects have entered into a quite different alliance. Public spirit has not the same interest in the great world, as private vices ! Honour, that relative dignity which mankind holds in the idea of moral excellency, is most irrationally defined ! Drunkenness and debauchery are the characters which give currency to an honest fellow ! Gaming

and effeminacy, to a fine gentleman! Temperance and chastity, find credit no where! Wisdom is only caressed by the bookfellers; and integrity is respected upon change. Modern ethics must be revised and corrected by your Majesty. The council of Agriculture will open to your inspection the manners of your people; you will see, and be acquainted with the various dispositions that dis-unite, and clash with the ruling principle of this country.

Your Majesty, from such a fertile field of intelligence, must reap abundance of useful knowledge; and by winnowing the harvest yourself, you will be more heedful, and solicitous, to separate the chaff from the grain.

The understanding being thus instructed, Seneca's judgement of the liberality of princes, will not be understood in your Majesty; you will not, like princes less informed, persist in the royal mistake of
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bestowing your graces blindfold. Your Majesty, looking upon the unflattering portrait of human nature, with the mental eye unfiled, will discriminate in your mind the sound from the corrupted members, who, together, fill up the *imperfect* scheme of national society: you will make it the interest of every honest man to be a friend to government, and to his country.

By this mode of proceeding, in the council of Agriculture, the rudiments of reformation will radicate, and, by your Majesty's fostering care, will grow up, expand, and over-shadow those malignant weeds, that have for many years interrupted the growth of virtue.

Surely, no one can object to an establishment so humane, and so liberal, but such who subsist by our errors, and abuses; men whose hearts are narrowed by such base affections should be stigmatized with your Majesty's displeasure; for he who neglects to reform, what he might reform,
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does, at the same time, give his consent to the mischief, and, therefore, undoubtedly makes himself an accomplice in the crime. This was a censure passed upon the ruling powers, so long ago as Charles the Bald, which appears by a clause in a law of that time.

To be virtuous only for virtue's sake, is an excellent precept, but it requires generosity, and sentiment, to make the most of it; at first sight it seems to promise nothing, at best, only a reversionary benefit thrown at too great a distance to be grasped at with avidity; such abstracted maxims, wise as they are, held up only now and then, will never satisfy the exorbitant mind, as they do not fall in with the erudition of Threadneedle-street; for men who *shrewdly* and *closely* follow the business of this world, will never be at the expence of learning a new language, only calculated for profits in the next; such accomplishments are the most alarming

ing innovations in the state of Mercature politics, and with a steady punctuality *posted* under the article *loss*.

But in the Council of Agriculture, wisdom, founded on truth, will publicly shake hands with every passion, and by tempering those unruly emotions (which have more of nature in them, than divines are willing to allow) all our enjoyments will be explained, and approved; every impulse of the mind will be allured, and directed by rational motives; we shall become virtuous from conviction. To copy others, is a natural inclination, therefore, no sooner shall the banner of example unfold itself, and flutter in every eye, but you will see men of various tempers flocking to the royal pavillion, to share those favourable circumstances, which unaffected wisdom engages to furnish.—Avarice will find an interest in generosity—Pride will admire the ease and address of affability—Idleness, wan and unnerved, will

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will look wishfully on the healthful tinge that glows, and the gait that perpetually smiles, upon the cheek of industry—Ebriosity will upbraid the crutches, and languish for those muscles which confer such masculine strength upon the limbs of temperance—Opulence will solicit the pre-eminence, that mediocrity of fortune so engagingly occupies.

Thus every mistake will be rectified from knowing them, and our true interest perfectly understood; for truth, by making this establishment intelligible, will subdue every prejudice, discipline our future conduct, and convince us, that to be truly rich, is to be truly honest; that the only way to act with justice to ourselves, is to be perfectly just to others; that the man who deceives his friend, over-reaches himself; and defeats his own purpose—When time decyphers the interdeal character, conscience, that distinguishing power of the mind, which suggests to our feelings what
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AGRICULTURE, &c. 189

is right, and what is wrong, will explain what I mean.

Turn aside from the degeneracy of reciprocal commerce, to the meanness of wealth: similar errors appear which disturb the peace, and interfere with the interest of mankind. He who is upon bad terms with his neighbour, is at variance with himself: he loses his dominion when he loses his temper. We can establish real authority only in the good offices we render our fellow-creatures: the opulent may command, it is true, but the obedience must shew their authority. Look into pastoral tyranny, there you will find many gentlemen of three hundred pounds a year, infinitely more supreme, having more influence over the minds and bodies of the village, than their neighbour with ten times that income. Business moves with celerity, when encouraged by generosity, and kindness; but when brutish incivility controls the
the

active powers of man, it drags on cheerless to the labourer, and unprofitable to the *delinquent* who employs him.

By speculating on facts, we shall no longer blunder in the dark. Reason, that intellectual measure which gives superiority to man, will, from positive information, establish our interest in Philanthropy, and restore the credit of human nature.

Your Majesty is in possession of a minister, who ventures every thing for the honour of his country; and, I believe, he is equally ready to hazard as much for the improvement of it.—It will be said, I speak thus favourably of Lord North, as he is first in power—I avow it—for if your Majesty's wisdom had not appointed his lordship to that high office, his patriotism, like a flower in the wilderness, would not have been known.

In attempting to do justice to a prime minister, I am as daring as his lordship:
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my intrepidity arises from a consciousness, that every honest man in the opposition, upon appealing to the integrity of his heart, will say, *Here is no flattery*.

I respect and honour Lord North for the superior dignity of his understanding; for his persevering, yet flexible temper; with many other qualities of the mind, so particularly adapted to a leader of administration; and not for his *pensioning* and *appointing* powers, as I abhor and detest those *dissenters* who worship the minister only as he is the supreme disposer of all good things.—The golden calf is not the object of my idolatry.—I hope Lord North has the same antipathies.

Your Majesty is not destitute of subjects warm as his lordship in the interest of their country; the Duke of Northumberland, Marquis of Rockingham, Sir George Saville, Sir Walter Blacket, with many other noblemen, and men of fortune, in England.—Lord Hillsborough, and several
more

more, in Ireland—In North Britain, the Duke of Argyle, Lord Bute, the Reverend Mr. Graham, &c. &c. who, in spite of being Scotchmen, have the social virtues hovering about them; but I flatter myself, when patriotism is recovered from its state of lunacy, all illiberal distinctions will be discouraged, and a *great*, and *good man* be respected whether he is descended from a *Norwegian*, or a *Saxon*. As an Englishman, who has the honour of his country at heart, I wish it.

I must in this place catch the sigh from Doctor Johnson, and lament the loss which Agriculture must suffer, in the North, from the death of Mr. McLeane; *that* amiable young gentlemen, *who*, after having discharged the debt of civility, *perished* on his return to the *Isle of Col.* This *honest* patriot had made Agriculture a part of his education; he purchased experience from the English farmers; he toiled with them in the field; he turned
up

up the sod with his own hand; and thought no labour too hard, when a perfect knowledge in the practical part of husbandry was the end of it. He knew his country called for every effort to fertilize it, and encourage the coyness of the seasons: and he was determined to carry the science with him into the Hebrides—But, melancholy to relate, he had scarce unfolded the leaf which was to illuminate the minds of his ignorant and needy vassals, when fate precipitately shut up the book. This eulogium from me, is but the praise of an hour; his memory will be embalmed in the imperishable volumes of the truly learned, and ingenious author of the *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.*

The council of Agriculture will be the most honourable, the most powerful, and, I hope, the most permanent establishment in your Majesty's dominions. Honour-
O able

able, as it will enrich the poor with contentment; the wealth that nature intended to settle upon them. Powerful, as the opulent will confirm their authority, by the charter of humanity: and permanent, as your subjects are to expect much, and to venture little, for an appointment founded upon public spirit, where private interest had no share in the first idea of it, opens the most uninterrupted prospect of longevity; and a further promise of continuance, from a frugality in the conduct of it.

Permit me to observe to your Majesty, that this being, intentionally, a Board of Reformation, you can only expect men of unfulled and benevolent minds to take their seat at it: men, who wish to prove to the world, that patriotic virtue has nothing venal or mercenary about her. The *building*—perhaps the Pantheon—what an illustrious alteration!—*secretary,*
clerks,

clerks, stationary, house-keeper, coals, and candles, enumerate the expence; for the directors, beyond the scandal of a doubt, will officiate, and transact their part of the business from the most interested motives, the valuable consideration of doing honour to their country and themselves, in promoting the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

Your Majesty's companions, at this board, being thus associated by moral rectitude, will not be exposed to those degradations which a more splendid order of companions, recommended by vanity on one part, and chosen from affection, or interest, on the other, have formerly experienced.

Sir Andrew Harclay, Knight, and Earl of Carlisle, in the reign of Edward the second, was accused of receiving a large sum of money from Sir James Douglas, by which traitorous practice

the king's army was defeated by the Scots, at the Abbey of Bokelande. The said Earl was condemned first to have his spurs hewed off from his heels, with an ax, and his sword broke over his head; his gown, hood, girdle and coat, were then taken off. Thus degraded from the honour of knight-hood, he was further sentenced to be hanged, beheaded, and disembowelled; his bowels to be burnt, his body quartered, his head set on London Bridge, and his four quarters hung up in four different towns in England, as a frightful and humiliating example to others. — This judgement was executed in the year 1322, before the order of the garter was instituted, consequently not meant to censure any particular association of men, but only to exhibit a proof in this historical relation, that even *right honourable* characters, are not exempt from the most disingenuous propensities.

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This new institution must introduce companions who will be faithful to your Majesty, in their love to your subjects; and the passions being here levelled to one even standard, they will meet with no disappointments, to put them out of temper, and set them against the administration of Agrarian politics; they will unite in one interest, and join *their* wisdom, and *their* enquiries to your Majesty's, for one great end — the public good. You will there be advised in, and informed of, every occurrence in terrene œconomy. You will know that land is rated so high in Ireland, that they cannot raise feed at a price low enough to establish their linen manufactory upon a permanent basis. That your subjects in Scotland have little occasion to emigrate across the Atlantic, so long as they have, to the shame of many, so much uncultivated land in their own country; and what is still more reprehensible, so much waste

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in ours, even within a few miles of the capital.

The dominicales, lands formerly belonging to the kings of France, were, by order of Charlemain, rented in small parcels, to little farmers, at a ninth part of their value; this philanthropy, as it raised many industrious families from want, contributed to the welfare of mankind.

In the course of your Majesty's enquiries, it will appear to the Board, that *copyholds*, or what the law very properly terms *base tenures*, are exceedingly oppressive to your subjects; very discouraging to industry; and repugnant to that British spirit of freedom, which warms the minds of the lower people: and what men of estate seem so passionately to admire in theory, and so eagerly to avoid in practice. For so ungenerous are the humours of men, that while they are raving for liberty in public, they are privately contriving
various

various expedients to enslave those who fall within the vortex of their power. I can assure your Majesty it is no uncommon thing to see a feoffee lord forging chains for his own vassals, yet affecting to exterminate the very idea of slavery in every other corner of the world. A copyhold is a kind of provincial empire; it has its local courts and customs, which are as binding as laws; it is the last remains of feudal tyranny, and the feudaries are, at this day, dupes to the passions of the lord; a prey to the steward; and a victim to the interpretation of law.—Many forfeit their right of inheritance from not being acquainted with the modes, or intricacies, of a Court-Baron.—Frequently it has happened that a combination of kindred and tenants have destroyed a surrender, to set aside the will of a testator, to the injury of some helpless minor, who had the most natural right to his benevolence!—and many have
suffered

suffered the most mortifying, the most ruinous, disappointments, from the neglect of some other more trifling punctilio, which the constitution of former times has entailed upon us. These pernicious dregs of despotism being made known to your Majesty, every *honest* and *generous* method may be suggested, discussed, and prosecuted, to the relief, and satisfaction, of *all* parties; that investitures of so fatal a tendency may be removed, and every subject emancipated in the possession of his estate.

Your Majesty may, from time to time, invite the assistance of parliament, in this important undertaking.

The penal, and parochial laws, will pass in review, and the confused multitude of statutes be reduced to a small, clear, yet comprehensive code.—Many other favourable changes will take place, to the ease and happiness of a free, and, by nature, a generous people.

The

The understanding thus informed, and humanity awaken'd, every act of wisdom, and beneficence, may be expected, from such an assemblage of great and good men.

May the chosen sect, of this new doctrine, approach the Council of Agriculture with clear heads, and unpolluted hearts!—May the *grain* of this country be the *verbenæ*, the sacred herbs to decorate the altar of truth!—May your Majesty long fill the *suggestum*, or chair of pre-eminence, to defend the temple from the contamination of vain men, who prizing their *talents*, more than their *integrity*, deceive mankind into opinions, destructive of the peace, and welfare of the nation.—May the blessing of abundance be continued for a series of years, under your Majesty's gracious, and benign government: and when the great ruler of princes may think it fitting to exact from
you,

202 L E T T E R S, &c.

you, the debt so justly claimed by nature,
that the annals of your Majesty's reign
may be held up, by a grateful posterity,
as an un-erring precept, for the conduct
of future princes, is the most *ardent* and
disinterested wish of,

May it please your Majesty,

Your MAJESTY'S,

most loyal, and most devoted,

Subject and Servant,

W. DONALDSON.

F I N I S.