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AN
APPEAL
TO
MANUFACTURERS,
on the
PRESENT STATE OF TRADE,
&c.

“No Effort is lost.”

DR. JEBB.

BIRMINGHAM,
PRINTED BY JAMES BELCHER.

1795.

IN seasons of calamity, the Author of this little tract, conceiving it to be a duty incumbent on every friend to his country, to use his honest endeavours to point out, what he apprehends to be the cause of public evils; and to state the lamentable effects produced under his own immediate observation; is the only reason he thinks it necessary to give, why he submits the following remarks, which arose in his mind, from the unparalleled situation of the affairs of this kingdom, and more particularly of Birmingham and its Environs.

Birmingham, Jan. 12, 1795.

AN APPEAL,
&c.

IT is not to the Clergy, Nobility, Gentry, nor yet to that respectable part of the community employed in Agriculture, to whom I address myself; but, to that numerous and distressed body of people, the *Manufacturers of Birmingham*, and of *Great Britain*, who depend principally on foreign markets for their support.

I use the term *distressed*, as, exclusive of what I feel, and what I see others suffer, the following resolution in *Aris's Gazette* of the 15th ult. is sufficiently notorious; to which are affixed signatures, that by no means require my testimony to prove their great respectability.

BIRMINGHAM HOTEL, Dec. 12, 1794.

AT a Meeting held here this day, to take into consideration the *DISTRESSES* of the *LABOURING POOR*, and to adopt some mode for their relief during the approaching winter.

Present, &c.

Resolved unanimously,

That the want of employment having reduced great numbers of the labouring poor to great difficulties, and deprived

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prived them of the means of providing themselves with the necessaries of life, we consider it to be our duty to endeavour to alleviate their wants during the approaching winter, though it is by no means intended to introduce regular annual subscriptions.

Compare the preceding with the state of the poor, as respects numbers in the Workhouse, and out of it.

	<i>December 22, 1792.</i>	<i>Dec. 22, 1794.</i>
Total in the house,	- 366	- - 636
Ditto out-poor relieved,	1390	- - 2817
Ditto children at nurse in the country,	} 173	- - 268

If such is the real state of the labouring manufacturers, those who derive a profit by their employ, must have serious reasons for complaint.

What says the *Secretary at War*? "A cry of distress and poverty had been raised.—He believed it not*." Is it possible, that either of the members for the county of Warwick could have been present, and yet make no reply? Would he do us the honour of making some enquiry of those of our townsmen, who, time past, have given Ministers *very* satisfactory information on subjects of great national importance; I have no doubt, in spite of the *maxims* he may hold, that he might be supplied with the most incontrovertible facts, in

* See Windham's speech, 30th ult.

support

support of the opinion he reprobates, *that a rich man's estate is not sensibly impaired by a loss that would ruin his poorer neighbour.*

The voluntary contributions of the more affluent part of the inhabitants of this town, to relieve the immediate wants of their poorer neighbours, is truly laudable: at the same time, let us recollect, that the *duties* of benevolence are not confined to pecuniary assistance. The object of the truly beneficent character, is not merely to grant relief to present misery, but, by removing the *causes* of it, to prevent future distress.

Our mechanical engagements leave us but little leisure to examine deliberately into our comparative situation, or to discern the real causes that so materially contribute to the calamities we feel. But, when the sources of subsistence are dried up; when employment for the hands cease, the head will feel an unusual stimulus to discover, why industry cannot find employ? When amidst the general distress that surrounds us, our labour every day sinking in its value, and the necessaries of life augmenting in price; when we behold many classes of our fellow subjects, whose labour continues of the same value, or more valuable, yet exempt from the hardships we experience; the reflection will arise, *Why should the pressure of the times be thus partial?*

Was there ever a time, when the *clergy* could boast of a more ample revenue? not any: and for

for this very obvious reason, that tythes must increase with the fertility of the land, which was never in a better state of cultivation than the present. When speaking of the revenue of the clergy, I would not have it understood, that I have reference to that period, to which Mr. Burke directed us, on the trial of Warren Hastings; when he remarked, that the clergy possessed *judicial* as well as *ecclesiastical* authority over Europe, and had laid it down, as a rule of evidence, that no ecclesiastic should be convicted of criminal gallantry, without the testimony of thirty-two ocular witnesses—nor bishop, on less than seventy-two*.

The *nobility*, independent of being the greatest land-owners in the kingdom, fill the principal offices of honour and emolument in the state. The value of their *labour*, though not reducible to a manufacturer's scale, I take for granted, is *fully* satisfactory.

The *gentry*, have ample reason to rejoice amidst their abundance, as the rental of the kingdom was

* Well may we exclaim, what will not MEN do in the plenitude of ECCLESIASTICAL authority! The effect of unlimited power on the human mind, seems generally the same, but never so dreadful, as when man conceives he is doing the immediate work of God. This remark is exemplified by the conduct of the PRESBYTERIAN clergy, in 1646, when they applied to parliament to enforce UNIFORMITY IN RELIGION; and to extirpate popery, prelacy, and heresy. We cannot well call in question the propriety of MILTON's observation, "NEW PRESBYTER, IS BUT OLD PRIEST WROTE LARGE."

never higher; which may, in some measure, account for the *astonishment* many of them feel, when the calls of hunger and wretchedness, drives to their door, him, who in more prosperous times, felt all the independence full employment could give.

The *farmers*, may take their ease, eat, drink, and be merry, as both *times* and seasons apparently favour their interest. *Produce*, in general, abundantly increased, and its price *enhanced*. To the latter, I would submit this query; Which is most likely ultimately to promote your interests—a demand, arising from the effectual exertion of *productive* labour, or that which results from labour being employed in *destructive* purposes?

What says *Commerce*, and its basis, *Manufactures*? In 1791 and 1792, how different were our feelings: the cost of commodities was considerably advanced, but we did not complain; sensible, that its cause was an increased and increasing prosperity. A greater demand for our labour than could well be supplied, added to its value, which enabled us to pay well for whatever we purchased; and to contribute with cheerfulness our quota, to the expences of that government, whose constitution has always commanded our admiration, and afforded us that *security*, without which every incitement to personal exertion would have been lost.

Mark

Mark the reverse. Provisions equally high with the most prosperous times, and our labour, not only reduced in its value, but with great difficulty can find any employ: Taxes of government, and parochial rates, swelling to an enormous amount, whilst our means of paying them, are daily exhausting.

It is an indisputable fact, that, owing to the very great division of labour, our working manufacturers become more dependent on the particular branch, to which their attention has been directed; which, in times like the present, however it may facilitate the powers of labour, operates very unfavorably to the individual, when the usual demand materially fluctuates or stagnates; his employment being wholly of a local nature, has, in a variety of instances, induced the industrious father of a large family, to accept of that *bounty*, which makes him what is called a *volunteer* in his Majesty's service. This bounty has frequently been applied to the immediate relief of a wife, and numerous offspring; and at the same time, perhaps, for ever deprived them of that support and assistance, upon which they had always depended.

In addition to the foregoing remark, it may be observed, that the *policy* of the times, increases the *locality* of the class of people I am now speaking of; as a proof of which, I shall adduce an advertisement in Aris's paper of the 22d ult.

B

Handsworth,

Handsworth, Dec. 17, 1794.

AT a VESTRY MEETING held this day at eleven o'clock, pursuant to public notice given for that purpose, to consider what steps will be necessary to be taken, to prevent the evil consequences likely to arise from the great number of club and other small houses intended to be built in this parish :

PRESENT,

George Birch,		David Jackson,
Thomas Lane,		John Scragg,
Matthew Boulton,		T. Milkward,
David Fenkins,		and
Joseph Milkward,		S. Smith,

It was unanimously Resolved to remove every person likely to become chargeable, that shall hereafter come to reside within the parish of Handsworth without a certificate; and to discourage by every legal means the building such houses.

Resolved, That the church wardens and overseers of the poor do take notice, from time to time, what houses are built, and do report the same at every parish meeting.

Had these resolutions been the result of the deliberations of *country gentlemen*, I should have felt no surprise; but, when I see affixed to them, the name of one of the most *justly* celebrated manufacturers in his Majesty's dominions; I must say, there is too much truth in the assertion which states, that "*it is often more difficult for a poor man to*
" pass

" pass the artificial boundary of a parish, than an arm of the sea, or a ridge of high mountains."

Agricultural pursuits are by no means subject to the same disadvantages and uncertainties. Give the *farmer* four such families as his own to supply, and generally speaking, he will find a demand for his produce*: but, my friends, what *philosopher*, or what *statesman*, can say how many families consumption is requisite, to find our various *manufacturers* steady employment? This town has been properly called the *grand toy shop of Europe*; but, to what part of Europe can our merchants, at this time, export our articles with safety to themselves? To France we cannot send any goods whatever. Yet, the custom-house ledger informs us, that, according to six years average, ending with 1774, that country took manufactures to the amount of 87,164l. and in six years average, ending with 1792, was 717,807l. However these accounts may serve my *Lord Hawkebury*, as a comparative statement, to us, as respects the real amount, it must appear erroneous; well knowing, that the articles made by us for the French market, were of the finest texture, and principally *steel*: an idea of the increased value of which, from the raw material, may be formed, by stating, that a watch chain, worth when finished from two to five guineas, shall not be two ounces in weight;

* Computing the number of people employed in agriculture, at a fifth of the whole inhabitants of this country.

confe-

consequently, rating the price of pig iron at ten shillings a hundred weight, will make it worth in its first state, not quite one farthing. Yet, in the political calculations of the present day, these facts appear to be of very trifling importance.

I may with great justice say, that our commerce with France, had nearly all the advantages of an home trade, in point of quick circulation, and much superior in point of profit. *Punctuality* and *dispatch*, are those essentials in trade, which makes it pleasurable; by relieving the mind of that anxiety, which always arises from a state of suspense and uncertainty. The quickness of the returns from France, enabled our merchants to observe the *one*, and excited the manufacturer to the performance of *both*. Never did the sagacious *Auckland* so effectually serve this country, as when he negotiated the commercial treaty in 1786; and never did the manufacturing interest of this kingdom receive so deadly a blow, as when hostilities commenced with that unhappy nation.

In order to evince the rapid progress we had made, and were making, by means of our *commerce* and *manufactures*, and to shew, how much we had to risk by not attending to the political axiom of a great statesman, "*that no war is justifiable, till negotiation has failed,*" I shall state from *Chalmers' Estimate of the comparative strength of Great Britain*, an account of the exportation of British manufactures, from 1701, to 1792 inclusive.

The

The value of British manufactures, which were exported from England, according to a three years average, ending with 1701	-	-	-	£. 5,277,015
That value fell, 1711, to the lowest point	-			4,088,488
That value rose, according to a three years average, ending with 1716, to	-			5,128,818
This value fell, in 1718, to	-			4,380,961
This value rose, according to a three years average, ending with 1738, to	-			6,655,852
This value fell, in 1740, to the lowest point	-			4,111,297
This value rose, according to a three years average, ending with 1751, to	-			9,109,946
This value fell, in 1755, the lowest point, to	-			6,192,107
This value rose, according to a three years average, ending with 1766, to	-			10,450,345
This value fell, in 1769, to	-			8,984,094
This value rose, according to a three years average, ending with 1772, to	-			11,075,099
This value fell to the lowest point, in 1781	-			7,042,996
This value rose, according to a three years average, ending with 1787, to	-			10,977,728
And, this value gradually rose in 1790, to				14,056,633
			in 1791, to	15,896,226
			in 1792, to	17,449,614

Let every friend to his country, consider the above *historically*, and the conclusion of his mind will be, that *Peace* is the one thing needful for the promotion and preservation of the prosperity of this kingdom.

Compare

Compare the *French trade* with that of *Russia* and *America*. They require articles of the heaviest kind, in which the raw material bears the greatest proportion to their value; and the returns necessarily so distant, as leaves the merchant to place very little dependence upon them; of course, circulation is frequently *palsied*, to the great injury and distress of both merchant and manufacturer. The edict of our *pious** ally, the Empress of Russia, issued in the course of last year, is sufficiently known, by the effects it produced. If we direct our enquiries to *Germany*, where we have long been in the habit of

* The Leyden Gazette of the 26th of December, contains the two following articles:—

The first is from Warsaw, and relates the taking of Praga, a suburb of that metropolis, in these words: “ The attack began at five o’clock in the morning; at nine the enemy was in possession of the place. Five thousand Poles were slain in the assault; the remaining 5000 (for there were only 10,000 soldiers in the town, and the Russians were 30,000 strong) were taken prisoners or dispersed. After the battle was over, the Russians proceeded to disarm the citizens, and to plunder their houses. When this was over, and every thing appeared to be quiet, ten hours after all resistance had ceased, about nine o’clock at night, they set fire to the town, and began to butcher the inhabitants. The sick and the wounded perished in the flames; the rest, old men, women, and children, fell by the sword. Nine thousand persons, of every age, and of either sex, are computed to have fallen in the massacre, and the whole of the suburb, except a few scattered houses, was reduced to ashes.”

The other article is from Petersburg, and is as follows: “ 2d Dec. The day before yesterday, Major General d’Isiniéff arrived here with the news of the reduction of Warsaw by the troops of the Empress. Yesterday was set apart as a day of solemn thanksgiving to GOD, and TE DEUM was sung for this important event.”

placing

placing a constant dependence, from the known regularity of the trade, we shall find a universal stagnation of business—excepting Hambro’, where we see all the benefit resulting from the *freedom of trade*, even amidst the savage contests of contending powers. In *Holland* commerce languishes, for want of that security, which we have vainly attempted to give them. *Flanders*, whose fertility enabled its people to purchase what we had to sell; for convenience and ornament, is now in the possession of those, who have found out various means of distressing us. *Spain*, whose demand for British commodities, has, of late years much increased, is now *panic-struck*, from the progress of a victorious and powerful enemy: that *panic* does not confine itself to Spain. *Italy* in a degree feels the effects of similar causes, and the wants of the Italians, are not so great as formerly. To all which may be added, the delays occasioned in waiting for *convoys*, the great advance in rates of *insurance*, which operate as an additional charge on the articles we export, consequently lessens the sale of our goods, and at the same time enables foreigners, more effectually to come in competition with us.

Thus are we in a great measure deprived of our principal markets: and our prospects by no means tend to cheer the hearts of those of our brethren, *who are ready to perish*. I need not aggravate the actual state of the middle and lower classes of manufacturers in this town and neighbourhood; as I

am

am convinced their misery is sufficiently real to move the pity of every friend to humanity. I might with much propriety appeal to medical gentlemen, to the clergy, to merchants, to officers, military, civil, and parochial, for the truth of my assertion; more particularly the latter, as being obliged to witness scenes of woe, which truly bespeak the melancholy condition of the lower orders amongst us; and they also affirm, that their legal demands, have, in various instances, been paid with an agony of mind, which indicated uncommon distress.

As the times afford us some leisure for reflection, let us consider the positive situation in which we are placed. Our *rents* remain the same as usual—our *mechanical instruments* are, generally speaking, in an idle state—our *clerks* without employ—and many of us have an accumulating *stock*, whose value entirely depends on the demand there may be for it; which in itself is very problematical, as *fancy*, rather than *utility*, forms its basis. Thus is a great part of our capital *literally fixed*. Would any other description of his Majesty's subjects, suffer such evils, and not complain?

Do his Majesty's ministers mean to give additional pangs to our misery, when they tell us, that *trade flourishes*? Because, we have been patient under our sufferings, is it to be assumed as *data*, that as our complaints have not reached the ear of royalty, therefore, we are satisfied? If his Majesty's ministers

ministers are really in possession of facts that they conceive, will prove these assertions; it is utterly impossible that it can apply to that part of the kingdom we inhabit; nor yet to the West Riding of Yorkshire, otherwise, how came there to be 1,453,758 yards of cloth manufactured less in 1793, than in 1792? However disposed we may be, to feel nearly unlimited confidence in the abilities and good intentions of our governors—However much we may have been agitated by political alarms—We cannot sacrifice our rationality to any minister whatever. When poverty presses so close upon us, *inquiry* becomes a duty of the most urgent nature. Our sentiments must coincide with Mr. Wilberforce, when he says, “that true magnanimity consists in acting with propriety under every circumstance; resolutely determining to change the mode of conduct whenever it is required, by alteration in the state of affairs.” We conceived our present minister possessed that *magnanimity*—if he does not, he must expect that our confidence will be withdrawn.

If then, my friends, it is true (and to you I appeal for the truth of whatever I have advanced) that a great part of our fixed capital is worse than useless*,

* As the component parts of manufactured articles usually resolve themselves into four, viz. raw material, wages, expence of fixed capital, rent, &c. and profit: the loss sustained by the manufacturer, exclusive of the positive diminution of his profits, will evidently appear from the following statement. Taking it for granted, that the annual expence, in any particular manufactory, of fixed capital (by which I

if our expences are much the same as in better times—if our *property* is in that shape, which may become comparatively worthless—if our *labour* is to lose its value—if corroding *anxiety* is to destroy our peace, and pursue us into domestic life; where conjugal affection, and filial attention *used* to act, “as the softest stops of a musical instrument to restore that sweet equilibrium, which is so often disturbed by the necessary perturbations and business of society”—if we, who depend so much upon *foreign markets* for our support, who manufacture goods, not for this or that town, or this or that kingdom, but for Europe in particular, and the world in general; and are by the policy of courts, and ravages of *war*, not only obstructed in our operations, but, deprived of our resources—if we have

mean every instrument employed in the manufactory, and whatever apparatus is necessary thereto) rent, salary of clerks, and other contingent expences not coming under the denomination of raw material or wages; supposing this collective expence to be rated at five per cent. on the goods manufactured, and the annual amount of such goods, made prior to the War to have been 10,000l. the expence would be 500l. On the other hand, admit (what is perfectly consistent with fact) that since the War, the annual amount of goods made has been reduced to 3500l. and the ordinary expences referred to not materially diminished, there is an absolute loss of 325l. per annum, independent of the profit that would have been made on the sale of goods to the amount of 6500l.

Let the nobility and gentry, when speaking of their attachment to the constitution, after having subscribed a few hundred pounds for the internal defence of the kingdom; compare such subscription with the absolute annual loss, the manufacturer feels in consequence of the War: and then say who has had their patriotism most put to the test.

no prospect under the present warlike system, but *famine* in our dwellings, and *desolation* in our streets, and yet are to furnish *recruits* for the army, *food* for the widow and fatherless, and *money* for the state; is it not requisite that our rulers should be rightly informed of our grievances?

If WAR has thus bereaved us of those blessings we have heretofore enjoyed; it behoves us as members of a free state; as fathers of families, and as manufacturers; to take into our immediate consideration the *necessity* there is to petition his Majesty, as the father of his people, to order such measures to be taken, as may tend to an early restoration of PEACE, as the only means that can place his suffering subjects in their former happy circumstances.

If, on the other hand, his Majesty's counsellors, should *advise* him to continue this disastrous and destructive war—if the same vindictive personalities are still to *embellish* the speeches of our senators, rather than that manly and dignified argument, which yields to whatever is just and reasonable, uninfluenced by any other consideration—if we are still to continue deaf to the calls of Religion and Humanity, because our passions urge the expediency of the French being subdued, or exterminated—if every obstacle is to be thrown in the way of pacific measures, *till the last man and the last guinea are exhausted*: in the name of all that is just, let the greater
part

part of the National Burden fall upon those, whose situation in life protects them from the direful effects of War; and as "it cannot be denied, that the mildest, the most equitable, and the most usual expedient of polished states, in periods of emergency, *is the reduction of the salaries of their servants, and the suppression of superfluous places;*" let the advocates for the continuance of hostilities, prove the patriotism of their views, by voluntarily sacrificing, for the good of their country, what in more prosperous periods they have derived from her bounty.

F I N I S.