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MONEY DE JURE,

AND

MONEY DE FACTO.

A SUMMARY  
OF THE  
EFFECTS OF THE LEGISLATIVE INTERPOSITION

IN BEHALF OF  
DEPRECIATED AND DEPRECIATING

BANK PAPER,

ON THE VARIOUS ORDERS OF THE COMMUNITY,

AND THE  
SYSTEM OF THE CONSTITUTION.

“ Vicit tamen in senatu pars illa quæ vero pretium aut gratiam  
anteferebat.

“ Ita bonum publicum ut in plerisque negotiis solet privatâ  
gratiâ devictum.”

SALLUST.

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**MONEY DE JURE,**

**W**HEN an individual takes the pains to collect the sense of the public on a subject of general interest, although he may be thought worthy of no other reward, he at least earns some sort of claim to attention; as public sentiments stand in need of individual organs.

The general voice is usually fated to meet general neglect: this is the reason that considerations which should occupy the public care, too frequently become an object of public disregard, till a due attention is at length roused by laudable individual excitement.

Widely-diffused opinions are like the combustion of grains of gunpowder lightly strewed over an extensive surface; their effect is scarcely noticed, and but feebly impress us: yet when

the same quantity is collected and compressed into one spot, it produces an explosion which arrests the attention, and is, as it were, involuntarily heard.

The country had long observed the gradual depreciation of the various circulating paper throughout the kingdom, but that observation seemed to wait the appearance of those publications of the fact, which have recently issued from the press, ere the nation began to act on their own consciousness of its actual existence. Then, indeed, the alarm was sounded, and hostilities commenced.

Although, since the earliest public notice of this unfortunate truth, so many able and effective Essays have appeared on the subject, as to seem almost preclusive of further discussion; yet as all those have confined their observations to the mere fact of the depreciation, there still remain other and more extensive views in which the topic might be contemplated. Its effects on society, particularly, are worthy the most mature and full consideration.

Above all, we should dwell on the important circumstance, that this depreciated paper, having been driven to the last most necessitous resource of an application to parliament, for the protection of government, it has now obtained a solemn legislative sanction. It has since,

therefore, become a matter worthy the most serious reflection, as deeply affecting the wealth and prosperity of the nation at large, the individual interests of every order of society, and the vital principle of our constitution.

The object of this treatise is to furnish a comprehensive but succinct account of the origin and nature of paper circulation; to shew its primary use and present abuse; to point out the means of estimating its conjectural value, or, rather, its actual depreciation, considering this paper as money, and bullion and specie as merchandize; and also to shew to what proportion of the latter the credit of the former is equal: in the course of which, we shall have occasion to enquire the object, means, and operation of public loans; the causes and effects of the national debt; to expose the inequality of the present mode and measure of taxation; to describe the project and institution of the public funds; and to appreciate the event of a bankruptcy of the state, as affecting private interest and public prosperity.

But it will be the chief design of these pages to deduce from all the foregoing considerations an estimate of the present and probable consequences of those legislative provisions, which have enacted that this paper substitution for the ancient coinage of the mint shall be received

in payment, throughout the kingdom, on the interests of the community, and the system of the constitution.

Until this interposition of the legislature had established the distinction in the state of a money *de jure* and a money *de facto*, the mere voluntary currency of a negotiable paper might perhaps have been considered a presumption of the country's riches, or at least a testimony of national credit: so an evidence of conscious stability in the protestant church might be deduced from the circumstance of her having sufficient confidence in her own strength, to tolerate the Roman catholic or any other sect of the Christian faith.

Previous, indeed, to such interposition, while the issue of this paper was spontaneous on the one hand, and the acceptance of it optional on the other, the subject of its circulation and its value might not have been worth the attention of the public, other than as mere indulgence of popular curiosity. It might have served boys, as exercise in cyphering. It would have been a mere numerical problem, and might have supplied the accountant with arithmetical recreation.

But no sooner does it become a public interest, than it demands a public investigation; and great is the responsibility of ministers, if it

should be found, that without mature deliberation, they have procured the passing of a bill which goes at once to diminish the comfort of the people, and the absolute wealth of the state, and to augment the influence and power of the servants of the crown.

No sooner has the parliamentary majority interposed its omnipotent power to compel the acceptance of a credit-fallen paper for sterling money, than the liberty of the subject awakens to its right of discussing, not the legality of the legislative measure, but the advantages or disasters likely to arise to the country from its effect and influence.

It is much to be wished, that this interference on behalf of the debased bank paper had been conceded to by the representatives of the people on some other hints, than that of the popular rejection of it, and that too on the open avowed mistrust and express refusal of this emblematic money, publicly announced by a noble Lord of extensive landed property, a Peer of the realm, and a truly loyal subject. These surely were not constitutional motives for obliging the nation to receive this fiction of a payment, by a fiat of the law.

These considerations have suggested this undertaking; these are the motives of the present exercise of that right of discussion, by which it is

intended to bring into notice the circumstances attending the coerced circulation of this now legitimated medium of commerce, heretofore current only by custom, founded by the unsuspecting reliance of the public on the credit of parliamentary faith--the consequences likely to result from the new shape under which it appears, as clothed in the authority of the law, and the novel influence it acquires from having thus become armed against all consequences of a conviction of depreciation, and all risk of refusal under the protection of the majority of parliament. I shall also endeavour to point out the most obvious causes and effects of this necessary parliamentary measure, and from them to deduce a true estimate of the real value of that currency which has been reduced to absolute need of such support.

From various, yet unvarying, authorities, at least until the present day, we gather the following explication of the difference between paper money and current specie.

Money is the standard of the value of the necessaries and accommodations of life, and paper money is the representative of that standard. "Nothing is necessary," (we should at present adopt the past tense) "*nothing is necessary to make this representation of money supply the place of specie, but the credit of those who issue*

*it.*" This was the case of the Bank of England: let us see what is the case. Now, indeed, we find that something more is necessary, (a tacit acknowledgment, we must admit, that the credit of that Company is not at present sufficient;) and therefore, in order to give it that artificial but effectual currency, of which, by the failure of the Company's credit, it would have been deprived, an act of parliament--the force of a law--was required and obtained.

It has been further said, "That the notes of this Company are of the same value as the current coin, because they may be turned into it whenever the possessor pleases." Bank paper, therefore, came into a participation of the power of money precisely on the same terms as ministers partake the government of majesty; that is to say, on condition of being discarded as soon as they should become obnoxious; and as in the absence, or during any temporary inactivity of the sovereign, statesmen officially usurp the rule of the realm; so, should specie be exported or hoarded, paper in an instant usurps its currency.

The paper manufactory has, in fact, succeeded in maintaining its ground against the sense of the people, and the present has become the æra of a pecuniary revolution.

The sterling coinage of the realm has been

debased, and blighted, by the contact of this mildewed intrusion, and has at length adopted the measure of quitting the country. Finding its authority dwindled, its powers abridged, and its prerogative curtailed, it has ultimately abdicated these realms. Bank paper now exercises the functions of gold, and by a natural consequence bank dollars and bank tokens are the mercenary levies which have been raised to supply this paper with the convenience of change.

Negotiable paper owes its origin to the finesse of that proscribed people, the Jews, a nation hopeless of all other means of human aggrandisement, and therefore wholly absorbed in pursuits of gain. Excluded all avenues of ambition, they have been compelled to seek weight and importance by the narrow and painful path of avarice. Despairing of becoming great, their sole desire is to be rich. In the weak and unprotected state of universal contumely aliens to every nation on earth, and citizens of none, they were ever unable to preserve the acquired fruits of a covetous industry, until they found means of evading that power which they could not resist. Oppressed and plundered by prince after prince, and having sought in vain a refuge in every corner of the globe, obnoxious on account of their religion--to universal perse-

cution, on account of the impotence to which they were consequently reduced, every state to which they applied for the protection of justice alike extorted from them immense sums of the riches which they had amassed, without affording them security from others in return: the wealth and weakness of this much-harassed people at once provoking incitement and promising impunity. Their natural cunning at length suggested to them the means of preserving, by concealment, the wealth which they had so successfully coveted, yet dared not to display. Their subtlety thus stimulated, they invented that great commercial engine, letters of exchange. Chased from one state to another, they at length concentrated themselves in Lombardy, and by the means of these their secret letters, withdrew their wealth from the grasp of extortion and confiscation. The injustice of John and Henry III. in England, and of Philip Augustus and Philip the Long, in France, imposed on these people the necessity which generated this artful invention.

A policy so refined could not but attract the attention, while its convenience, so apparent, could not but excite the imitation of all the merchants of Europe. Accordingly from that period we find the practice universal.

But as concealment of their effects was not

the object of the merchants of Christendom, who had nothing to fear (from the arbitrary violence at least) of their respective princes, the practice was adopted by them with very different views. It was with them a mere temporary expedient, as prompted by the pressing emergencies or profitable speculations of their freer commerce. By means of thus negotiating their debts, they discovered that their credit would serve them at home, so as to enable them to employ a greater proportion of capital among strangers. They were also aware of the profit and advantage arising from that mercantile maxim of calculation, that he pays latest who pays least: "*minus solvit qui tempore minus solvit.*" Every way, indeed, this practice was profitable, and in the end it was found to answer the purposes for which it was pursued. By these means merchants, and companies of merchants, saw their capital and credit mutually augment each other. The riches of the trading world increased abundantly, and commerce arrived at the height of prosperity.

Princes had for some time viewed this mercantile prosperity with a wistful eye, but the refuge of the Jews had taught them caution.

It was reserved for the reign of William the Third to make advantage of this prosperity. Then it was that the merchant first saw the

monarch condescend to notice, as a government resource, the visible extraordinary increase in the proportion of wealth acquired by the mercantile part of the people, in comparison with that of the rest of the nation.

England is not like Holland, a mere mercantile state: she has proved herself no less entitled to be justly stiled a military people. The face of our country proclaims us not inferior in agriculture to any spot in the globe; nor is there perhaps in the world a people where useful manufactures are carried on to such extent and perfection as in Great Britain. Her burthens, as a military nation, which had been, till the revolution, principally borne by the agricultural interest, then became too weighty to be sustained by the amount of the sources of taxation of those days. The duties of the state being found insufficient for the prosecution of the numerous and heavy wars in which the nation was at that time engaged, ministers at length applied to the trading interest for supplies. These were to be furnished, not in the shape of taxes, but (a peculiar mark of favour) to be raised, forsooth, in the way of loan; and thus originated that afflicting and profligate expedient, since converted into an incessant and continual source of immediate supply, by anticipating taxation, a *public loan*. Yet notwith-

standing sad experience has ever since proved it to have been as impolitic as unjust, as ruinous as temporizing, and as burthensome in consequence as it is useless in effect, it has been resorted to on all occasions from that æra to the present period.

It is particularly necessary that we understand the nature and operation of this public loan, if we would understand the nature of our incumbrances, and their effect on our industry.

The public loans are sums of money to an indefinite amount, lent by a few rich individuals from among the people, and always from the mercantile or monied part (terms almost synonymous) to the government, on its exigencies, (which happen, by the way, most frequently), when engaged in long and expensive wars. Circumstances prove to us, that these principal sums advanced are neither intended on the one side, or expected on the other, to be ever repaid. The only remuneration to the lender consists in the regular annual payment of a stated interest, to the utmost amount allowed by law. This interest is levied by heavy taxation on the produce of the land, the toil of the labourer, the skill of the artist, and the industry of the manufacturer! The repayment of the principal is not only not thought of at the time of the advance made to government, but it is

frequently necessary to have recourse to a loan to pay even that interest on it, which the whole toil, produce, skill, and industry of the country cannot furnish.

Under such circumstances it might be thought that merchants would be scrupulous of lending money to government. On the contrary, the richest are ever found exerting their utmost influence and interest to procure this loan.

If it be asked why government, rather than burthen posterity with their ancestors' debts, do not discharge these incumbrances? the answer is, they cannot; and the reason is apparent from the purposes for which it is borrowed. There are two consequences of borrowing money. Some men borrow to enrich, others to impoverish themselves. These consequences flow severally from the various motives which induce men to borrow, and the various means of applying the sums borrowed. The prudent man of business borrows to increase his stock, by speculation or industry; the prodigal heir, to diminish his future estate, by expence and luxury. The expenditure of the one is the sleep, that of the other is the death, of such loan. The merchant repays by his success: the prodigal can only repay by his bankruptcy; for the one sows his corn, the other devours it.

Princes cannot be engaged in traffic, any



more than they can disengage themselves from liberalities, munificence, and necessary hostilities. They borrow to squander on luxury or war, and each is a gulf which never returns what it has once received. They render wealthy, by their profusion, the creatures of the court. Princes therefore borrow, not to enrich, but to impoverish their funds; and they have no fortunes but the prosperity of their dominions, no wealth but that of their subjects.

The melancholy truth follows, that loan to a government is a debt on the state, and a national debt is a mortgage on a people's comforts.

If the national debt can never be repaid, the nation's taxes can never be remitted. Unfortunately a nation in debt is not more sacred from the calamitous consequences of that situation than an individual. Debt is a present anticipation of future resources. If those resources are certain in their arrival, and sufficient in extent, debt would not then be an evil; but if they should be deficient in either of those respects, debt then becomes a fatal injury, which will increase, and must ripen into inevitable ruin. This question, like all others on mere matters of fact, must await the answer of the absolute event.

Now, it has been long ago proved, and fre-

quently shewn, that this nation is involved in debt infinitely beyond its resources. It is also a well-authenticated fact, that the whole amount of all the specie of the kingdom would pay the creditors of the state but a very small proportion of the interest alone, on their respective debts; much less is there in the country sterling money sufficient to purchase the necessary articles requisite to the subsistence of the inhabitants. Inquiring minds will be naturally anxious to ascertain how these difficulties, which cannot be dispensed with, are overcome.

In the solution of this enigma, they have at once the secret of the origin of paper money. The alchemical process is at once disclosed. In the language of the Book of Genesis, War begot Debt, Debt begot Taxation, Taxation begot Bank Paper, and Bank Paper begot an Act of Parliament.

The sums derived from taxation being insufficient to meet the incumbrances of the state, it became necessary to pay its annuitants in a depreciated medium, that those resources which had been previously applied solely to that purpose might be employed in answering the expences of the war.

Paper therefore is evidently a result of the necessities of the state, which wanting money, was

driven to adopt some measure that might supply to them what they stood so much in need of.

We have observed that the persecution, oppression, and plunder of the Jews suggested to them the means of eluding the Christian violence and injustice. It has always been the fate of projectors to find their schemes improved on, as soon as they have betrayed their principle by putting them in practice; and sometimes to observe them turned against themselves. The Christian merchants soon benefited by the invention of the Lombard bankers. The promissory note was an improvement, by a ready suggestion from obvious analogy, on the bill of exchange. In consequence of this usage, the princes of Christendom easily discovered a means of enriching themselves, from the sources of commercial wealth, without the reproach of actually and ostensibly debasing the sterling specie of their dominions, which is ever a palpable imposition on the public; or of exercising their power, in the violence of exacting by force, what they could not obtain by address. They therefore took advantage of commercial means, to procure a share of commercial riches: they adopted the use of paper, and gained a power over the money of the subject in proportion as they increased the circulating medium.

Here let us pause, to observe the conduct and policy of the Romans, in a similar situation.

They found the exigencies of the state had augmented till they were become unable to satisfy the public creditors. No sooner did they find their means inadequate to their duty, than the question with them was, how to equalize the loss which must be sustained somewhere, in consequence of their insolvency, so as to relieve the state, with the least possible oppression to the citizens; and in what they did, they acted with as much public prudence and private equity as the nature of their dilemma would allow. They had a very complicate derangement of affairs to adjust. They were indebted publicly as a state, and of course mutual private debts subsisted among fellow citizens. They found themselves obliged to gain some advantage on their creditors, and their object was to effect that advantage with as little injury to individuals as possible.

Their as weighed two ounces of copper, and the denarius was worth ten ases. They made the as of one ounce of copper, by which they at once gained one half on their creditors. At the same time, by a master-stroke of political justice, they decreed that the denarius, which previously contained only ten ases, should now contain sixteen. Thus, while the state gained one

half; individuals lost only a fifth, provisions and the accommodations of life rose only a fifth, and all other consequences are equally obvious. The republic of Rome exercised, on all occasions, consummate prudence in choosing a fit conjuncture for any extraordinary measure; she accordingly selected a period most opportune, on this occasion. She was in the plenitude of her pride and prosperity, and the successful rival of Carthage. The principle of a republic is virtue. Rome was at that period a republic.

England is certainly not a republic: it is a mixed government, composed of all, and therefore frequently partaking of the nature of each, as either happens to obtain an undue proportion of weight and influence. From the Conquest to the present Regency, this balance of interest and power has wavered to every form of government, at various periods. Under the first William it inclined a little toward a despotism, which afterwards subsided into a limited monarchy. It then assumed something of the aristocratical form, till the king uniting with the people, from jealousy of the nobles, augmented the democratic interest. Wishing to shake off this alliance, the monarchy fell in the struggle, and the government was reduced to anarchy, for such is perhaps the meaning of what was termed the Commonwealth. Recovering from this

state by one general effort, it was thrown into a position which made it preponderate towards something more than mere monarchical authority. The weight of the democratic influence, however, restored the equilibrium by the revolution. The gradual and almost imperceptible corruption of the genuine and true representation of the people, ever since that period, has, however, so weakened this democratic interest, that we seem once more to be considerably affected by the sensible increase of the power which has been attained by the servants of the crown.

Republics are ever willing to make great sacrifices to the state. The individuals in all monarchies think a retrenchment of superfluities impracticable, until they are taught by necessity that nothing is more easy. In republics there is less pride than honesty; in monarchies there is less honesty than pride. Republics call their honesty justice; monarchies call their pride honour. Those are always just from virtue and principle; these, seldom, from vanity and passion.

Thus, in times of pressure, the Roman republic diminished the size, or increased the denomination of, the value of their coin. The Roman emperors, on the contrary, on similar

necessities, debased its quality. The causes of this difference were, that the commonwealth had no desire to conceal its necessities. The emperors were always ashamed of their poverty; so, honest traders raise the price of their goods, while others adulterate them.

Didius Julian and Alexander Severus, finding themselves unable to continue their liberalities, got rid of the odium of decreasing them, by debasing the medium in which they were distributed. Thus in the reign of Gallienus nothing was seen at Rome but copper silvered.

In England, a corresponding scarcity of specie has been supplied by bank paper.

The state now borrows money of the rich, and gives them, in return, a paper which represents a debt, and the faith of their subjects has hitherto given it a currency. But what is the consequence? The men who lend money to a company of merchants have a confidence in the profits which that company may make by traffic, and readily receive, in return for the specie advanced, a paper, which is the representatives of those profits. They know that the sums advanced will be advantageously employed, and will return with increase. They know that the company will consequently augment their own wealth, and be therefore ena-

bled to remunerate them; and that the result of such reciprocal benefit will communicate something to the general prosperity of the state.

It is the contrary with money lent to the government. It is employed in unprofitable purposes, and becomes lost to the nation. The lender may not, perhaps, lose the interest of his money, but it is paid by embarrassing the government and impoverishing the people; and he himself, though content not to lose, cannot congratulate himself on any thing gained.

To illustrate this from common life. If money be lent by a prudent man of opulence to establish an industrious, intelligent, and indigent youth in business, and continues to supply him as the necessaries of his subsistence and employment require, he advances his means profitably to his own resources, beneficially to the exertions of struggling merit, and advantageously to the state. He is, at once, prudent towards himself, benevolent to his neighbour, a friend to society, and a patriot to his country.

If, on the other hand, he furnish a dissipated heir to an ample estate with the means of anticipating his future fortune, and continues to aid his profligate course till he has enabled him to urge his ruinous career beyond the extent of his expectations, he involves himself, ruins the ob-

ject of his criminal indulgence, and commits an irreparable injury on society.

The reader may deduce the obvious analogy. A government lending money to uphold a failing commerce, would exemplify the first instance of this illustration; a commercial interest contributing to the government, is but too truly described by the last.

The consequence is, that we have an inundation of promissory paper in the country---a floating mass of national debt, which we have no other means of providing against but by encroaching most prodigally and ruinously on those distant future resources which we shall assuredly want, when they arrive, for the necessities of those days. So the prodigal spendthrift meets his notes and bills wherever he turns, and finds that whenever they are satisfied, he must be undone.

This has increased the national circulation, but not the national wealth. This paper became originally current, as we have seen, by the value which it bore from being capable at any time of being reduced into specie. When it exceeded in its amount that specie which gave it such credit, it of course became of less value, in proportion to the increasing reluctance of those who professed to be responsible for it, to answer their engagements. We allow that it was at

one time equivalent to money; but "*cessante crusâ, cessat et effectus.*" This worth was then visible and sensible; for at that period both among ourselves at home, and among strangers abroad, our paper was so considered; because those who issued it were always ready to exchange it for specie. This convertible quality, which could at any time make it money, precluded all objection; but when that quality failed, by a natural consequence its credit shrunk from it. The extent of this defalcation was readily ascertained by the course of exchange, from the reason, nature, and effect of the cause. The depreciation of currency abroad affected the circulation at home. This decrease of value became as palpable and apparent as the original worth had been. Gold and silver soon became scarce. Common understanding and common observation soon perceived the sources of this scarcity. While the pound note was worth twenty shillings, there could be no profit in sending the specie out of the country. As this worth lessened, the advantage of the exportation of money became more extensive and more apparent, and the practice more universal. It was at length known to the most remote inhabitants of the country---from the merchant to the peasant, from the banker to the clown.

The scarcity of sterling, is the effect of depreciated circulation, and is therefore its most evident proof.

As, after the introduction of counterfeit silver at Rome, nothing was very soon to be procured but silvered copper; so, on the depreciation of paper, scarcely any thing can be seen in England but bank notes and bank silver.

Foreigners will buy the merchandise of states, who use a deteriorated currency, with their own debased medium, which they will purchase at its actual value in the course of exchange; and by this real value also will they accept it for their own.

It will be necessary to know what is meant by the course of exchange. Commerce has taught merchants what money is worth all over the world: The money of every state has both a positive and relative value. Its positive value is fixed at home by law; its relative value is ascertained by comparison of its real worth (if gold, for instance, by its purity and weight) with that of the specie of other countries. It is this comparative estimation which merchants call the course of exchange, from the operation of which there arises between different states a constant account of debtor and creditor, of profit and loss.

This course of exchange can fix the value of

paper, or any other substitute for money, as well as of specie. Paper derives its value from the credit of those who issue it; that credit is founded on their solvency. If a company issue more paper than they have specie to answer, this paper will consequently fall in value by as much as their specie is insufficient. To give a familiar instance: the notes of a solvent man are worth their full amount. Should he become incapable of paying his debts, they would then be worth only so much in the pound, as he can pay with his effects. The proof of solvency or insolvency consists in the readiness or backwardness to answer the just demands of his creditors. It is the same with companies as with individuals.

The law has given the pound note a fixed nominal value in this country. That value, however, is above what it is actually worth in course of exchange. A state may make a positive money of any thing. Law may give it a circulation at home, and a nominal estimation; but it cannot give it currency abroad, or relative value. No state can do this, unless Midas were its minister, and alchemists composed its cabinet.

The legislature may compose the pound of any thing, but they cannot make it worth twenty shillings.

When the depreciation of the circulating medium of this country (for such the bank paper

had become) grew evident, as that of bank notes is at present, it was not to be supposed but that some intelligent peer or commoner should notice it publicly. In fact, the attempt was made by a noble Lord to put the intrinsic value of this paper to the proof, by applying the infallible test of refusing to accept it for more than its estimated worth. He evidently conceived it a spurious money, and that by imposing it on the landholders, they would be defrauded of such a proportion of their rents, as its real value was less than its nominal. He had his particular opinion of its true worth, and declared he would accept it only at such valuation. He threw down his glove of defiance, and challenged its worth openly and publicly; but it was taken up by another noble Lord, who transferred it to administration. Like Laocoon, he had nearly betrayed and overthrown this delusion of the country, and disseminated general alarm, when Lord Stanhope interposed. He was seconded by all the might of ministry, and in consequence a bill was carried through both houses, and received the royal assent, by which the paper establishment was protected from further attempts, and those symbols of the exhausted resources of the country were made current among the people by the law of the land.

As Ilium had her palladium, perhaps Britain has hers; and whatever hope the Trojans reposed in their image of Minerva, Englishmen may consider, with more dread and less superstition, the fatal subtraction of the coin impressed with the image of their sovereign, by means of the hollow delusion of a paper money.

Of whatever value paper had become actually and relatively deficient, it has now legally and positively been supplied by this statute. However impotent it might have grown, it is now invested with parliamentary capacity.

Of what real or relative estimation it would have been proved to be, had this measure not been effected, we cannot now assert: but we, however, know that it is deficient, and we feel the effect.

For the sake of argument, let us estimate this paper at Lord King's valuation. That nobleman has declared his opinion, that the pound note is really worth but sixteen shillings. He is probably right, although to be of such value, it ought to be capable of being converted at any time into so much specie. But granting it to be of such value, even then, by as much as its real is less than its nominal worth, by so much does it lessen our profits on our staple merchandize, when sold to foreign dealers; and encrease its price beyond its value to ourselves, on the

home consumption. It enables other marts to undersell us without disadvantage to them. France may therefore spare herself the trouble of systematically obstructing our commerce. The evil consequence of a growing depreciation of our currency would at length sufficiently impede our trade by the weight of its own incumbrances. That which would cost much in our currency, might be had for less in that of other countries. Money would be comparatively cheap in England, and in other nations comparatively dear. Gold and silver, which bear a great value every where else, would become depreciated in real worth here, in consequence of the nominal value of the paper. So, according to the valuation of Lord King, what would cost sixteen English shillings in France, cannot be sold in England for less than twenty; because sixteen shillings will there procure what must be bought with twenty here. The French labourer, in that case, lives as comfortably on sixteen shillings as the Englishman on twenty, and in the same proportion will be the measure of difference in every thing. Foreigners, therefore, will pay for our manufactured goods in money but at its due worth. They will pay no more for English labour than what it could be obtained for in their own country. Thus, what they pay the trader will not enable him to remunerate the

toil employed on his traffic; for in payment of what costs the English factor a pound, they will give no more than the pound is worth in course of exchange; or, what amounts to the same thing, they will purchase the depreciated currency at its established discount, for the purpose of paying their English debts. The consequence which ensues is, that trade stagnates, and industry droops; and whether we prove the cause by its effects, or the effects by their cause, we want no evidence of the fact. The mournful testimony of all the manufacturing towns in the kingdom, and the frequent and comprehensive lists of bankruptcies published in every Gazette, abundantly prove the declining state of all the sources of our former prosperity, and the cause is but too obvious. Let us take one instance. A certain quantity of raw cotton, we will say, is purchased for sixteen shillings. Of course the American planters will be paid in specie. That sum sterling must be procured by the British factor at a loss of 20 per cent.; that is, he must give for it a pound in paper. The labour which must be bestowed on this material is bought with paper. We need not have recourse to any other causes, to account for our declining commerce. The Englishman cannot afford to send these goods abroad. To be at all remunerated, he must sell at home, otherwise



he must be a loser; as in foreign markets, where money is dear, he cannot ask a price answerable to the measure of value of his own country, where the nominal circulation is cheap, and consequently he can make no profit, being either paid in the depreciated medium of his country, or in money equal to its relative and actual value. In buying, on the other hand, it is reversed. The foreigner will demand more in nominally valuable paper than Englishmen can afford to give. It is true that the English merchant himself may be repaid, at home, the difference of the price arising from the depreciation; but the national commerce and prosperity must consequently suffer and decline. The merchant must make good his losses abroad by his profits at home. The trader gains 20 per cent. here, and loses it elsewhere. The skill or labour which is said to be worth twenty shillings in this country, may be obtained in others for sixteen.

A manufacturer, artist, mechanic, &c. calculates that a pound will subsist him for a certain period, and perhaps he may find himself correct: but the truth is, that sixteen shillings are sufficient; for while he imagines he is spending a pound, he really spends less by four shillings. He perhaps calls to mind the days when he could live, in the same degree of comfort, on

sixteen shillings: he therefore upbraids the times, which will not allow him to put by the additional four shillings: he exclaims against the rigor of such times, and deplores the rise in value of the necessaries of life.

The shopkeeper entertains similar reflexions. He is aware of the advance on his goods, but is conscious of no increase of profit. Both appear to have an increase of means, but their necessities increase with them. To both, Fortune seems to have depreciated the favours she bestowed upon them. Thus, to a man standing on the deck of a sailing ship, the vessels at anchor seem to pass him. If he is in company with others, sailing at an equal rate, they appear to be motionless. If he passes ships sailing at a slower rate, they seem to be stationary. All such extraordinary appearances are founded on ordinary facts. When these are simply known, wonder ceases. If the currency of our paper were as universal as that of our bullion, the dearness of the necessaries of life would be a proof of our riches: but when universal currency failed, it became a proof of debt, and consequently of poverty. As long as that paper was convertible into specie, it was everywhere current, and it was much more equivalent to money, when it was considered a mere representative of a debt, and depended on credit,

than since it has been legally converted into a lawful representative of the signs of value, and made independent of faith. The means taken to establish it have proved its ruin. By forcing us to consider it money, they have obliged us to see its defects in value. By compelling us to acknowledge its worth, they confess its depreciation.

Such a circulating medium as this paper, born of our necessities, cannot be considered but as a sort of state physic---a nostrum, applied to the disorders of a nation reduced by debt, fatigued with war, and sick of taxation. The necessity of compulsion to oblige us to swallow it, is of itself a sufficient proof how very unpalatable it is, and how much disrelished, after the more substantial dish on which the people formerly fed. The ministers---those state physicians---fully sensible of the intrinsic worthlessness of their drugs in the natural, primitive state, may endeavour, perhaps, to enhance their value, by suggesting the usual considerations submitted by the faculty to their patients---the extraordinary worth which they derive from their efficacy in their compound character, by which they are made a medicine for the complaints of Poverty, and the compensation due to the trouble and skill which could render them capable of becoming efficacious. Yet this tem-

porising remedy but mocks our hopes. Our debt rapidly and frightfully swells, the war rages with augmented rancour and violence, and the burthen of our taxes becomes every day more weighty, and intolerable.

That this depreciated medium of exchange will not elsewhere pass current for the value of its professed worth, is a mere naked, simple fact; but the enquiry into what would have been found to be its absolute and real estimation even in this country, had not the legislature interposed, is now become matter of curious, and perhaps not altogether useless speculation. That this investigation was about to be prosecuted, is evident, from the motive and circumstance of such interposition. The people were about to reject paper in payment to the amount of its nominal value, when the parliament interposed its injunction. The people were about to use the liberty they possessed, but the parliament checked them by the power with which they were invested. But lest I should appear to be censuring the measures of parliament, while my intention is merely to relate the acts of one of its sessions, I will drop that relation, and continue the proposed valuation.

It is well known that the demi-nudé dress of an English fine lady would be almost as well calculated to afford comfort under the inclement

climate of a Siberian sky, as the bank paper of a British merchant to obtain full credit for their assumed value, in a Russian market. A bank note is a mere English subject; an English guinea is a citizen of the world. Bank paper is received, even in this metropolis, with mistrust and caution; and if discovered to be a forgery, is worth nothing. Gold, on the contrary, is unhesitatingly received, and universally welcomed. A guinea may indeed be bad, but the very worst is worth something.

It seems to be a chief argument with the advocates for paper, and one on which they lay much stress and emphasis, that a pound note and a shilling will procure as much of the necessaries and conveniencies of life as a guinea. That I utterly deny, because a guinea is worth at least one fourth more than the paper pound. But let it be borne in mind, that were there no paper in the country, the guinea would produce at least five times as much of every article of merchandize as it does now, (a truth, of which every man of ordinary observation must be sensible;) yet I will, for the sake of argument, admit that the pound and shilling will be as potent, in an English shop or market, as a guinea; and what does that circumstance prove? That this fact, which is made the boast of paper, should be, as it really is, the complaint of spe-

cie. It is not a matter of congratulation to us, that the pound in paper is worth comparatively so much: it is matter of sincere regret that the guinea in gold is worth so little. Restraining the power and influence of the one, cannot give value or credit to the other. The guinea may be robbed, indeed, but that robbery will not enrich the pound. We know that if a copper bank token were silvered with any tolerable nicety, it will be frequently taken for the thing which it counterfeits. The bank, however, would be backward to admit the same argument, in behalf of such counterfeit tokens---that it was of equal value with their silver coinage, because it procured an equal quantity of goods in the market. It is probable that no vintner ever yet thought of justifying the quality of his adulterated wines, by the circumstance of his having dishonestly exacted the same price for them as the genuine were worth in the market. Certainly when a man pays the best price, the presumption is that he receives the first quality: but as certainly no one would ever think of proving the degree of excellence in any thing, by the price which it obtains. That would be, in such case, to attempt the justification of a cheat by acknowledgment of it; and surely the argument would be equally strong on the part of the fraudulent vintner, as on the behalf

of the circulators of base coin, or worthless paper; for to attempt to shew a value in bad money, from the circumstance of its procuring an equal quantity of goods with that which could be bought at the same price by the lawful currency of the realm, is fully as sophistical as to ascribe a good quality to bad wares because they might have been sold for the same sum. We are aware also that a bank dollar may be changed for a sterling crown and sixpence, and that solely on the authority of a mere resolution of the bank directors, although the crown alone be intrinsically worth more than the dollar. The same may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of the other bank silver. But it seems, that in receiving silver for silver, the nation much more readily submits to lose a little, than, in taking paper for gold, to lose a great deal.

What the government permits, it may be said to do. It has been observed, that if a state allays the circulating medium, individuals will contribute to the evil by doing the same thing. This is the reason that we have seen private banking companies established all over the kingdom, and that we may see private trading houses beginning to issue their own silver tokens!

In truth, there is a general empiricism in every thing in these days. There is a literary

quackery. Books are estimated by size, binding, type, and hot-press. We have it even in our music and the drama. There is an universal empiricism in physic, and special pleading is the quackery of the law. I am now endeavouring to shew in what consists the empiricism of money.

Were the interest of the national debt to be paid in specie, the wealth of the state would be insufficient for that purpose alone; how then could we afterwards carry on the war? The annuitant drones, therefore, who compliment the national hive by reposing in them the confidence of depending on the security of their credit, and the exertions of their sinews, for the subsistence of themselves and families, must be satisfied by some other means. It is true, there stands a large building called a Bank; but there is nothing in it. A man who is rich in the paper of the country--in the public faith---is rich only in the national taxes. But these are as yet but in the womb of the earth; if they arise from the fruits and produce of the soil, they are in the cradle of industry; if they grow from the occupations of the people---if they arrive with our commercial imports---they are as yet on the perilous ocean. They are, therefore, exposed to all the dangers of a famine in one case, revolt

or invasion in the second, and to shipwreck and capture in the last. Such men are not rich, therefore, in money; they are rich in the promises of the state. These promises must necessarily be clogged with a tacit proviso, that if either of those accidents happen, their fulfilment will be frustrated. The state is not rich enough to advance money to their creditors on the confidence of the improbability of those contingencies; and the promises of the state to these people would be but a mendicant means on their part, in the mart of their necessities. Their wealth in such a case would be as unreal and visionary as a poet's thoughts. The finest fancies of an author's imagination would procure him no credit in literary commerce, until embodied in print, to be circulated by publication. It was no less necessary that the state, to make their promises marketable, should give them a negotiable substance. This was as easily done as suggested. Presto!--The promise bestrides the gossamer, assumes the substance of bank paper, becomes both visible and tangible, and takes its station in the bank, like the herald Mercury, "new lighting on a heaven-kissing hill." Thus is given to "this airy nothing, a local habitation and a name." Thus the immaterial nature of a promise, which heretofore as-

cended to the skies on mortal breath, embodies and enfolds itself in paper, and sinks into human pockets.

These are the more readily received; for most men have always appeared to have a greater predilection for promises than present performances; and if we could account for this blind partiality, we might say, that the pleasures of hope exceed those of fruition---that men are fond of the exercise of extraordinary power; consequently as it is in every man's power to promise, though he cannot perform, promises become very frequent---that the perspective of the mind is contrary to the perspective of sense. Objects in the mind's eye are magnified in proportion to their distance. Hence the shrewd tradesman prefers, generally, to give credit to safe customers, than to take their ready payment; and how much more efficient are the promises of good behaviour in parliamentary candidates, among voters, than their absolute honesty! Electors therefore more frequently, if not always, choose the men who make exuberant promises to them of intentional public spirit and virtue, rather than those who give them present proofs of private worth and social integrity.

This at once solves the paradox of the pro-

missory pound being worth more than the ready guinea. Worth more!!! Yes, worth *more*; for

“What is worth in any thing,  
But so much value as 'twill bring?”

Now, if a pound note be worth in reality only sixteen shillings, and passes current for twenty, it is certainly practically worth more than the guinea, which is really worth twenty-seven shillings in paper, and yet passes for only twenty-one. These are the arguments of the friends of paper. Thus a distinction is made between theoretical and practical value.

It may be urged, perhaps, that though paper cannot be converted into gold at will, yet gold may at pleasure be converted into paper. The possessor of specie, therefore, by converting it into notes, may make their practical equal to their theoretical value. The bank will make these three objections to such arguments; that it is a circuitous method, and therefore always troublesome; that it is not commonly understood, therefore seldom practised; and that it is generally apprehended to be unlawful, therefore a fearful experiment.

Do we not say frequently that a man for whose person we may not have a very extraordinary esteem, is worth 2 or 300,000*l.* for whom a

Guinea merchant or slave factor would not give a dollar---whom no woman would accept as a husband gratis, and no man receive as a companion on the same easy terms; for, in point of fact, the man may not be worth one doit for any single good purpose of society. He may, withal, appear to be worth even as little as he really is, (and those who have curiosity may see such men every day on 'Change,) yet he will receive all the homage due to his reputed value. The fact is, that he does not bear this extraordinary worth about him, but entrusts it to the lock of some strong coffer in an obscure part of the city.

In the mercantile phrase, too, every broker is stiled a good man, even though he may be known to be the greatest rogue in the community. Such men may reverse the sentiment of our bard, in their soliloquies, and say,

“They who steal our merit do steal trash;  
“But they who filch from us our India bonds,  
“And government securities,  
“Rob us of that which not enricheth them,  
“And makes us poor indeed”---

being, alas! their solitary recommendation.

This distinction of theoretical and practical worth may be compared to that before shewn to exist between relative and positive value. We may give any thing a name; but that ap-

pellation will not invest it with the nature of the thing of which that name is the idea. So, when the usurper Cromwell seized the throne of England, assumed the royal authority, and exercised the prerogative and power of majesty, he was really king, though he stiled himself protector.

I will by one further analogy endeavour to explain the fallacies which produce the apparent equality in value between this real, and artificial money.

Paper, which represents a debt, without money to pay it, which engages to do what it cannot wholly, and will not partially, perform, may be thought by men of ordinary understanding as absurd a substitute for money as if the minister were to transmit to our general in Spain, by way of reinforcement, 100,000 suits of an army clothier's regimentals, without soldiers to man them! Mere matter of fact people may (as the Psalmist expresses it) exclaim, in their hearts, "Tush:" but on more deliberate consideration, even these inanities may have their good effect when properly applied. The most literal inutilities have sometimes their unexpected use. For instance, these empty jackets may serve as a *ruse de guerre*. Were the regimentals, on some favourable occasion, displayed on poles in the stile of ancient trophies, on the summit of

some neighbouring hill, their resemblance to their realities might alarm an enemy into capitulation, whom your actual force were inefficient to subdue. Nor is this a fancied instance. Such stratagems have frequently succeeded. Even in our island, when the French descended on the Welch coast, they mistook the red cloaks of the old gossips who were flocking to see the show, for a military force, and in consequence surrendered to a handful of soldiers who had approached the beach. The cackling of a few geese under the walls of Rome saved the capitol; but few generals would have thought of driving them there for that express duty: yet they effectually answered the temporary purpose of the most alert out-lying picquet.

These suits, we will allow, however sanguinary in their appearance, would not serve the turn of fighting men as such; but arranged as before, at proper distance, they might hold a force in check, as military men term it, during a movement, and cause a temporary diversion in one place, while the actual troops attempted an operation in another; and just as these woolen battalions may frighten a foe into a retreat in the field, so your paper money may cajole the public creditors into complacency at home; only preserve the men of straw from the tele-

scopes of the enemy, and the notes of the Bank from such assayists as Lord King.

An invidious distinction seems to have obtained in the state, between what is called the public and the individual. The Attorney General of his majesty's present Administration declared, in the court of King's Bench, last term, that the public was considered an object of general plunder by all people---that he could not but be conscious of the melancholy truth, as he was pleased to term it, of the existence of one code of morality for the public, and another for these individuals; and that men who would be shocked by an imputation of dishonesty towards private persons, had no scruple to defraud the community. However that may be, if it is a fact, the public, on their part, are certainly not behind hand in the matter of retaliation. The public and the individual do, indeed, seem to have separate interests, though they have both the same object in view---imposition on one another. Fraud appears to be the staple commodity of each; the only difference is, that the one is a wholesale dealer in what the other only retails. It is not the nature of a trafficking nation to be over-scrupulous of the means of making a profit. In such states traffic can reconcile fraud and injustice, as fashion familiarizes ab-

surdity and deformity. We term the Algerines a piratical people: they probably call themselves a naval and commercial country; though in truth their commerce is a little peculiar themselves. They carry out the means of death, and return with the necessaries of life. They export violence, and bring home rapine. It is true, we, as a civilized nation, exclaim against this odd sort of barter, and the reason of our indignation seems to be, because it is not our custom. We, till very lately, drove (according to our own account now) a much more unjust commerce. That proscribed traffic, the slave trade, was sometime ago very generally encouraged amongst us. No sooner are we forbidden such unnatural practices by law, than we immediately discover them to be monstrous and inhuman.

From such facts we may deduce this truth, that every man has a casuistry for himself, and a conscience for every one else.

Hence it is, that the men who are placed at their ease by a paper circulation, will have it to be a national good. "What right," say these, "have the people to complain of poverty?"--- "How," say they, "can the state (meaning themselves) be said to be poor, while we (meaning the state) are enabled to roll in our carriages, live luxuriously, and establish ourselves magnificently?"---It is but voluntarily mistak-



ing one person for another, as it serves their convenience, and they think that they have found out a plausible source of gratulation; as if the luxuries of those enriched by the public burthens were a proof that they who are impoverished by them were capable of being more heavily laden---as if the splendor of a few could dazzle and blind our sight to the miseries of the multitude! And how often, even during the utterance of this unfounded gasconade, that bird of prey, a hovering Bankruptcy, swoops on the boaster's fancied wealth, and scatters it to the winds! But those who are oppressed by it, on the other hand, more justly consider it a national evil. The rich public creditor expresses complacency; the poor public debtor utters complaints.

In sober sadness, it is but too evident that the avowed necessity of a paper circulation is a melancholy symptom of "something rotten in the state." As in the body, such morbid matter may long lurk concealed; when it breaks out, we seek for a remedy. If it be local, all may soon be well; but, be it constitutional, hope droops. Medicine, indeed, may prolong the patient's existence, and partially relieve his pain; but every opiate must be strengthened, till weakened nature can sustain no more. The circulation becomes impoverished, from pure blood to mere lymph, till the body is exhausted, and the man

dies. Now if we must consider money the vital fluid of the body politic, should it ever degenerate into an impoverished circulation of paper, however the expedient may keep a sinking credit for some time afloat, the analogy is nevertheless alarming. The mint alone should be the seat of life to a nation; but if the Bank be the heart of this state, we may fear that the fountain of our existence is fatally diseased.

We seem, indeed, to be so involved in debt as to be really incapable of being just. We boast of being able to employ extraordinary resources, and we prove that boast well founded, by actually resorting to them. Thus we really exhaust our strength by the very display of it.

If a dealer should attempt to recommend a horse, because he had actually just driven him a hundred miles in the space of eight hours, however his prowess might be admired, yet a prudent man must consider such a proof of it as an injury to the constitution, and consequently a drawback on the value of the animal that had performed the feat.

It is indeed much easier to obtain new loans than to impose new taxes. Taxation is become a perfect science amongst us, and one of no small intricacy; yet it is to our purpose that we should have some idea of the equalization of

our burthens, by this mode of contributing to their support.

The two most obvious, because most gigantic taxes, we have, are those on property and income; and we may consult these for information on the score of the general equability with which they are usually born by the various classes of the community, and the impartiality to persons which is generally observed by those whose business it is to direct the means, and regulate the finances, of the country.

The land tax is (under different modifications) of very ancient date; the income tax is a modern improvement, of very recent birth. The first falls upon the proprietors of the soil of the country; the second, on all those who have an annual income arising from any source whatever. It shall be the business of some of the few succeeding observations to shew that these two sources of taxation are most unequally and unjustly resorted to, as to one another; and that the latter is most unequal and unjust in itself, as to the various sources, and the several incomes, of different persons; however it may superficially appear to be equalized with respect so the various extent of the personal estate of each.

The wealth of this country may be divided into two great, distinct, visible sources---her

land and her funds. These two sources divide the nation into two separate interests, the landed and monied, as they are called. These are both regarded by the nation as their two great objects of taxation. It is difficult, and, as I take it, impossible, to furnish any just reason why either of these should be considered with a partiality prejudicial to the other. However, the truth is, that by some blind fatality the land pays a proportion towards the exigencies of the state above all comparison with the contribution of the monied interest of the country.

First, they are heavily assessed in virtue of the estates which they hold, under the form of a redemption from the land tax.---Secondly, they also pay an income tax of ten per cent. per annum on the whole annual produce of those estates, which forms their tax on income.----Thirdly, under the name of a property tax they also pay a further proportion.---Fourthly, they must of course be affected by the income tax of their tenantry, because as it is to be paid by them out of the profits which they make of their farms by their skill and industry, they of course consider that burthen in their engagement with their landlords, and it consequently diminishes the amount of their rent.---And lastly, they are liable to heavy duties on every me-

thod of charging or transferring their estates, in the enormous price of stamps.

Now on the other hand, the man whose source of income is in the funds of the state, renders nothing more than a bare simple proportion of ten per cent. on the total of the mere interest only of his stock.

How is this inequality of contribution towards the support of a mutual cause to be reconciled with reason and justice? Surely the stockholders have no title to the favor of the legislature, in preference to the proprietors of the land. Would they blindly pursue those ancient precedents which, though just enough, perhaps, at the period of their date, are surely now become antiquated and obsolete, when they can be no longer borne out by the various revolutions in the manners of the times, the posture of our affairs, or the principle of their adoption? It cannot certainly be, that because at a time when the personal property of the whole nation was held in so little consideration, that a full tenth of the whole aggregate was often levied without remorse on one side, or murmur on the other, the same measure of taxation should be adopted at this time, when such an immense ascendancy has been acquired by the monied interest, in consequence of the ad-

vantages of commerce over agriculture. Thus, that interest, which formerly escaped its due proportion of the national burthen, from contempt, appears now to be excused, from favor. At this time a small portion of the paper of the country would be sufficient to purchase the whole of the land: surely, then, this funded property---this paper wealth---is an object fully worthy of financial consideration, and might be effectually called on for further and more strenuous exertions. While the land is burthened with assessments, the paper of the kingdom is exonerated for a loan; that is to say, one is invited to lend, what the other is compelled to give. If reason could justify an unequal taxation, the inequality should be imposed on the monied men, for these considerations. The monied interest may be aliens and foreigners; the landed cannot. The stockholders are the men, generally speaking, who either export the bullion, and encourage paper circulation, or are the means of it. These men are the tools by which the ministry triumph in the house where the representatives of the people should sit, who encourage profligacy in administration, and enable them to make a market of the necessities of the country, by the loans which they furnish to them. For these cogent reasons it appears that the public funds, which constitute so large a pre-

portion of national wealth, whether real or visionary, should in justice be called on to contribute more to the service of the state than any other of our resources; and that there can be no plausible pretext given for that existing preference, under favor of which they actually contribute so very much less. It will presently be our business to enquire more minutely into the nature and formation of what is here called the Public Funds. We cannot yet lose sight of the final object of this important question---the inequality of the income tax, as estimated by the resources from which it is derived.

The main fact on which the proof of the injustice of our income tax, as at present constituted, relies, is, that it is borne alike, without difference of proportion, by the wages of labor, and by the wealth of luxury. No distinction is made between the mere subsistence of the industrious manufacturer and the superfluities of the affluent gentleman---none, between the toiling debtor to the necessities of the state, and the opulent creditor who fattens on her burthens and her exigencies. It can hardly be necessary to waste many words in shewing that there would be nothing more than mere equity in making a general distinction between that income which is derived from exertion and industry, and that which springs from sources of ease

and indolence. The first class, by worthy efforts, serve the best purposes of society, in contributing to the aggrandisement and prosperity of the community. The other class, on the contrary, are a burthen to these; and to their country, in general, too often a reproach. The one supports the state under her debts, the other accumulates the debts of the state. The men who live in luxury and idleness, on funded property, are the people who create those very necessities which they who subsist by employment are called on by taxation to appease. Those are the strong who uphold; these are the weak, who betray the country, and hang a dead weight on her energies. They who do nothing, live well, and sleep soundly on the security of the national credit, may literally be said to be bribed to consume the fruits of the earth in indolence and inutility, by the sums which are wrung from the wages of toil and industry. Such is the effect of the present influence of our boasted war tax.

It may be asked, how could this be remedied?

Let it be thought bold; let it be called arrogant; I will yet dare to speak out. Let the industry, the husbandry, the arts, and the manufactures of the state be wholly absolved from this burthensome tax; the deficiency may be justly supplied to the revenue, by exacting it

from the capital of the public funds. Thus the paper of the country would bear a much more due proportion of the country's burthens, in comparison with the contributions of the land. If it be said, that no one should be exempt from bearing their part in every tax, I would ask, why are the military virtually acquitted of this as well as others? Those who are engaged in the idleness of war should certainly not be more an object of public partiality than they who are employed in the business of peace. I will even assert, that they who create a nation's prosperity are more worthy of her care than even they who merely protect it. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the people owe the army no gratitude; for were they not amply encouraged, they would not devote themselves to our standard. No intelligent officer can profess himself conscious of any such claim. If any thing is due to the military, it is not from the people.

To divide a tax equally among the different orders of people, is not to equalize it. The several capacities of each order should be considered, and by that standard the measure of contribution should be formed. Nor is the general weight of taxation its only consideration. There is very great nicety required in equalizing its proportion to different capacities. We have already cursorily examined the injustice

and disproportion of our income tax. Novel as this tax may be to England, it is not so to the world. At Athens such a mode of taxation obtained; but the Athenians ordered it very differently. They divided the people into four classes, and decreed that they who gained 500 measures of fruit from their own estates, should pay 60 minæ to the public; they who gained 300 measures, 30 minæ; they who gained 200 measures paid 10 minæ; and they who were of the fourth class paid nothing. If we compare this distribution with that of the present day, we must be forcibly struck with the superior justice of the Athenians. With them the richest man not only paid a larger sum, but a larger proportion, while the poorest paid nothing. Now with us, not only do the poor pay an equal proportion with the wealthy, and therefore make a greater sacrifice of the comforts of life, but they have less opportunity of concealing the amount of their incomes. So that every man pays more to the state in proportion as his income is really less. The larger incomes have also the greater capability of making false returns, and the public are in general found to owe the men of largest fortunes least obligation.

To shew that the funds of the nation, as they are termed, are capable of the proportion here assigned them, and that it is but just that such

proportion should be borne by them, nothing further is necessary than to describe the nature of these funds.

By a solecism in language, the debt and incumbrances of the nation are denominated her funds; as if a man should call the bonds and mortgages which involve his estates, his title-deeds.

The promise of the glorious Revolution was overcast by the subsequent adoption of a measure in political finance, most ruinous in its consequences to the constitution of the country. I mean the anticipation of the future resources of the nation, by supplying her immediate exigencies, whether fancied or real, from the actual funds of posterity, by borrowing money on the credit of her growing prosperity, to be repaid by succeeding ages. Then was first adopted, on the hints of a similar measure resorted to by the state of Florence, in 1344, that destructive expedient, a public loan. For certain objects thought, at that period, worthy an extravagant waste of blood and treasure, the government borrowed of monied individuals enormous sums, to enable it to carry into execution the designs it had planned. Thus arose the national debt---a debt which has ever since been rapidly encreasing, till it has outgrown all our means of reduction. However incapable the

nation may be of paying off the principal of this national debt, the interest must be, and is always, regularly discharged by the taxes levied on the people. These taxes must, of course, be perpetual, because the discharge of the original debt is impossible.---Let a moment be spared to inquire how these ruinous means have effected their desired end. We owe, at this distance of time, every guinea of each loan advanced to government, from the reign of the third William to the present moment. But what is now become of the objects of our ancestors' protracted wars? what is become of the Dutch barrier, the French monarchy, the Spanish succession, the House of Austria, and the liberties of the Germanic body? Of these we know, at present, nothing but their failure. Therein we see a melancholy vestige of the mouldering fabrics of impotent short-sighted policy, while we behold a tremendous weight of national incumbrances engendered by those vain views, which at this moment balance the prosperity of the country in awful equilibrium with her ruin; suspending the tortured anxiety of the people between the menaces of fate in one scale, and their hopes of better fortune in the other.

The experiment of a loan being once made, the government was easily seduced into frequent repetitions of a practice, which, while it

afforded convenience and accommodation to existing administrations, threw all the burthen and distress on people yet unborn. At length, under the direction of Mr. Montague, afterwards created Lord Halifax, a project was formed by which this financial operation was regularly organized into a system, by which this source of national calamity to future times became the universal resource on all occasions. He gave it the figurative appellation of a public fund. These public funds, therefore, are really nothing more or less than an ideal stock, supposed to consist of sums, once indeed actually advanced by monied men to government, for the benefit of the people---money, once, I say, advanced, but long ago expended, and that without the purchase of one national good or advantage, and for which the people are forced to pay an almost incredible amount of taxes, in satisfaction of the interest due on it to the national annuitants. And how have these sums been expended? not in commerce, but war; not in the acquisition of lasting interest, but in pursuit of fleeting fame. These funds, so long exhausted, are yet to be supposed in existence, by virtue of their name. This existence is still mentioned under the metaphorical allusion, but literal illusion, of a bank, or mount. This bank is an imaginary depot of fictitious

wealth, surrounded by swarms of real substantial claimants and annuitants, who must be satisfied, not by the contents of this bank, but by the industry and labour of the people, through the medium of taxation. The man of easy circumstances seldom reflects, when he receives his dividends, that it is from the earnings of the poor mechanic, the incumbrances of the soil, and the imposts on all the necessaries of life, he draws a considerable proportion of that income, even if he is aware of it; but is content to consider the bank as an inexhaustible fund of national wealth, and to regard no other source of his fortune. Did their annuitants, indeed, reflect on the precarious nature of their wealth, they would perhaps have little satisfaction in the contemplation; and that, not in pity on account of those by whom it is afforded to them, but on account of the exhausted means by which it is supplied, and the very limited prospect of its continuance.

Even the omnipotence of the legislature cannot invest those much-abused means with immortality, nor preserve their cherished funds from dissolution---“*debemur morti nos nostraq.*” Let others decide the question, whether the total annihilation of this bank would be of benefit or injury to the nation? Some might perhaps think that to assert it would be a restoration of our de-

clining prosperity, would amount to little less than high treason; yet to affirm that it must perish, will amount to no more than truth---“*Mortalia facta peribunt.*” If we are not permitted to say that what is termed a national bankruptcy would benefit the commonwealth, we may at least declare an opinion, that it would injure no worthy order of the people. Who are they who would suffer by this calamity, (if it be one), miscalled national? None, who are independent of paper money. Certainly not the landed interest; for much as they may be burthened with the actual yearly payments for which the country has professed to be responsible; yet the soil is not mortgaged to make good the deficiencies of taxation. When burthens become intolerable; no one will bear them; so liberty regenerates from excessive slavery.

Those engaged in trade and mechanic arts would sustain no injury, because the disappearance of an imaginary money would occasion no actual diminution of real wealth; because a trade or an art will always find its level in society. They are to their possessors an ark which would float on a national deluge of debt, and preserve their adherents until the general bankruptcy should subside. Paper, that spurious encroacher on the true medium of com-

merce, has rendered the situation of men engaged in business truly precarious. Many an industrious and successful shopkeeper is reputed to possess a comfortable competency, the fruits of his care and diligence: but in what does it consist? In book-debts---in mere credit. On a sudden some extensive house fails, the bubble of his fancied fortune bursts, and his boasted affluence vanishes like a vision. Like Sisyphus, he has no sooner succeeded in rolling the stone to the summit, when on a sudden, at one rebound it precipitates him once more to the bottom of the hill, and his tedious course of industry must be pursued anew.

Whom, then, would such an accident injure? Merely those who subsist in idleness on what are termed the funds of the country, which are, as has been shewn, a mere blank---the men to whom the nation are now paying an enormous interest for a principal long since expended in the purchase of calamity, the impoverishment of the state, and the oppression of the people. These, indeed, may exclaim that they would be ruined! What do they mean by ruin? That they would be compelled to discard their pampered and lazy servants, put down their cushioned chariots, abstain from French wines, banish their silks and other superfluous fopperies of effeminate dress, and, finally, be forced from their



beloved leisure into some active employment, of advantage to themselves, and utility to their country.

But then this sumptuary revolution would not be unattended by its consequences to the commonwealth. Many laborious, industrious, skilful, and deserving subjects, who are now starving, would be fed; many who are now naked would be clothed; and very many, who have toiled beyond the strength of nature, would be rested and relieved. Thus, when Henry the Eighth, resolving to reform the church, ruined the monks, a lazy and indolent people in themselves, and the cause of those vices in so many others, a spirit of trade and industry spontaneously sprung up in England, and pervaded the island. The destruction of the bank, by its own exhaustion---that great hospital and almshouse of the unemployed paupers of the nation---might produce similar benefits. Assuredly the wearied, wasted energies of the industrious and useful orders in the country would rise refreshed into new life and vigour, and the sloth, indolence, and inactivity of those who are now idle, would universally take wing. The heel of the husbandman would bruise the head of taxation.

Yet this is termed a national calamity, forsooth. Most men are rational enough to think,

and some are bold enough to declare, (for where truth is unpalatable, it requires some degree of hardihood to utter it), that even if the great accident should transpire of the formal annunciation of the bankruptcy of the Company of the Bank of England, (for their insolvency is another question), it is a general opinion, I say, that this event would not be a mischief so great as to amount to a calamity, nor would it be so extensive as to be entitled to be generally stiled national.

But each particular individual is fond of generalizing his own private apprehensions and fears. It is apparently the desire of every man to make his dangers common.

Is a ministry assailed, it is immediately exclaimed by their pack of hirelings and retainers, that the state is the object of this threatened vengeance.

Is the established church about to exercise that act, which is at once an evidence and proof of its internal confidence, and its external supremacy, (I mean toleration), the cry of the bigots is, that the national religion is in danger.

This forcibly reminds us of the fable of the iron pots and earthen pitchers, swimming together down a river with the stream: on a sudden a piece of rock appears in their course, when the

fragile vessels, turning to their less brittle companions, ejaculate, "Lord have mercy upon us, we shall *all* be dashed to pieces!" The Fables of Æsop are, indeed, a powerful key to human motive.

But allowing it to be a calamity for a moment, the benignity of Providence has ordained that general blessings shall be the fruit of particular misfortune. The fire which consumed so extensive a part of the city of London, was truly a severe calamity---it was a dreadful example of divine visitation; yet from that source of distress arose its present beauty and convenience, its future health and security. If the bank paper should disappear on a sudden, in one general conflagration, this drooping country would be totally regenerated.

Why shall we not even examine whether that portion of the national debt, which it is out of our power to satisfy, might not be expunged without injustice? Why not question the power of an ancestor to burthen his posterity beyond what he bequeaths to them, and beyond their own capacity? It is much that parliament may make laws to bind the conduct alone of a people unborn. Our ancestors have transmitted to us the liberties which we enjoy; we therefore receive their laws, and that only because those laws are the bulwarks of those liberties: but, in justice, they

have no right to burthen us with their debts, because we do not derive any wealth from them; nor have we any interest in those objects for which their loans were furnished. The representatives of the people should be the guardians of their rights. Their acts, therefore, may be receded from by their successors, if they bear a tendency to abridge or clog those rights. According to Julian, "*Tutor domini loco habetur cum rem administrat, non cum pupillum spoliat.*" But whether we suppose it just or not, that the nation should be thus burthened by those whose duty it is to protect them in the enjoyment of their prosperity, Necessity, which is paramount even to justice itself, seems to be approaching, with rapid strides, to "make these odds all even." Necessity, if it does not wholly exonerate us from debt, will most assuredly at some time relieve us from its pressure. Our taxation has its vertical point, and our affairs their crisis. Our burthens must have a limit, and oppression itself a *ne plus ultra*: but I need not anticipate the reader's reflections.

It is beneath the dignity of a nation, calling herself rich, great, and powerful, and unworthy the integrity of a people professing to be honest, frank, and sincere, to conceal their wants or their weaknesses from themselves, or to strive to flatter their own opinion into a vanity which

it would be not only folly, but ruin, to indulge. By persuading themselves that they are more wealthy than they really are, they might involve themselves in a profligacy which they could not support, by which they must be overwhelmed with debts and difficulties. By deluding themselves into a conceit that they are even greater than their truly high rank amongst nations, they might be led to adopt an assumed arrogance derogatory to their actual worth; and by ascribing to themselves a power beyond their due claim, there might be danger of being seduced by the lure of ambition into the snare of contempt.

He is an enemy to his country, who would endeavour to intoxicate her with such preposterous vanity; and he is her best friend, who is sincere to her defects and errors.

Her most worthy course of conduct consists in a sacrifice of false honour to true honesty; and she must seek her real interest, where alone she will find it, in integrity. Let her not be ashamed of that plain, simple justice due to her subject public debtors, by a confession of that insolvency which calls loudly for a compromise with her national creditors; and make the utmost restitution to them in her power, for those immense sums which can never be repaid. Let her not imagine herself the richest state on

earth, merely because she has the greatest share of public credit, but shew a title to that superior credit by a superior honesty; and not prove herself hereafter to be unworthy of it, by taking an unfair advantage of the faith and confidence reposed in her. Let her no longer seek resources from the company of the Bank, to supply the well-known deficiencies of the national mint, nor borrow from those who trade with her, to impoverish her natural subjects, and ruin their posterity, encumbering with debts to foreigners the prosperity of her native soil. But if she neglect these duties---if she yield to this facility of borrowing on one hand, and this avidity of loan on the other---if she will continue to enrich herself by stripping the people of their specie, and impoverish them with a circulating substitute of daily depreciating paper, then this phantom of power, this fiction of wealth, which---

Like some tall bully, lifts the head, and lies--

will still lead us on to overlook our true good, and seduce us into further measures, beyond the remnant of our means; and boast as we will of our resources, we shall at length resemble the idiot, who claims a title to vaunt of his activity, because he has displayed it in a feat by which he is become lame for life.

If we have ever at any time acquired some

slight advantages by this ruinous system, whatever they may be, their acquisition has so overwhelmed us and our posterity with debt, that we must perforce exclaim, "*vix ea nostra.*" No man can call that fully his own, for which he yet owes the price; nor can any thing be called a good, which is outweighed and exceeded by its concomitant ills.

The evil genius of Britain has been long toiling to bring this visionary fabric of her greatness to ideal perfection. It will still encrease it, till the structure shall be thought complete, when this magical, delusive mockery will vanish from our sight. Our boasted Exchange, that fearful temple of care, anxiety, and apprehension---that national gaming-house, where the wheel of fortune, in one instant, lifts the speculator to the clouds, and the next, plunges him in the gulf of perdition---will one day shake to its very foundation, unless it apply for succour to honesty and probity. What a wretched, cowardly consciousness fills the heart of many a devotee in this church of avarice, where the sordid of all nations crowd to worship Mammon, and forget their God! Can there be a stronger proof of its sandy foundation, than the universal trepidation for the safety of the idol whom they adore there? They tremble at every breeze of air, and exult at every gleam of sunshine. Assur-

edly this place of confusion of tongues, this modern Babel, will perish, as did that of old, by its extent. Its base totters as its height ascends; and the nearer it seems to approach the acme of its aggrandizement, the more does it incline over the precipice of its destined destruction. The day will come when many will find they "have ventured far beyond their depth, like wanton boys who swim on bladders." We have already seen one bubble burst; and why may not another? However well the government may mean, and however good their intentions may be, it is to be feared that all its efforts for the support of a sinking credit will but spread the alarm wider, and perhaps really extend the evil itself; for after all, though laws may compel a people to give credit to a company, they cannot enable that company to satisfy those who trust them. We must suppose the design of ministers laudable, but they certainly have incurred a weighty responsibility for the success of the experiment they have tried. If, as well-intentioned men, they have been blinded, by their zeal for the Company of the Bank, to the interests of the people, as such mere well-disposed men they may perhaps stand excused; but they must not be acquitted on that score, as ministers of state. In this latter capacity they should

have duly balanced the claims of the public creditor with the public means; and here it is to be noted, that the actual public means are meant; and when those means were found wanting, they should not have thrown the nominal weight of a circulating paper, representing a company's debts, into the popular scale, to give them an appearance of prosperity which they did not possess, and thus beguile them into a delusive satisfaction in their fancied resources. This, at the same time, is doing an equal injury to both creditor and debtor; for while the debtor appears to pay really what he has not to proffer, the creditor seems to receive more than he is really paid. Now, it would be absolutely more just dealing, even with the public annuitant, to call upon him for a remission of his demand ingenuously and candidly, than thus to inflate the poverty of one, to an apparent shew of wealth, equal to the satisfaction of what is due to the other.

If we would define what is meant by taxation, we should find it to be a simple sacrifice of a portion of our wealth to our government, for the security which it affords to us in the enjoyment of the rest. Now, if it be the fact, which no one can at present deny, that the claims of the public creditors are endangered by their extent, when found to exceed the pub-

lic means so far, in the spirit of that policy on which their security is founded they should submit to surrender something now, lest they should hereafter lose all. If the state be not actually insolvent, it is at least on the very verge of insolvency; and in such a situation we may boldly dare to say, that even a national bankruptcy would be better, not only for the public good, but better for the ends of public justice, than the further augmentation of our incumbrances beyond the extent of our responsibility. If a national insolvency actually exists, it is a cruel calumny on all honest bankrupts, and a libel on the laws which protect them, to say, that bankruptcy is or can be fraudulent or unjust. Yet there are not wanting superficial politicians, and shallow moralists, who exclaim against the mention of such a thing as national bankruptcy. Their cry is, "The nation must be just; her creditors must be satisfied." But an insolvent nation can do no more than an insolvent individual. The question is therefore now no longer, whether the state should be just or not, but how far we are capable of being so? and if we are in the most minute degree incapable of rendering due justice to our creditors, we should certainly not encrease the evil by delay, but instantly announce our situation, and make the utmost dividend our means would per-

mit. The longer this is procrastinated, the greater will be the injustice. It is much to be feared that the state has been already long, very long, acting most unjustly towards her creditors, by professing to do what it has not really done. We have long taken to ourselves the credit of regularly paying the full augmented interest on our debts, whereas we have been the whole time actually diminishing that interest which we boast to have paid; because we have been continually depreciating the medium in which it has been pretended to have been satisfied. It is true we have paid regularly a greater amount to them annually in notes; but as these, by increasing in number, have decreased in value, we have not *bond fide* paid them more, in the true signs of the worth of things; that is, we have not increased their riches, or enabled them to obtain a proportionally greater share of the comforts and conveniencies of life: and it may be thus proved.

It is an axiom, that the greater the quantity of money, or of any other circulating medium, in a country, becomes, the more proportionally its value diminishes, and the less of every article of subsistence or luxury it will procure in that country.

Let us, for instance, suppose, to simplify the argument, that the total aggregate of the circu-

lating medium of exchange in England amounted in value to one million. If by any accident that circulating medium should be augmented to double that amount, it would consequently lose precisely one half of its value: whence it would follow, that all marketable commodities would rise in price to double the sum which it would have cost, while there was only one million in circulation. It would then require two pounds to purchase what might have been previously bought for one. Those who lived on a certain fixed income would find their means suddenly reduced in a double proportion. They would find their fortune, on a comparison of what it had been, to be as two is to four. On the other hand, they who issued such a circulating medium would obtain advantages commensurate with the loss which they who were compelled to receive it would sustain on what was due to them. They who possessed the power and means of increasing this currency, would augment their means twofold. Where they previously owed two pounds, they would really only pay their creditors one in actual value; because they cannot passively encrease their means of payment without at the same time debasing the previously existing medium of exchange. Thus they may be said to take with one hand, what they give with the other. In fine, the loss on one

side, and the profit on the other, would be magnified in an equal duplicate ratio; and moreover, the taxes and the state burthens must also increase in progressive proportion with such augmentation and debasement of the circulating medium.

If these arguments be just, they need no comment: it must be an impotent understanding which would require assistance in drawing the natural inferences. But we will examine the thing further; and, unluckily, the further we scrutinize it, the more we see to condemn. All these consequences of partial and unjust advantage would result even from such an augmentation of the sterling coinage in pure gold and silver; and we cannot but perceive, that those inequitable effects would be considerably aggravated, if such an increased medium of circulation depended on the credit of any set of men. For if specie itself becomes cheaper, and of less value as it becomes more plentiful, the worth of paper must be much more decreased by increase of quantity; because it depends, not on intrinsic value alone, but on its credit, and credit is weakened in proportion to its extent. If a nation therefore pays, or rather answers, the demands on it, by a paper which represents a debt, and if it should at any time increase the issue of such paper, for

the purpose of apparently satisfying the growing interest due to its annuitants on their claims, it may indeed, by such a measure of finance, extend the bubble of such seeming satisfaction, and be thus thought to give what it could not in reality afford. The state, by so augmenting the circulation of paper, neither actually enriches itself, nor duly discharges its debt. It merely appears to increase the amount of those sums which it pays to its creditors, under the appellation and semblance of the interest of their stock, or share of the public debt. Yet surely it will be scarcely thought necessary to shew, that (when the price of every article of subsistence be enhanced by the depreciation of the vulgar measure of value, in consequence of its quantity being arbitrarily augmented,) the public creditor is in fact paid a practically diminished annual interest on his debt, in a proportion corresponding with the necessity he is under of parting with a greater sum, in that measure, for marketable goods, according to the extent of such depreciation. In truth, therefore, the country cannot be fairly said to be at this moment paying the full interest due on her gigantic debt to her creditors; and she will pay them annually less, as the parent womb of her new legitimated paper currency shall become more prolific; and indeed so cheap is the material

which at present supplies the manufactory of the current money of our day, that were the national debt even more enormous than it is, the public need not despair of issuing a proportion equal to its complete liquidation: only the sooner they do it, the better, before the present medium of circulation shall no longer have the sanction of the legislature, or be considered the money a-la-mode. Mechanical invention, indeed, has of late wonderfully facilitated useful operation. The steam-engine, at this time, has greatly abridged the toil and expence of human labor. The paper-mill has no less superseded the necessity and utility of sterling money. Even calamities become ridiculous, when their cause and origin are fraud and folly!

And shall the state yet vaunt of justice, while it has recourse to such awkward shifts, and miserable temporising subterfuges? If it will insist on such a claim, let it consult the mirror of its conduct, and be admonished. Let the country rouse from its lethargic vanity, to a consciousness of its real situation. It must then see that it is actually ruining itself, to preserve a show of prosperity; that it increases its burthens, to stifle its murmurs. Like a ruined profligate, it runs in debt, while it can obtain credit to support an empty appearance—a fallacious seeming. Has it a greater dread of the

shame of poverty, than the disgrace of dishonesty? If it has, such self-adulation does but beckon alien mockery; and even the friends who admire its virtues must declare themselves the enemies of its vanity.

But if such foibles dictate to her a line of conduct, she must no longer be vain-glorious of her justice, or boastful of her integrity. We can never be entitled to such high claims, while we could keep up a hollow, hypocritical appearance of honesty, by means of dishonest practices.

If we are not, or cannot be, wholly just, let us at least be as much so as we can, even to the utmost extent of our dwindled and dwindling means. Let us duly consider how much more easy it is to give political birth and existence to thousands of public creditors, than political strength and health to hundreds of public debtors. Let us reflect, in short, how much more easy it is to incur debt than earn money, to squander than acquire wealth, to borrow than to repay. Let her at once check her career, and adjust her much-deranged system. If the nation's circumstances will not allow her to commence the work of reducing her debts, she may at least refrain from swelling them beyond their present magnitude, nor put it in the power of evil-minded persons to say, with any semblance of



truth, that the majority of her parliament is playing booty with her creditors, to drain the country of its resources; and that the servants of the crown and the annuitants of the state divide the spoil of the people, while affecting to be careful of their interests, and tender of their welfare. In that true spirit of virtue which animated the Roman Republic, why may not the state gradually free itself from its oppressive national burthens, with as little injury as possible to interested individuals? for, however humbly its pride may regard honesty, its prudence should teach it, that such a measure is the true and only sane policy. Let the nation duly weigh their capabilities on all future occasions, and never lose sight of the "*quid valent hu-  
meri, quid ferre recusent.*"

Sad is the situation to which the people are at present reduced by impolitic measures, carried without effectual opposition. Luxury corrupts one half, and poverty dispirits the other. Even the contemptible rich party rule the miserable poor, and both are deprived of the mediation and control--of the admonitory wisdom and virtuous fortitude, of that noble but attenuated, class, the free and independent--the men who composed an aristocracy in the state, not indeed of rank and fortune, but of virtue and integrity--those moral nobles, who checked

the tyranny of vice and oppression, and forbade the thraldom of ignorance and subjection. The real national poverty, induced by a fictitious encrease of visionary national opulence, has almost sunk and depressed these into the torpor of despair. They drooped with the integrity of their country, and await in gloomy silence a burial under her ruins. Shall the people of England sleep at such a time? Let them peremptorily call on the few by whom they are constitutionally represented in parliament, to form a select band in opposition to all further attempts towards their seduction into measures iniquitous in their adoption, and ruinous in their effect. Whether these are suggested or promoted by the weakness or wickedness of ministers, their fatal consequences are in all respects the same, and equally productive of mischief and misfortune. Hence it arises that Reform is so loudly insisted on in the conscious House of Commons, and re-echoed from every corner of the United Kingdom. The hopes of the nation rise with the growing conviction of its absolute necessity, and their complaints subside as their confidence encreases. Reform is the only means of disarming the constitution of the weapons of suicide. Lord Treasurer Burleigh declared, that England can only be ruined by a parliament; and Montesquieu has described the signs

of the period of that destruction to be---“*when the legislative power shall become more corrupt than the executive.*” We should be cautioned by these prophetic truths, and guard against the realization of such a possible result. When momed men are allowed to lend to a government, they begin to partake its power; and though they may not be legislators, yet they may control those who are, and dictate to them those laws which it is their office to frame. The minister of a state in debt, like the steward of his ruined lord, will find so much occasion and employment for the exercise of his cunning in devising the ways and means, as to leave him but little time to consult his wisdom in the disposal of what resources he already possesses. Taxation is the sole science of such a minister, and his subtlety is continually engaged in means of extending it. Though the prosperity of a state be the cause of excessive taxation, yet the effect of excessive taxation is national adversity. The common observation on our weight of taxes is, “How strong must the state be, which can bear such burthens!” But may this never be the forerunner of another which too frequently follows: “How heavily must that strong state have been laden, to have broken down by its incumbrances!” The subjects of the Greek emperors, we find, at the time of

their conquests by Mahomet the Second, were so oppressed by taxation, that the exhausted ingenuity of their avaracious and oppressive masters had even gone so far as to impose a tax on breathing, *pro haustu aëris*. Could human nature be brought to consider such a government worth defending? That the Greeks did not, is very manifest, from the facility with which the Turks every where subdued them, after the reduction of Constantinople. As soon as they had an opportunity of comparing their situation with that of the Mahomedans, whom they found paying only a simple tribute, easily levied, the resistance of Constantinople shews that they had other motives for so easily shifting their subjection, than mere dread of the Ottoman scymitar. They preferred to accept the very small portion of liberty and comfort afforded by actual undisguised foreign despotism, rather than endure the oppression and distress of a pretended free domestic government. This proves to us that taxation, which at first is always a testimony of the liberty of the people, may become at length an evidence of their oppression.

These considerations are conspicuous amongst the many evils which call earnestly on a duly represented commons for scrutiny and redress. Their optics, unclouded by motives of private or

partial interest, would soon perceive that this income tax---this war tax---belongs properly, in a greater degree, if not exclusively, to the public creditor. The easy and affluent are more deeply concerned in the success of the nation's warfare, for the protection of a nation's opulence. Labour and industry are ever a sword and shield against distress and poverty. If cowardly Luxury, too timid and too weak to take the field in her own defence, will have hardy Poverty fight her battles, and protect her enjoyments, let her at least furnish her champion with resources, and relieve him from the expence of the contest, while he is shedding his blood in her cause.

Skill in useful arts will buoy its possessors above any evil circumstances.

These, therefore, are less interested in the events of war than the idle and incapable herd of dependent annuitants. It was ever till lately the policy of this country to protect the more humble, but more useful, classes of the community, and no unadulterated member of the genuine British House of Commons would silently see a reverse conduct adopted towards them. Such a representative would regard the starving family of an industrious artist or manufacturer as no very flattering augury of the prosperity of the people for whom they toil. He would in-

vestigate the cause, and endeavour to cure the effect. He would not go about to account for the high price of bread by the scarcity of corn, when he has the principle nearer at hand---when he is aware that it has been lower in times of much greater dearth. He would, in short, be neither blind to our distress, deaf to our complaints, or regardless of our relief. A fair representation of the people would dissipate the mist which obscures the true state of the nation. It would institute some inquiry into the nature of our disease, and create an earnest eagerness in search of a remedy. They would convince us that we are not entitled to be thought rich merely because we are expensive, and that we ought not to be profligate, even if we were really wealthy. A House of Commons, who uttered the sentiments of the people, would not be told, without reply, that we are in a flourishing condition, because we were in the exercise of a profusion beyond any former example. They would not silently be told by a minister not to talk of national impoverishment, while the national expenditure was daily increasing,--while the state was becoming acquainted with luxury beyond what it ever knew. Such popular members would answer this subtle sophistry by well-grounded arguments, built on experience; they would answer, that habits of

extravagance and indulgence in luxury are no proofs of the prosperity of a people. They certainly never are a cause, and seldom an effect, of riches. Extravagance and luxury cannot enrich a people; and a people who are rich, usually become so by a conduct and disposition directly hostile to such habits and enjoyments. Economy always, and sometimes even avarice, more generally characterizes the men who have become affluent; while on the other hand, they whose fortunes are desparate, are as usually marked by profligacy and prodigality. In truth, and in fact, the display of wealth of which some so much boast, who would wish us to consider ourselves in a state of prosperity, is more readily referable to the overgrown fortunes suddenly made by successful individuals, out of the general calamities, by means of the powerful lever of credit, and the advantages afforded to them by means of a paper money. It is admitted, that if a private person build a palace, or beautify and improve an estate, it is a conspicuous testimony of augmented riches; not of the country, however, but of the subject. The same circumstance which proves so ostensibly the possession of wealth in some one, by such a glaring evidence, simultaneously suppresses the counter testimony of their misery, by thrusting them into the obscure and strait-

ened house of poverty and want. The dews of Heaven, which are shed impartially over the surface of the earth, refreshing all nature equally, but insensibly, are unseen, or but slightly observed: yet were the same moisture congregated in single, separate meadows, we should announce the appearance of a deluge. So it is with public and private opulence. Thus may we account for the present general waste and extravagance of expenditure, and the general laxity and dissoluteness of habits in the times, arising from an accumulation, certainly, of wealth, but not to the state; not to the people, but to bankers, brokers, and speculatists of all kinds; not to the national commonwealth, but to a monied aristocracy. We cannot but ascribe the enormous riches of these individuals to the wreck of the public; and we may trace the exultation and prodigality of the few, to the distress and desolation of the many. Parties are pampered, while multitudes starve, and some are glutted on the privations of all the rest. The very order of things in such a state demands that some should indulge in luxuries, that the impoverished crowds might thus acquire a subsistence; for on the offal and refuse of the satiety of the tyrants of opulence the slaves of poverty depend for bread.

Since the despot Monopoly has usurped an uncontrolled sway over the comforts and ac-

commodations once strewed among the people by the liberal hand of a bountiful and generous competition, we trust ministers are too well disposed to mock us, when they talk of our prosperity. Let it be granted to them for a moment, that our manufactories are in a flourishing state. They may be so; but the poor manufacturers are sunk in the abyss of dejection and despair. A few powerful capitalists, a few men of great wealth and inordinate credit, do, it is true, found extensive establishments, and succeed perhaps to the utmost of their most sanguine expectations; but it is not by holding up the monstrous opulence of these to our dazzled sight, that we are to be convinced of the comforts or competency of the people whom those manufacturers employ. For what though a few, who were before rich, may aggrandize themselves in such occupations, yet the bulk of dependent beings to whom they owe their aggrandizement are pining in wretchedness, hardly earning, by unremitting toil, a scanty subsistence. Such may become the opulent and powerful masters of a famishing and miserable mob, and grow swollen with all the insolence of prosperity, while their multitudinous vassalage are shrunk by want and dejection.

Should any industrious individual from amongst these, emboldened by the enormous accumula-

tion of the wealth of such traders, dare to attempt a distant and most respectful competition with these mighty monopolists, what is the event? He embarks the little produce of his well-deserved earnings in the sphere of their dominion, and expects in due season some small but merited share of the advantages that gather so abundantly round the lords of the occupation: but they immediately rise up against the intruder, undersell his little stock, and crush at once his humble hopes; or if they do not succeed, it is owing to the perseverance of adversity getting the better of the idleness of prosperity. But this seldom happens, so extensive is the influence of the great capitalist, not only by means of his real wealth, but by force of his consequent credit derived from the extent of his establishment--from the tyrannical practice and monstrous system of negotiating that credit, and rendering it answerable to the purposes of money, by the circulation of their own paper--and from combining in partnership against the indigence of individuals; a combination of the weight of money of a few, against the industry of numbers of the many. The law, too, takes part with the former against the latter. The poor people may be prosecuted for the offence committed by rich companies, under the sanction of a charter; wretched workmen are

indictable for combination, as it is called, against their greedy employers, whenever the pressure of necessity unites them to ask an augmentation of their hire. They are even forbidden by law the freedom of peaceably leaving their masters, when they can no longer subsist on the wages which they earn. This is most assuredly an extreme hardship: for as the continual depreciation of the circulating medium must of course continually increase the price of provisions, and all the other necessaries of life---and as, also, that price must again be very frequently even still farther advanced by the actual scarcity of those articles, an increased demand for them, and various other causes; so that unless the legislator had also fixed the marketable value of such things, at the same time, it is cruelty and injustice to make laws against combinations naturally arising out of the order of affairs, and the exigencies of the times. The price of labor should not be fixed until the price of provisions can no longer fluctuate: but had the law imposed a stated price on provisions; though it might have assuaged the evil perhaps of limiting the laborer's hire, yet that relief would have been effected by obliging a second class to share the inconvenience; for by such a measure, it would have alleviated the unfair burthen of one part of the people, by unjustly extending it to

another. The legislator ordered it so, no doubt for very wise purposes; but it would be great satisfaction to those who suffer, to point out to them the advantages of it.

Let us see whether agriculture be in a better condition. We are told that farmers are every where thriving---we are desired to advert to the present mode and style of living of that once plain class of people, and compare it with what it once was. We may observe, it is true, that they have laid aside their former beverage of malt and hops, for the more expensive luxury of foreign wines---that their daughters leave the dairy to attend the dancing-master, while their sons abandon the plough, for the acquisition of fashionable recommendations. All this may be true; but what is the cause of this revolution? Simply this: the race of farmers, properly so called, has dwindled into a few monopolizers of farms, so that men now no longer rent a farm, but a territory. The yeomanry of the country are become consolidated into a few speculators in land---a few agricultural merchants. One man attracts into the vortex of monopoly the whole of that labour and husbandry of a population which once flowed in more slender, but more productive channels, over the cultivated extent of a grateful land, remunerating the peasant for his personal exertions. The once

happy country farmers are reduced to mere servants in husbandry; and they who once labored willingly, cheerfully, and vigorously, for their own advantage, now toil discontentedly and inactively for others, who are an amphibious class, partaking of grazier, corn-factor, and stock-jobber. The British rustic happiness is already an Arcadian fable. The neat farm houses, where content afforded consolation to that labor which supported her, have been pulled down, to build appropriate mansions for the despot land-jobbers--the neat gardens have been laid open, to increase his pasturable acres--the home-brewed barrels have been banished, to import for him the juice of the grape; and universal desolation surrounds him, concentrating the general prosperity in his individual luxury. There are few aged countrymen who do not boast of better days. The grey-headed laborer can tell you that he was once a farmer, and will shew you, with the tears in his eyes, where his home once stood. He worked hard, and managed well; but neither hard labor, nor skilful husbandry, could resist the tide. The present monopolist could pay his landlord a greater amount of bank notes. So Opulence carried it, and poor Industry was turned out of doors. But the true son of labour is invincible; he dashes away the obtruding tear, and thanks his God (a

melancholy consolation in despair!) that he can still work. No wonder, then, that we every where see houses building, while luxury jostles us in every street. But let us not boast of wealth; let us not say that these are proofs of public prosperity. The opulence of a few may, in pride, make an ostentatious display; but Poverty drives her millions to hide their heads from light. Let us not boast of an effect, of which we must lament the cause. In agriculture, as in manufacture, we trace the triumph of a party to the despair of a people. The rich farmer may be indulged in luxury beyond all precedent and experience; but, alas! it is at the expence of the poor labourer's comforts! What, if the former fare far more sumptuously than their landlords, the poor peasantry are abridged of their food.

Trade, perhaps, may suffer in some degree less than either of these, but it is by adding to the necessities of both. Yet this source of wealth is not without its sufferers--all is risk, hazard, and danger. Firms, houses, and companies are marshalled against individuals, while they annoy and fear one another, and the greater employs its strength and influence in the reduction of the less. Bankruptcy succeeds to bankruptcy in perpetual rotation; because while credit is become the medium of commerce, we

must ever see distress and injury produced by dishonesty and injustice. Some grasp all, and leave others nothing; some grow incredibly rich, and all the rest are miserably poor.

This extreme disproportion in the new division of wealth has arisen from the gradual alteration and augmentation of the circulating medium. The existence of the well-known truth, that wealth begets wealth, is coeval with the earliest notions of property and society; and the reason is easily deduced. On the formation of communities for mutual aid and protection, property became sacred from violence, and wealth of all description was to each member what strength was to man, in a mere condition of nature. In a savage state, the strongest seized on the choicest spoils of the woods by force; as the richest in civilized society acquire the chief luxuries of cities by wealth. Money was soon instituted a sign of the value of things; and as men possessed more or less of that medium of power, they were strong or weak in society, in respect to the rest of the community. Thus did artful subtlety reduce to subjection despotic strength. Still the criterions of power and impotence were ostensible and visible, and every one was capable of ascertaining his due share of influence and weight in society. A certain degree of credit might always, in the course of things, have at-

tended the possession of money, but not in such a proportion of an undue augmentation of social authority and power. At length subtlety refined on its own policy, and devised a means of giving that credit which was originally but the fungus and excrescence of property, a share of riches, by investing it with a negotiable form and substance, and rendering it capable of a concurrency with money. Thus on a sudden the opulent increased, in a double proportion, both their own power and the impotence of poverty. Then arose, in more giant form, the tyranny of oppression, the lust of avarice, and the devotion to luxury. It was this circulated credit which begot and cherished the monster Monopoly, whom it employed in the promotion of its further aggrandizement. This negotiable credit and mischievous monopoly were every way well calculated to support each other, because they are mutually strengthened by mutual success. By influence of credit is acquired the power and advantages of monopoly; and by force of monopoly, credit is frequently nourished and maintained.

True, indeed, it is, that, like all speculative fabrics not founded on the firm base of justice, the pillar and the pile often fall together. But one mischief arises from this just and wisely constituted self-destruction; for honesty may



sometimes be somewhat injured by the ruinous lapse of this perishing fraud.

In all the branches of private commerce, we daily see the inevitable destiny of unjust abuse of the power of credit. We see it in the frequency of bankruptcy, and the recurrence of ruin.

Then, People of Britain, put your representatives on guard against such a degradation of the sources of the national faith as that which involves the individual in destruction. Call on them to weigh well with the nation's actual means, its absolute debts and burthens; and if they should find the state in the frightful and fraudulent condition of a profligate or inconsiderate insolvent, bid them loudly invoke justice, that they may avert vengeance. Silence the empty vaunt that England is still the richest of the nations of the earth, and let individual calamity be the beacon of public caution. Have we not recently seen, even the most wealthy citizens \* of this wealthy metropolis, by such incaution, hurled in one instant from the summit of prosperity to the abyss of ruin?

We must suppose our present ministers too virtuous to encourage or sanction designedly the mischievous currency of a false credit, fa-

\* The Goldsmids.

vourable to private advantage and monopoly, but fatal to the public good and fair competition.

If it be asked what benefit a government could derive from affording such an encouragement; let them shew that there certainly exists a fallacious lure of fancied advantages, seductive to the weak, though the prudent would spurn them.

By a partial excess of wealth accumulated to private individuals, a government is better enabled to exact more exorbitant loans than could be contributed by a people equally wealthy as a nation, but amongst whom that opulence was more equally divided. In a nation universally, but equably rich, there is universal and uniform œconomy; because, as few are in want, so, few have superfluities in such a state. On the other hand, where a few are extremely opulent, and the rest are extremely indigent, a government might borrow from the opulent, without injury to them, or injustice to the distressed. The realization of large fortunes by individuals, creates an appearance of public prosperity by the encrease of private expence, at a time when the nation may be actually in distress. This may be made conspicuous by a single argument. Let us suppose an income of 100l. a-year to be neither more nor less than equal to

one man's expenditure---to be necessary, but sufficient, for all the purposes of life. Now if the subjects of a state were 20,000, and each possessed such income of 100*l.* a-year, it would be found difficult to levy a contribution on them, without some semblance of oppression. But if by trade, or other means, 10,000 of these subjects should acquire a proportion of the public wealth, extending their own incomes to 500*l.* a-year each, every one of these would be able to advance to government, and expend in his own establishment, 400*l.* annually; and after all, find himself in possession of double the amount of the yearly income of his fellow subjects. The former would be better able to contribute one half of their income to the support of the state, than the latter to afford any the least proportion; and if that half were advanced by way of loan, it would be a very inequitable measure to repay the interest which should become due on it, by an equal percentage on every individual of the community: and plausible as it may be to urge that men who lend money to a state should be paid, yet it should be first enquired, whether the money borrowed by governments be, in all cases, lent to the people, before they are called on to pay what is termed the national debt; or if the advance of heavy loans be necessary to enable a

government to protect the prosperity of its subjects; still, the richer any private person is, the more he is interested in promoting fit measures of protection; the more, therefore, he should render assistance, by contributing to the cause.

It is the vicious and dangerous character of a cruel tyranny, a headstrong and rash despotism, to be inconsiderate of the strength, and regardless of the exhaustion, of the resources of a people, when in pursuit of pernicious projects and wanton warfare. The views of a limited monarchy, on the contrary, can never be extended beyond the subjects' means, without trespassing on the principles, and trampling on the forms of such a constitution.

If at any time such a neglect of popular interest and national good should become apparent in this country, (and may it long be averted!) we might safely affirm the due representation to have become corrupt and extinct, and that the House of Commons had degenerated into a mere cabinet of administration.

As some of these observations may probably be thought by many novel and extraordinary, and by some perhaps even inflammatory, it shall be shewn that they are not without the support and example of splendid and weighty authority, both in sentiment and utterance.

That eminent constitutional lawyer, and

much-admired writer, Sir W. Blackstone, speaks of the funded system, and a paper circulation, in the following temperate, but justly severe, terms of regret and reprobation.

*“By this means the property of the kingdom is greatly increased in idea, compared with former times; yet, if we coolly consider it, not at all in reality. It exists only in name, in paper, in public faith, in parliamentary security. In short, the property of the public creditor consists in a certain portion of the national taxes. By how much, therefore, he is the richer, by so much the nation which pays these taxes is the poorer.”*

*“A certain proportion of debt seems to be highly useful to a trading people; but what proportion that is, it is not for me to determine. Thus much is indisputably certain, that the present magnitude of our national incumbrances (in 1758) very far exceeds all calculations of commercial benefit, and is productive of the greatest inconveniences. For,*

*“First, the enormous taxes that are raised upon the necessaries of life, for the payment of the interest of this debt, are a hurt both to trade and manufactures, by raising the price as well of the artificer’s subsistence, as of the raw material; and of course in a much greater proportion the price of the commodity itself: nay, the very increase of paper circulation itself, when*

*extended beyond what is requisite for commerce or foreign exchange, has a natural tendency to encrease the price of provisions, as well as of all other merchandise.*

*“Secondly, if a part of this debt be owing to foreigners, either they draw out of the kingdom annually a considerable quantity of specie for the interest, or else it is made an argument to grant them unreasonable privileges to induce them to reside here.*

*“Thirdly, if the whole be owing to subjects only, it is then charging the active and industrious subject who pays his share of the taxes, to maintain the idle and indolent creditor who receives them.*

*“Lastly, and principally, it weakens the internal strength of the state, by anticipating those resources which should be reserved to defend it in case of necessity.”*

Says the same author, in another place, *“Our national debt and taxes (besides the inconveniences before mentioned) have also, in their natural consequences, thrown such a weight of power into the executive scale of government, as we cannot think was intended by our patriot ancestors.”*

Another most enlightened author, intelligent and ingenious, as learned and profound, observes on the same subject, in a work of thirty years labor and research, that *“those who are of this opinion (that a nation might be advan-*

tageously indebted to itself,) have, I believe, con-founded a circulating paper, which is the sign of the profits that a company has, or will make, by commerce, with a paper which represents a debt. The two first are extremely advantageous to a state; the last can never be so; and all that we can expect from it is, that individuals have a good security for their money. But let us see the inconveniences which result from it.

“If foreigners possess much paper which represents a debt, they annually draw out of the nation a considerable sum for interest.

“A nation that is thus perpetually in debt, ought to have the exchange very low.

“The taxes raised for the payment of the interest of the debt, are a hurt to the manufactures, by raising the price of the artificer’s labor.

“It takes the true revenue of the state from those who have activity and industry, to convey it to the indolent; that is, it gives the conveniences of labor to those who do not labour, and clogs with difficulties the industrious artist.

“These are its conveniences: I know of no advantages.”

Thus speaks Baron Montesquieu; and by the concurrency of authorities so weighty, such as it is a reproach to every Englishman not to have read, and without which there is a vacuum

in every library, these sentiments are countenanced, and must be strengthened. These two authors, who were nearly cotemporary, wrote in the latter end of the reign of George the Second. Since that period it is well known how much this funded debt has increased; and within these last few months this paper money has been rendered independent of faith, which has been supplied by a forced currency, under the sanction of an act of parliament!

Here it may be curious to call to mind the chief argument used by the projector of this scheme of the public funds, for its adoption. He submitted that it would render the monied interest devoted to the Crown, and oblige the people to be more industrious, in consequence of the increased weight of the taxes. Now we find the prophetic Edmund Burke, in his “Thoughts on the Revolution,” expressing himself in these words. “Public debts, which at first were a security to government, by interesting many in the public tranquillity, are likely, in their excess, to become the means of their subversion. If governments provide for those debts by heavy impositions, they perish by becoming odious to the people. If they do not provide for them, they will be undone by the efforts of the most dangerous of all parties: I mean an extensive discontented monied interest; injured, but not de-

*stroyed."* We have quoted the opinion of a learned judge on this measure; now let us hear his advice. "*When, by the free operation of the sinking fund, our national debts shall be lessened; when the posture of foreign affairs, and the introduction of a well-planned and national militia, will suffer our formidable army to be thinned and regulated; and when (in consequence of all) our taxes shall be gradually reduced, this adventitious power of the Crown will slowly and imperceptibly diminish, as it slowly and imperceptibly arose. But till that shall happen, it will be our especial duty, as good subjects and good Englishmen, to reverence the Crown, and yet guard against corrupt and servile influence, from those who are entrusted with its authority: to be loyal, yet free: obedient, and yet independent.*"

Who is there that can be blind to the enormous power thrown into the scale of the executive authority, by this currency of a circulating medium established throughout the kingdom by authority of parliament? Who does not see, that in consequence of the introduction of a substitute for money, so subservient to the existing government, the fortunes, the property, and security of the subjects of the state are all submitted at once to the arbitrary power of the servants of the crown? All these a breath of the

sovereign might at any time extinguish for ever. Yes, the vision of our wealth, the sources of our subsistence, at one olympian nod of the monarch, one magic motion of the sceptre, would vanish in an instant, like a dream, and the poor deluded people would wake at once to all the evils and horrors of individual beggary and national ruin. The same power which could effectually say, "Let paper be money," might scatter it in air.

What though the people of the present day look with confidence to the virtues of their king, in vain that they loyally repose unsuspecting faith in the justice of their long-tryed monarch, and that they transfer their hope and confidence to the family of his illustrious house; yet we cannot regard his servants without the most jealous suspicion. Constituted, as is at this moment, the state, of the representation of the people, we cannot but be jealous of the administration of power. We should be unworthy to possess such men as the enlightened and prescient judge who has bequeathed to us such invaluable admonition as that already quoted, if we could be deaf to the sage wisdom of his prudent admonition. We must guard against the servants of the crown. All who love the sovereign, must be jealous of administration. So just is the equilibrium of our constitution, that should the popu-

lar interest strike the beam, the monarchical authority must fall to the ground. This we have already once seen; may we never see it again! So beautiful is the theory of our government, that no Englishman can be truly loyal without liberty, nor capable of obedience unless independent of restraint.

It is too evidently not only necessary that this constitution should be secure in the virtue of the executive branch; it should be secure in what might seem to be its weakness, but has ever been experienced to be its actual strength. It should be secure in the limited extent of the influence of the Crown, by a due promotion of the interests of the people.

Now there never was a more powerful engine of despotism, at any period of our existence as a nation, placed in the hands of the Crown, than this conversion of the credit of a company under the protection of the government into the moneys of the state--into the current circulating medium of exchange among the subjects of the kingdom. It places the prosperity, the very existence of the individuals of the nation, at the mercy of the Crown. The fortunes of each man, the means of his livelihood, are surrendered to the sovereign; and he has nothing in return but a share in those future taxes which perhaps the nation may not be

able to raise; nothing but a proportion of his country's calamities. Thus the property of the subject is given up to the Crown, a pledge of passive obedience, an effectual hostage of non-resistance. The laborer is made to depend on government for his hire, the manufacturer for his wages, the merchant for his profits, the landlord for his rents, and the stockholder for his security. The specie which does not escape abroad, is collected into the Treasury, and re-issues through the Bank, stripped of its reality, and naked of its worth.

We have, therefore, too just reason to fear that at some future period this tremendous engine may be employed for the most dangerous and destructive purposes, by some vicious and abandoned administration. It is certain that such an accession to the power of the servants of the Crown invests them with the means, if they should be disposed to use them, of enslaving the people, debasing the aristocracy, seducing the Sovereign, and subverting the constitution; and with this dreadful and harrowing contemplation before our understanding, unless we have a complete Reform in the House of Commons, we have no hope but in the possible virtue of present and future administrations. So easily corruptible is the delicate and tender nature of our constitution, that we can never be

entirely secure of its unsullied purity, while there exists a power or an influence which may force or beguile it to yield to treachery.

The necessity of such a thorough Reform in our Representation is in nothing more palpably apparent, than in the single circumstance of the passing of this bill. It is a mere government measure, and however well intended, altogether injurious to the interests of the people. So directly opposite in its tendency to their advantage---so decidedly hostile in its effects to their wishes and sentiments, that it is evident it would never have been carried by his Majesty's ministers through the House of Commons, had these been truly what they ought to be---the representatives of the people, the organs of the public sense, and the guardians of the nation's interest. It is a measure which loudly calls for revision; and its repeal, or confirmation, will be the true test of the capacity and virtue of the members of the senate---of the influence of administration, and that of the people.

Whenever the legislature recall this most momentous act, we may be assured that administration has received that salutary check, which alone can restrain them from trespassing on the rights of the Commons. For, however well disposed ministers may be, Power, like an unruly steed, will often carry those who are entrusted

with its management beyond the limits of their intention, in defiance of the curb of the most strenuous integrity. But when that is wanting, what evils might we not look for from an administration who had the inclination, as well as the power, to convert, by the control of a majority, the guardians of the State into the tools of Party!

It is in vain we look to brilliant, or even useful successes, in the field, as a counterpoise for our defeats in the Cabinet. The transient exultation of splendid victories may transport some for a moment, beyond the gloomy contemplation of our domestic prospects; but they cannot affect our real situation, or avert the evils of insolvency and profligacy.

Offensive war, which aggrandizes a few nations by the ruin of others, has never been productive of good to Britain; who, from her proud pre-eminence in prosperity, has every thing to lose, and nothing to gain. She has every great motive of defence, but can have no interest in aggression. The pursuits of war form the policy of desperate states. Favored Britain is subdued by her own victories, and injured even by her success. She flourishes in the shade of peace; and the commerce which enriches her, yields protection to her wealth.

But if her riches and her wealth be imagi-

nary or artificial, she will draw down on her head the ruinous consequence of injustice and impolicy.

Then, people of England, beware of mistaking your debts for your riches, beware of appropriating to yourselves what is due to others. Above all, beware of the vain attempt to give unnatural, but unavailing, support to a failing credit---to prop, by the strength of your shoulders, a mouldering structure, which cannot stand alone. Be sure, that if the defective and tottering parts be not taken down, and if the fabric itself be not repaired from its very foundation, it must inevitably fall; and the greater the number assembled to sustain it, the more extensive will be the ruin of its ultimate prostration.

Be not deceived by hope into improbable expectations. Hope is a pleasing companion, but a false friend. It may afford solace, but cannot give support.

Above all, bear in mind that your only reliance is on those whom you send to represent you in parliament. It is their duty to be watchful of your interest, to oppose every encroachment, and repel every attack on them. Be careful to whom you delegate so vital a charge; for you entrust them with your property, your rights, and your liberty. Be mistrustful of the men who are blindly subservient to all the views

and projects of every administration, and suspect those alike who as invariably obstruct them. Be it deeply engraven on your hearts, that on the due representation of the people depends the salvation of the state. The House of Commons is the basis of the constitution. From thence arise the pillars of the state, the fair columns of a patriot aristocracy, supporting and embellishing the structure of our monarchical government. Let your representatives look well to the firm or yielding state of this foundation of the fabric. Let them anxiously observe, then, whenever the one seems to give way under the weight of the other, and never forget that they are the perpetual conservators and supporters of the whole. In the acts and conduct of administration, they will find the true bias of the structure of parliament. Should it at any time be observed to decline from the upright and due order of its position, there will ever be visible a corresponding departure from its true level in the base. Adjust, then, the situation of that alone, and the building will immediately recover its perpendicular elevation.

Vigilantly watch, therefore, people of Britain, the every act of the servants of the Crown; and should any one of them be found inimical to your interests, as the act of establishing a paper currency seems to be, still be cautious of as-



cribing to oppression on the part of government what may be proved to be attributable to a dereliction of duty on the part of the Commons, or an attention to partial interest on the side of the Peers. The nature of the error must tell the means of correction. Respect the source of administration; but suspect their influence and power. Remember that jealousy is the associate of affection, and that therefore mistrust and suspicion rather evince than preclude the most loyal devotion. They are the watch-dogs which disturb our quiet, while they protect all that is most dear to us.

“BE LOYAL, BUT FREE; OBEDIENT, YET INDEPENDENT.” The Restoration of the state depends on the representatives of the people, and yourselves must be the architects of your own Security.

FINIS.