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A
LETTER
TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE PRINCE REGENT,
ON THE
NECESSITY OF ADOPTING
A NEW SYSTEM
OF
FINANCE AND REVENUE,
FOR THE SALVATION OF THE COUNTRY;
AND
RECOMMENDING AN IMPROVED PLAN
OF
INTERNAL NAVIGATION,
AS THE BASIS OF THAT SYSTEM.
BY A TRADESMAN.

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A LETTER,

&c. &c.

AT a time when the accumulated ills, which a long and ruinous war has brought upon this country, and when the heavy burthens which are imposed upon the people, paralyse, as it were, the best exertions of the nation; with the dread of being engaged in new conflicts, and but little prospect of any change of system favourable to the welfare of the State before us; we cannot but contemplate the future with that lively anxiety, which will be ever attendant upon a state of uncertainty and doubt, where the greatest blessings or the most direful ills are to be the result; and with that well-grounded hope, which we have been encouraged to place in an enlightened and patriotic Prince, that the first acts of his free government

would be calculated to afford that relief which is become so desirable and necessary.

Though the necessity of a change of system is almost universally admitted, few there are who will allow the practicability of that radical and general Reform which would be desirable; and no one even of the most strenuous advocates for that measure, has as yet suggested a plan for effecting it: admitting the necessity, the practicability should be ascertained, and the great work set about; it cannot be done too soon; delay may be dangerous: in the example of France, we can yet see the dreadful consequences arising from continuing the accumulation of errors upon any system, until the fabric overthrows itself; and the anarchy and confusion attendant upon the quick transition, in such cases, from one system to another, without some previous preparation. Actuated by an ardent desire to see my country prosperous and happy, and strongly impressed with the necessity of some immediate change, to render her so, I am prompted to beg permission most humbly to draw your Royal Highness's attention to this important subject; and I trust the purity of my motives for so doing will plead in extenu-

ation of any apparent presumption on my part in addressing a personage of your high consideration.

I may premise, that in making the following remarks, I do not mean to reflect on any person, or on any set of persons; to the system alone I attribute the ills that embarrass the country, and would wish to see all engaged in the great work of relieving her from the pressure of them. The example of all the nations which have flourished on the theatre of the world, confirms the maxim, that they, as well as individuals, have their rise and fall; and it will be well for Great Britain, if she, (benefiting by the example of others), pushes not her fortunes too far. Britain has already had her ascent to power and greatness, the summit of which she seems for some time past to have reached, and beyond which she cannot with safety soar. There would be no difficulty in advancing her name in the arts of war still higher, even upon the present system; but of what benefit would it be? it must be done at great risk, even to the endangering her very existence as a nation; it would be like sending a man on the forlorn hope, to raise his name at the al-

most certain sacrifice of his existence; without any ulterior object on her part to be attained from the bold and desperate adventure. Britain lost, could benefit none but her enemies.

Between the regular advancement of a nation to the summit of prosperity and any perceptible decline, there will always be a few years of pause. This moment appears to me that at which the fortunes of this country cannot well be bettered, and must of necessity become worse and worse; unless some immediate means are adopted to secure her in that elevated station which she has attained, and to enable her to realize those great advantages, which her vast acquirements present, and fairly promise. To do this, it is necessary to investigate with attention our situation, to ascertain whether the present system of government and of finance are calculated to produce the end required; and, if not, what means we yet possess for accomplishing it.

Without considering at all how far the war we have been waging against the French nation had its origin either in justice or true policy, it may be well to look at the effects, which that war has produced upon the finan-

cial, moral, and physical strength of this nation.

While the great and wonderful changes were taking place in the Continental Governments, which we have seen; and during the anarchy and confusion produced by the rival interests of the contending parties; an immense field of trade and commerce was opened to such nations as were not immediately affected by them: the situation of Britain, the industry and genius of her people, exactly fitted her to benefit by the opportunity that presented itself; she embraced it; and had not her Government plunged her in war, which drained her of all, and more than the advantages she thus derived; had it been possible for her to have avoided taking part in the conflict; she might now have stood confessedly the greatest, most independent, and happiest nation in the universe; and have been in the highly enviable situation of arbitress of it.

During the first changes in the government of France, and up to the time of the fall of the House of Austria, that country was too deeply engaged in war, to pay more attention to the arts of peace than the mere cultivation of the soil; and this too was at

times very precarious: manufactures and commerce were almost entirely neglected and unknown. France, therefore, and a great part of the Continent, became in a manner dependent upon Britain for clothing, and a variety of other articles. America, during the same period, was too beneficially employed in agriculture, and a lucrative carrying trade, to leave her yet scanty population leisure to manufacture the articles she required; nor was it her interest to do it while her relations with Britain permitted her to enjoy those advantages. Britain became the artizan of the world, her manufactories flourished; and the people were drawn from all parts of the country into her towns, to the use of the loom and the shuttle; while great part of the small farms were thrown together, that agriculture might spare the hands, and the land be cultivated at less expence.

During the same period, the great superiority of Britain's naval power over that of France, enabled her to reduce most of the colonies of her enemies; this, for a time, produced the same effect in respect to the luxuries of the Indies; and France was obliged to stoop to the humiliating condition

of receiving from Britain those articles which the long possession of the West-India islands had accustomed her people to the use of. So long only as the rival powers on the Continent were engaged in war with each other, could this state of things continue: the humiliation of the House of Austria, and the consequent subjugation, or by whatever term we may call it, by which the greater part of the continent of Europe became engaged in, and the firm supporters of, the interests of France, changed entirely the system: at that period Britain's commercial embarrassments began, and have since continued to increase; and we only now feel in reality the effects of the war, and of that system of policy, which was to insure the continuance of a trade sufficient to supply a revenue equal to the greatest possible expenditure of the state.

Where so rapid and progressive an increase in commerce takes place, as was seen in this country during the fifteen years following the year 1793; and where so vast a revenue is required as was necessary to meet the expenditure of the British Government during that period, and up to the present time, it can

scarcely be expected that suitable laws and regulations could be framed in such quick succession, as to secure the one without cramping the operations of the other. The multiplicity of those, required to secure the heavy duties, are undoubtedly become a great tax upon commerce in this country, which, together with the urgent necessity there is upon the people to provide for the growing wants of government, and the difficulty of doing it, it is much to be feared, have produced a laxity in the morals of the people, particularly among the trading parts of the community, to a very alarming extent; and prepared them for the ready adoption of that principle of "get money," without being over-scrupulous about the means; which will sap the vitals and endanger the very existence of any state or nation: it was this which undermined the foundation, and utterly extinguished the independent, virtuous, and patriotic spirit of the once much-admired Hollanders, and prepared their descendants for a tacit submission to the Gallic yoke. If we consider how eager the desire of getting rich is among all ranks; if we examine attentively the commercial speculations of the present day, their nature and

tendency; the mode now generally adopted in the conducting of business; if we but look at the numerous breaches of confidence, which are almost daily taking place, we cannot but think there is too much cause to fear, that this is the case; we cannot but conclude all is not as it should be.

With her trade on the decline, and her revenues pushed to the highest possible extent for the people to endure, except upon a system which would bring certain ruin upon the country, and which has already been practised too much, and too effectually; with a great and increasing population, not half employed, but almost half starved; it appears to me that Great Britain is at the present moment in much such a situation as we sometimes see a merchant, or tradesman, who has been induced to step aside from a regular and steady business, in which he was doing well, to embark in speculations beyond the reach of his capital, and to trust to a paper circulation, or what is usually termed an accommodation-bill business, to support him in them: on the occurrence of any event unfavourable to his views, the failure of any of his adventures, or of any of his accustomed modes of raising the

supplies necessary to meet his engagements, he becomes perplexed, and in difficulty; and though warned of his danger, instead of retracing his steps, with an infatuation almost bordering on insanity, he continues the same system of adding adventure to adventure, and expence on expence, but to stop enquiry into his affairs, and to protract, not avert his ruin: so Great Britain, engaged in an expensive and speculative war, and notwithstanding she was foiled in her most dashing political adventures at the commencement, has hitherto continued the same line of policy; prodigal of her resources, which indeed have been, and still are, very great; like a spendthrift, she acts as though she could command respect and admiration by her extravagance and profusion; and awe the world to subjection by the vain boast of the immensity of her expediture, and the lavish waste of those revenues, the demand for which is increasing with her difficulties, and with the people's growing inability to provide them.

When a people begin seriously to feel the burthens of war, they naturally become clamorous for peace; and as war has been the

means of bringing upon this country great part of her present difficulties, peace may reasonably be expected to relieve her from them. To a country whose finances and resources are unimpaired, and whose laws respecting her commerce are simple, and easy in their application, this most assuredly would be the case; but to one like Britain, (I mean as Britain now is), after having enjoyed a trade far, very far, beyond what she, or any country, can expect to retain for a continuance, and whose expediture has been and still is equal to the revenues deducible from that extensive trade, it demands some consideration before we determine upon an immediate and unqualified change of things, as far only as regards war and peace. I am far from being an advocate for war; God forbid! unless the one justifiable—that of self-defence; yet I cannot but consider a peace, while no other change is made favourable to the welfare of the State, as fraught with consequences little short of our immediate ruin; not from any idea I entertain of the Emperor of the French annoying this country during peace, or breaking faith with us;—Britain ought to be in a situation not to

fear on this account, and, at the same time, should be so circumstanced, that France would dread to disturb her;—my apprehensions arise from a conviction of the perfect inefficiency of the present system of finance, and of government to maintain the credit and independence of the nation. To make peace without any previous step towards reform, without a regular system laid down to be pursued, which should embrace in prospective the complete renovation of the British Constitution and the British Treasury, and which, persevered in, would in a few years effect both, would only be, like the merchant I have mentioned, resolving to discontinue drawing accommodation-bills, without considering that to carry into effect such determination, unless he had previously arranged some other mode of providing for the demands upon him, would only bring him into the Gazette at once.

Fettered and clogged, as both the agricultural and commercial exertions of this country are, by heavy taxes and perplexing laws, it appears to me, that in the event of our making peace with France and her dependencies, we should not only not increase

our trade, contracted as it now is from what it has been, but would, in all probability, experience a still further material diminution in it; it behoves your Royal Highness, then, as a preparatory step to making peace, to adopt such internal regulations as are best suited to afford present bread to the indigent poor, to provide useful employment for the heroes of our country, whenever you may see fit to relieve them from the toils and dangers of war, as would put the finances in that state of improvement, which would year after year admit of the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial interests of the country being relieved from those burthens which check most the exertions, and damp most the spirits of the people; and, by affording facilities and accommodations to commerce, enable them to outdo the French in the arts of peace, as they have shown themselves at least their equals in those of war. Unless this is done, France, without doubt, will soon, if not immediately, rival and undersell us in all European markets, if not in every quarter of the globe. The advantages of our machinery and capitals will avail us but little, while our exertions remain cramped and shackled as they are.

Soon as the House of Austria was humbled, Napoleon, having great part of the population of Europe under controul, with no wars but those of France to wage, adopted the bold and energetic measures, which not only prohibited the introduction of farther supplies of British manufactured goods into the Continent, but committed those already there to the flames; for the purpose of obliging the people of the nations under his rule, but of France in particular, to apply themselves diligently to the arts of trade and manufacture, and to provide those very goods which they had long been accustomed to receive from this country: to this end does he encourage artists of different descriptions to settle in France; with this view is he making docks and canals, in order to afford facilities to trade; in times of war to render the whole Continent of Europe independent of Britain, and more dependent upon France; and in times of peace to enable the French people to stand forward the great rivals of British industry and British enterprise.

In the same spirit, and with the same views, the Colonies of France being torn from him, I am inclined to think his prohibitions have

also been extended to the rich products of the Indies; as these are articles principally of luxury, for which substitutes cannot well be found, he, with great prudence, made his edicts less severe against them than against our manufactures; this difference in the spirit of his decrees was made no doubt with a view to wean by degrees, the people under his controul from the use of those luxuries, and thereby undermine the very financial fabric on which we place so much dependence;—the revenues arising from our very extensive trade; while the Government of this country have not thought a single alteration in their system necessary, to counteract those of the great rival of this nation. France appears to be aiming at what Britain should—at being perfectly independent of foreign trade; while the Government of this country (as though our very existence as a nation depended upon the sale of a few tons of coffee and sugar annually), have by means of Letters of Licence, encouraged a system of traffic with the Continent most injurious to Britain and beneficial to France; and at the same time carried on by means not only derogatory to the once great and much honoured name of *British*

Merchant, but to the morals of the people, and to the finances of the country.

It would be difficult to account for the conduct of the British Government in this particular, except upon the presumption, that the revenues arising from trade have become so necessary to the support of the present system; that business upon any principle is better than the want of it; or that the operations of Government are so much incumbered by the immense accumulation of the machine of state, that it requires all the attention of its members to patch and mend the overloaded engine, and all their energies to keep it in motion. As it was confessedly an act of retaliation on the part of Britain, to prohibit Neutrals to carry on a trade with France and her dependencies, in the profits of which she could not participate; the policy of it must have rested upon the presumption, that the revenues of France, like her own, depended on commerce; that to prevent her trading at all, would disorder her finances, or that the people of the Continent would not be content to do without those articles they had been accustomed to use; and that to be deprived of them altogether, would be sufficient to raise the standard

of rebellion against the newly acquired authority of Napoleon. If Britain's Orders in Council originated in this, how are we to account for her Letters of Licence? by which she not only frustrated the very object of them, but became at the same time the willing abettor and supporter of that system she wished to overthrow, and the principal promoter of the ends of her enemy. France, and indeed all the Continent of Europe, is economising as to the consumption of British goods, and the produce of the British Colonies; it is high time therefore, that Britain should begin to do without taking corn, wine, timber, hemp, flax, and other articles from her European neighbours, or else enable her merchants to export her own manufactured goods and produce on such terms as would command a market, and render her trade with them advantageous. To give full effect to the energies of the people, a complete new order of things seems necessary; and as such effectual change cannot be looked for unless it originates with your Royal Highness, I beg leave most respectfully to call your attention to a plan of improvement, which, in my humble opinion, is well suited to

give more vigour to our exertions during war, additional security and happiness in time of peace, and to afford to the country some hope of returning prosperity, under the happy auspices of an enlightened and liberal Prince, who cannot fail to consider the good opinion of the People as the brightest gem in the Crown which is destined to encircle his brow; and the comfort, freedom, and independence of the subject the best supports to the Throne of the Sovereign of a great nation at home; while the equity, justice, and integrity of his government, (the true characteristics of a powerful and great people) are the sure bonds of amity and friendship with surrounding countries.

The plan alluded to, is one which was submitted to the Honourable Board of Admiralty about twelve months ago, for making the river Thames navigable for vessels of every burden as far as the mouth of the river Wye, and for opening a communication by that river, and the river Arun, with the English Channel. This plan embraces the object of forming various and spacious docks, which are much wanted, for the use of the Royal Navy, as well as for the merchantmen of the country; and

was accompanied by some observations upon the causes of obstructions to the navigation of our rivers, and upon the means of removing them. These observations and plans were made last winter, with a view to draw the attention of Government, in the first place, to the ill effects which would arise to the navigation of the Thames, from the erection of the bridges over it, which were then in contemplation and now in progress, as well as to point out the inefficacy of the plan proposed by the late Lord Melville, for forming a Dock at Northfleet, to the ends required. It cannot be well expected that plans drawn up on the spur of the moment, as those submitted to the Board of Admiralty were, could be sufficiently minute and accurate to perform the work by; but the outlines, I have no doubt, were demonstrative enough of the great advantages they presented, and the leading features of them so striking, that the utility of the measure would be apparent. As no notice has yet been taken of them, and as men in general are apt to look upon things of this nature as mere matters of speculation, Government may very likely have considered them in this light, or at any rate, have viewed

them as objects of improvement merely local, with which they could not with propriety interfere.

After the matter has been submitted to such high authority as that of the Board of Admiralty, whose acquaintance with things of this nature is certainly most extensive, and who in aid of their own judgment can, and undoubtedly do call in the opinions of the most able Engineers in the kingdom, I may be thought intruding, in thus calling your Royal Highness's attention to the subject: the consideration, however, that that Honourable Board may in these times of difficulty be too much occupied in matters of immediate necessity, to give any plans of this sort the attention requisite to appreciate their merits; and that men engaged in any particular branch of science, are in the habit of considering every thing which comes before them, according to the given and acknowledged rules of it; and that on this account it sometimes has happened, that persons perfectly unconnected with a particular study, have seen improvements in it which the strict adherence to fixed principles prevented those who followed it from discovering; encouraged by these con-

siderations, and a sense of that duty which every individual in a free country owes to his Prince, and fellow-subjects, I am encouraged to point out to your Royal Highness a few, and it will be but a very few, of the almost numberless advantages the projected plans hold out.

In times like the present, when a great part of the population is unemployed, and almost half-starved, it would be good policy in the Government to find occupations for such as could not meet with other work, by making bridges, roads, or any thing else, even though there should be no immediate use for them, and if the very same people were afterwards paid to break them up again. If employment on public works, at no extravagant wages, could always be had by the labourers when more beneficial failed them, we should not witness the wretchedness arising from the great fluctuations in trade and manufactures, nor would there be that necessity upon the master manufacturers, of continuing to make goods beyond the demand, at much loss to themselves, with a view to give partial work to the people, that there now is; and though the people might sometimes be employed on

such works as were of no great benefit to the State, in general, such as were advantageous could be found, on which to employ the poor; and we should in all such cases have the works for our money; the national improvements would be done at little or no cost more than what is at present expended on the poor—to say the least of it, unprofitably to themselves and the country; and I see no great difference it can make to me or my neighbour, whether we pay 20*l.* 30*l.* or 40*l.* per annum, as poor's rate, or we pay the same amount in any other shape. It is difficult to account distinctly for the increase of crimes in this country: many may be the causes which contribute to promote the moral turpitude in the people, which lead to the commission of such as have of late disgraced the metropolis, and as still do much discredit to some parts of the country: the very great weight of taxation, the want of useful employment among the lower orders of society, and the too great value and consideration given to wealth among the higher, I am inclined to think, form the ground-work of the evil. The projected plans, by offering useful labour to the poor, are well calculated to check the growing depravity, and to stop

the commission of such crimes as theft, burglary and murder, among that class, while they afford an opportunity to put a stop to such as are become common among the higher. The dread of shame for a first offence is more likely to arrest the steps of declining virtue, than the fear of death is to prevent the commission of more capital crimes, among people already accustomed to the practice of minor offences. If for breaches of trust, defalcations in public accounts, dishonest failures, swindling, and the like, men of all stations were to be lowered from whatever rank they had held in society, to one below the most humble, yet honest peasant of the kingdom; and doomed to labour upon public works of this nature, with some conspicuous mark of disgrace upon them, to denote the crime for which they were punished; we should soon cease to have to lament the commission of such as those, and of forgery, as indeed of most others.

If in addition to the plan laid before the Honourable Board of Admiralty, a junction was formed between the Severn and the Trent, to pass from about Bewdley, in Worcestershire, by Birmingham to Litchfield, or Tam-

worth, and thereby open a communication between the German Ocean and the Bristol Channel; another between that and the English Channel, either by joining the Parrot with the Frome or Stower rivers; the Tamar, with a small river which falls into Budehaven, or the river Fowey, with the Allen, in Cornwall, and thereby cut off the navigation round the Land's End, and make the communication easy between the English Channel on the one side, and Ireland and all the west coast of England and Scotland on the other; another cut also to join the Suir and Shannon, in Ireland, would be to the great benefit of the British Isles.

The putting in practice such projects, would immediately afford to the community the benefits just enumerated, and when finished, would give to the nation from 200,000 to 300,000 acres of rich and valuable land, which in a very few years would be equal to most in the kingdom; besides, from the facilities thus afforded for drainage, liming, and manuring, as well as the encouragement thereby held out, for enclosing and cultivating all the waste lands within the influence of these rivers, we may fairly calculate, that four or five times

that quantity would soon be doubled, and in many instances trebled, both in value and produce; while the expence and keep of 50,000 horses at least, would be saved to the community: the savings and improvements upon this head would very likely far exceed the above, of any probable calculation, when it is considered that these tide-rivers would form a kind of trunk for internal navigation, with which all or most of the minor rivers and the present canals would doubtless communicate; or in conjunction with them, a system of railway communication might be formed throughout the country, which, being made at less expence, destroying less land, affording a more expeditious conveyance, and liable to less interruption than canal carriage, is generally more desirable. As the banks of rivers, formed according to the plans laid down, in near direct lines, would be the most desirable places on which to make the principal high roads; and with these in like manner, others would communicate; the very best materials could be had in all parts of the country by means of these rivers, the roads would be much improved, both in point of situation and goodness, while the expence of making them

and keeping them in repair would not be more than one-fourth part of the present.

The proposed junction of the Shannon and the Suir—the improvement of the navigation of the former, to open a communication between it and the river Boyne, with draining the extensive bogs in Ireland, all of which promise the greatest advantages to the country, would give employment to that people; afford them more comfortable means of support; accustom them to habits of industry and order, and have the happiest effects towards ameliorating their condition; and enable that part of the Empire to grow hemp and flax sufficient for the whole. The sums paid annually to Russia for these articles, would add very much to the comfort and improvement of the Sister Kingdom.

It may not be amiss to consider how far the improvement of the river Tamar, upon the principle recommended for making a communication between the St. George's and English Channel, and opening an entrance to the Hamoaze, by a cut behind Mount Edgecumbe, to pass by Milbrook, or between that and St. John, would supersede the necessity of the proposed breakwater in Plymouth Sound, and if the

former would not be of greater and more lasting benefit to the nation than the latter. I am inclined to think this would be the case, particularly if the neck of land which joins Mount Batten to the main land could be cut through, and the bed of the Catwater improved to allow the tide to flow freely up it.

It has ever been deservedly an object of attention with the Government of this country, to promote the fisheries as one of her great sources of wealth and independence: for this purpose, considerable bounties have been paid, without yet producing the desired effect; and while our coasts abound with fish of almost all descriptions, we have been able hitherto to convert them to no great national advantage; yet our neighbours, the plodding people of Holland, have derived from them great wealth, and their fisheries even on our coasts, have given employment to many thousands of that people; this speaks somewhat against our system. I fear that quantity and cheapness have been more attended to than quality, and to this we owe the failure of the British Fisheries. It must be matter of much heartfelt satisfaction, however, to every lover of his country to observe, at the present

moment, the attention paid to this subject by the Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and by the Right Hon. George Rose; the unremitting attention of the latter gentleman in particular, entitles him to the warmest approbation of his country. Had Government offered encouragement for the most perfect and palatable cures, instead of the quantities taken, the people would have been emulous to find out methods of preserving herrings, pilchards, and other fish that abound most upon our coasts, in such perfection as to have stood the test of time and climate, and improved the consumption; then the fisheries would have flourished without bounties; great quantities of good and wholesome food would have been added to the national stock, which at all times would have met the consumption of the growing population; a part would have become a considerable article of beneficial foreign commerce, in years of scarcity convertible into an useful and ready substitute for other provisions at home, and the means of relieving the country from all apprehension of want under any circumstances whatever. The projected improvements are well cal-

culated to promote the same desirable end, and to much greater extent: by means of them, not only the market of the metropolis, but all the intermediate country between that and the English Channel, would be thrown open to the fishermen on the Southern, as well as those upon the Eastern coast of the country; the whole would be supplied with fresh fish daily; and a ready mode of rectifying the mal-practices respecting the supply of the London market, which have been so long complained of, would not only be afforded, but the price of fish would in consequence be reduced within the reach of all classes of the people; the fisheries would become of importance; our coasts and rivers would swarm with vessels employed in them; the nursery for seamen would increase; and we might look forward to rapid improvements in the cure also, both for home consumption and for the supply of foreign markets. It would be difficult to form any just idea of the extent and value of which the fisheries might become to this country; but when we consider the subject in all its different bearings, we may fairly calculate upon the British Fisheries, under such promising circumstances; in a few years sur-

passing the most prosperous times of those of Holland;—when it is said, that country employed upwards of 9000 vessels, and from 300,000 to 400,000 people in them, and that their gain from them was above 5,000,000*l.* sterling annually.

When the increased population of the British Isles requires a quantity of food from other countries beyond any former period, notwithstanding our own improved cultivation and produce; when supplies from our neighbours, and from the American States, are become at least very precarious; and at a time when both Spain and Portugal are in some degree dependant upon us for bread; it becomes indispensable to provide against any probable ill effects that may arise out of our present relations with other countries; as to the supply of the necessaries of life: the plans proposed present many advantages to this end; beside the improvements to agriculture, and the extension of our fisheries, just noticed, they hold out the easy and ready adoption of national granaries, in case it should be deemed advisable for Government to take in years of plenty, the surplus of grain, at a saving price to the growers, and store it up until a year

when the crops were scanty; a measure of this nature would aid agriculture, and be better calculated to keep the price of grain uniform, than that of admission and prohibition to export, as at present practised.

By cutting off the navigation from Channel to London, through the Straits of Dover, much time, much wear and tear, and great risk would be saved, and the plans would afford the opportunity of bringing vessels of every description alongside the keys to unload; the dispatch would be such, that the largest fleet of West Indiamen that ever came into the Thames, might with ease be cleared of their cargoes in a week, at very trifling expence; and the goods be safely housed in the warehouses of the merchants without loss from pilferage, or from waste; without expence of lighterage, river risk, or cartage; indeed, without any other charge upon them except freight and insurance; and these much lessened in consequence. The savings on these heads, would almost exceed calculation. To the City of London alone, I should think, reckoning upon the extent of her commercial transactions, they would be more than 10,000,000*l.* annually.

A saving of all the present expences of cleansing the rivers, repairing the bridges, and of the various projected new works, which would by these be rendered perfectly unnecessary, would accrue to the nation: the ready conveyance of coal into the interior would enable the country to grow to perfection much valuable timber, which is at present cut down young for fuel; the demand for vessels and people for the conveyance of coal coastways, would increase, and that part of the nursery for seamen improve; the facility that would be afforded to transport timber from the interior to the different dock-yards would be a considerable advantage, which, with all those calculated to be derived from the late Lord Melville's Naval Arsenal at Northfleet, as well as a great many others, would be gained by Government, and would in times of war particularly, be very great savings in the national expenditure.

On the score of national defence, it is only necessary to consider the vast military strength and security that would be afforded: to England, for instance—by the junction of her largest rivers intersecting the country in three or four different places, without a bridge over

them, the communication being opened by means of tunnels under them; and these so constructed, that they could be filled with water without injury at almost a moment's notice; all the immense navy of the kingdom moored in or about these rivers; with their guns and stores on board; at all times ready for action, and capable of being moved to and fro with the tide, with celerity and ease, like as many floating batteries;—it is only necessary to consider this, to be convinced of the utter impossibility almost of finding an enemy hardy enough to invade, much less to entertain any serious hope of ever conquering her.

The scheme of improvement is upon a very extensive scale, and the funds necessary to complete the works must be commensurate; to expend millions of sterling money in building bridges, forming canals, &c. &c. is perhaps what no other country can do; and such a sum as would be requisite to finish all the plans, has yet scarce been thought of in this country for such purposes: no less than 80,000,000*l.* to 100,000,000*l.* would be required from first to last. Before determining upon the expenditure of so large a sum, it is necessary to know if it can be raised; then, if the

advantages to be derived from the works are proportionable to the expence. To the first enquiry the answer is easy and at hand--the Sinking Fund is adequate to every purpose. Should the people's attachment to this favourite scheme for saving the nation, be against the application of that fund to the great end I have in view--that of relieving her entirely from the pressure of the national debt, other means may be found to make the projected improvements go hand in hand with it, and give it ten times the effect it now has: a single loan of 10,000,000*l.* once borrowed and well managed, would be sufficient to complete the whole scheme, and this could easily be raised when the plan and object were well understood. The nature of the works is such, that after some progress had been made with them, the revenues immediately arising from that part would be sufficient to pay the expence of prosecuting the rest, and in a short time would come in aid of the Sinking Fund. When the whole were completed, the revenues to be derived from the improvements would be sufficient of themselves, to pay off the whole present debt of the nation within twenty years.—

Considering the return to be derived from the

plans for the outlay of the money, we may say, that 100,000,000*l.* at interest gives 5,000,000*l.* per annum: the present application of the fund I have mentioned, gives no more than this with the benefit of accumulation: by laying out the money on the proposed works, admitting the practicability of the whole, what prospect of gain have we? In the first place, we shall put the country in the greatest possible state of defence; we shall acquire for the Royal Navy, commodious harbours and docks, into which ships of war can at all times come direct from sea, either to take in stores immediately from the King's storehouses, to repair or be laid up, and that without even taking a gun or any other article from on board; we shall also obtain spacious and commodious docks and yards for building and repairing ships for the navy, and for manufacturing the articles necessary for their equipment; we shall acquire the means of ready transit of all kinds of naval and military stores from one depôt to another and from one coast to the other; the facility of passing with the greatest celerity, ships of war from one sea to another; the ability to assemble troops at any given point in a few days, and to ship them

without loss of time; so that an expedition may no sooner be determined upon than it can be executed; with that promptitude and dispatch which is best calculated to keep the troops in a state fit for action, and most likely to insure success; these, and these alone, to a warlike nation, or even to one situated as Britain is, acting upon a system of policy purely defensive, are fully equivalent to the outlay of the money. If then, upon the score of defence, strength, and saving in the national expenditure, we could derive advantages that would more than repay the advance of the money, what incitements have we to carry the plans into execution, when the work can be done at comparatively little real expence to the country, by employing the indigent poor, or those who would not otherwise have work.

Having already considered some of the principal local advantages to be derived from the system of improvement recommended were the projects finished by a company, or companies of individuals, with the sanction of the Legislature, I come now to point out why, in my opinion, the benefits would be more extensive, and diffused more generally over the country, if the works were done by Govern-

ment. I have already taken a slight glance at the situation of the nation, her dependance on revenue arising from commerce, the present shackled and diminished state of her trade, and the prospect of a still farther probable decline in it; while the national expenditure, instead of diminishing with her lessening resources, is annually increasing; and I have endeavoured to point out the necessity of a change from that system of finance, which certainly has been calculated to raise the country to a state of unrivalled prosperity and greatness; but is perfectly inadequate to the end of maintaining her in it. To establish Great Britain in her present elevated situation, and to keep her independent, a complete change in her system of finance must take place; and I wish to draw your Royal Highness's attention to the consideration of the projected improvements as the ground-work of that new system. Permit me to intreat your Royal Highness to look at the plans with the eye of the philanthropist, the patriot, and the financier; investigate their merits as an enlarged and comprehensive scheme of internal improvement and of national finance; examine all their stores of savings and advantages, and I be-

lieve you will find them replete with good; capable of being converted into a ready and easy method of raising a revenue equal perhaps to the whole national expenditure, beside affording numerous other benefits of ten times that value to the nation. Revenues arising from such a source as this would be easily collected, and at trifling expence; they would be drawn from agriculture and commerce, and would improve with the increase of traffic occasioned by either; such rates as were thought proper might be annually granted by Parliament, and could each succeeding year be varied to answer the exigencies of the State, or the ability of one branch or the other to support the load. Whenever the state of neighbouring nations and our relations with them, would enable the export trade without inconvenience to bear an increase of expence, the rates upon that branch might be augmented; when circumstances rendered it necessary that commerce should be free and unshackled as possible, in order to enable our merchants and manufacturers to undersell our neighbours, agriculture and internal trade should bear the pressure of them: the proper regulation of these, with

some commercial arrangements regarding the trade between Britain and her Colonies, judiciously made, would render unnecessary all our present internal taxes, and most of the import and export duties; farther than what were requisite for the protection of the morals of the people, of our home manufactures, and the produce of our Colonies; and a very simple system of collecting those necessary for this purpose might be adopted.

With the balance of power completely overturned, and Britain's political and commercial relations in Europe broken and destroyed, she should begin to adapt herself to the present order of things, so far as can be done consistent with her honour and integrity as a Nation; and no longer rest her hope of prosperity upon the uncertain renewal of any beneficial mercantile intercourse with her European neighbours: unless she alters her policy, this is at least very precarious. If a trade with the rest of Europe is to be maintained, it must be by her Merchants being enabled to sell British manufactures and the produce of the British Colonies, on such terms as that nothing could come in competition with them. Her commercial superiority cannot long or ho-

nourably be maintained by force of arms and arbitrary restrictions; these create too many jealousies, and raise too many enemies, to last; besides, Britain should be just as she is great; peaceable as she is powerful; an act of oppression or injustice should never be politic on her part: should she ever become so circumstanced as to render an act politic which is not perfectly just, from that moment the decline of her fortunes may be said to take place; from that time we may look for her ruin, unless her Prince or her People take alarm at the prospect, and step forward to arrest her fall. That your Royal Highness may become sensible to the dangers which threaten our native land, and prompt to avert them, must be the anxious wish of every Briton. Let her alter her policy, let her draw the revenues necessary to meet her expenditure from her internal resources; and let her set commerce free from those shackles which at present cramp it—relieve agriculture and manufactures from the great expences with which they are encumbered; render her harbours safe, and her rivers easy of access; make the British Isles one common parent; give the Colonies and Mother Country a reciprocity of interest in

their commercial communications, and the industry and enterprise of her sons will soar above all opposition; and her trade flourish in spite of every effort of her enemies to check it; that spirit of freedom and independence will again revive, which is necessary to keep the nation great and powerful; the trade with the Indies may safely be thrown open: Britain will become the emporium of the world as well as the principal manufacturer and carrier in it; and Your Royal Highness will have it in your power to command a safe and honourable peace, or to carry on an effectual defensive war if necessary, against the whole of modern Europe, even if aided by the New World.

Considering the improvements I have been recommending to Your Royal Highness's notice, in all their different bearings, they appear to me exactly suited to the present exigencies of the country, capable of being made the sheet anchor at which she may safely ride out the storm, and desirable to be adopted, whether she is doomed to enjoy the blessings of peace, or continue in a state of warfare.

I have the Honor to be,
&c. &c.

THE END.

The first part of the manuscript is a list of names, possibly of a church or a community, arranged in several columns. The names are written in a medieval script, likely Gothic or a similar hand. Some names are preceded by titles or honorifics, such as "Magister" or "Dominus". The list appears to be a record of members or benefactors, with some names appearing in multiple columns.

Below the list, there is a section of text that seems to be a formal declaration or a set of regulations. It begins with a large initial letter, possibly "N" or "I", followed by several lines of text. The text is dense and difficult to read due to the script and the quality of the scan. It appears to contain legal or ecclesiastical provisions.

The final part of the manuscript consists of a few more lines of text, possibly a signature or a date. The text is very faint and difficult to decipher, but it seems to conclude the document.