THIRD EDITION.

# OBSERVATIONS

UPON

# THE STATE OF CURRENCY

IN

# IRELAND,

AND UPON

# THE COURSE OF EXCHANGE

BETWEEN

# DUBLIN AND LONDON.

BY

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE first and second Editions of this work have been printed in Dublin. It was intended to have postponed the publication of this edition until the report was printed of the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to examine into the state of the Irish Currency and Exchange, in order that the most material parts of it might have been adverted to. But as a delay of some weeks is likely to attend the printing of this report, it is proposed to publish an additional Appendix to this work, containing such selections from it as may appear applicable to illustrate the subject.

May 14th, 1804.

# OBSERVATIONS, &c.

IF it had been made a supposition, that the national Bank of Ireland should increase the issues of its paper nearly five times beyond their original amount, would it not have occurred to the plainest understanding, that a great depreciation, and a discount on its paper would have been the consequence? Such an increase has taken place, and what might have been expected from theory is at present amply substantiated by fact. The Bank of Ireland has increased its issues to near five times *their* original amount; a depreciation has taken place; and a discount established of at least 10 per cent. Whatever difference of opinion may have existed relative to the question of depreciation, as it regards the currency of England, there is no doubt that the currency of Ireland has suffered a most serious depreciation. The advocates of the Bank of England maintained, that, because there was no discount on its paper, there could be no depreciation; which, though an incorrect mode of reasoning, is a proof, that, had there been a discount, they would

 have

have granted a depreciation to exist. That there is a discount on Irish Bank paper is known to every one, and proclaimed daily in every newspaper by the different advertisements for buying and selling guineas. It is not therefore necessary, to adopt the arguments which were resorted to in England, to prove a depreciation of paper, in order to make evident the existence of a depreciation in Ireland. It is only requisite to follow them so far as to show, that the cause of it is an excessive issue of Bank of Ireland paper, and to explain the degree of depreciation which has actually taken place.

The value which the paper has lost in comparison with that of specie, into which it was formerly convertible, can only be attributed to the same cause which lessens the value of every article of sale, barter, or exchange, namely, more of it being brought to market than the demand requires. The surplus above that quantity, which is requisite for carrying on the various operations of trade, receipts and payments, necessarily contributes to diminish the value of the whole in circulation; to enhance in a proportionate degree the prices of all things, and to produce a discount upon it, when it is to be converted into specie.

This reasoning will receive no small degree of support and illustration, if, upon examining the returns which have been made to Parliament by the





the directors of the Bank, it should appear that the proportion of notes now in circulation should be excessive in their amount in comparison with those which were in circulation immediately previous to the restriction of cash payments; and if it should also appear that the ratio of their increase is likewise excessive, when compared with that of the increase of the Bank of England notes during the same period.

It is stated in the returns presented to the House of Lords, Feb. 1803, that the amount of notes in circulation in Jan. 1797, was 621,917*l.* April 1st, 1801, 2,266,471*l.* June 1st, 1802, 2,678,980*l.* Feb. 1st, 1803, 2,633,864*l.* And by a second return, dated Dec. 12th, 1803, it appears that the amount of the notes in circulation in November last, was 2,911,628*l.* The increase therefore, in six years and eleven months, is, 2,289,711*l.* The total amount in circulation in November, 1803, wanting only 197,957*l.* of being five times as great as it was in 1797 *.

This simple statement is sufficient to prove the excess of issues which exists: an excess which is not to be considered as only applicable to the notes of the Bank of Ireland, but also as the cause of the increased issue of private Bank paper, in

* See note, p. 5.



the

the proportion of 10*l.* or perhaps 20*l.* for every pound which the Bank issues, beyond what the demand for circulation requires.

If the private Bankers issued their paper in the proportion of 800*l.* to every 100*l.* of Bank of Ireland paper, the total amount of paper in circulation would be 20,607,399*l.* As Dr. Smith supposes, that a Banker with 10,000*l.* capital, may issue 40,000*l.* in paper*, though payable in specie; it is not assuming too much to suppose that, under the circumstance of payment in National Bank paper, and the present system of discounting, the proportion of issues may be advanced from four, as high as to eight to one. It will not therefore, appear very extraordinary, taking the capital of all the private Bankers at 2,911,628*l.* to suppose that the amount of paper actually in circulation, exceeds twenty millions.

It appears by the returns made to Parliament, that in May, 1797, the Bank of England notes in circulation amounted to 11,103,880*l.* The Bank of Ireland notes to 621,917*l.* In November, 1803, the former amounted to 17,931,930*l.* The latter to 2,911,628*l.* The increase of the one is less than two thirds of the original amount. The increase of the other is

* Wealth of Nations, V. I. 450.

nearly



nearly five-fold*. The ratio therefore of the increase in Ireland, greatly exceeds the ratio of the increase in England, and exhibits additional testimony of the excessive issue of Bank of Ireland paper. As the trade, the taxes, and the expenditure of England, during these last six years have increased in a much greater degree than the trade, taxes, and expenditure of Ireland, no other

* This calculation is taken from the returns made to the House of Lords, Feb. 14, 1804—and former returns made to Parliament.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bank of England notes in circulation May 1797 | 11,103,880 |
| Add ⅓ of this sum | 7,402,586 |
| | 18,506,466 |
| Deduct amount of notes in circulation Nov. 25, 1803 | 17,931,930 |
| Increase less than ⅓ by | 574,536 |
| Bank of Ireland notes in circulation Jan. 1st, 1797 | 621,917 |
| Add ⅔ | 414,610 |
| | £. 1,036,527 |
| Notes in circulation Nov. 25, 1803 | £. 2,911,628 |
| Increase greater than ⅔ by | £. 1,875,101 |

It will be found upon calculating the proportions between the present, and former quantities of notes in circulation, that whilst the quantity in England has not increased ⅓ by £. 574,536. The quantity in Ireland had it been only £. 197,957, greater than it is, would be exactly five times greater than it was Jan. 1st, 1797.



con-

conclusion can be drawn from this comparison of the ratios of the increase of issues, than that the issues of the Bank of Ireland have been equally unnecessary and excessive.

The plainest understanding might have foreseen, that a depreciation of Bank paper, and a discount upon it, would have been the consequence of multiplying its quantity to any considerable degree beyond the actual demand for the purposes of circulation. The effect of this upon the exchange is next to be considered. What are the facts? Previous to May, 1796, the exchange between London and Dublin had fluctuated during eight years between 7½ and 9 per cent *. During the latter months of 1797, exchange was so low as 6 per cent †. The amount of notes in circulation the beginning of that year was only 621,917*l.* In April 1801, the amount of the notes had advanced to 2,266,471*l.* and exchange to 14 per cent; in November 1803, the notes advanced in amount to 2,911,628*l.* and exchange to 19 per cent, steadily remaining above 16 per cent for the last six months of 1803, except during the periods in which it was influenced by the Treasury drawing for the Loan on London.

* This period is taken, as the rates in the appendix refer only to 1789.

† See Note to Appendix, No. I.

By



By these statements it appears, that the exchange previous to the restrictions was on an average below par; that it had not been so high as 14 per cent, until the year 1801, when the amount of the notes in circulation wanted little more than 200,000*l.* of being four times greater than it was when the restrictions first took place. That in 1803, the amount was near five times greater than it was at that period, and exchange 19 per cent.

(Apparently, therefore, there is every reason to think that the depreciation of paper is the cause of the high rates of exchange.)

But the reader is requested to pay particular attention to the nature of the par of exchange, and the inferences that may fairly be deducted from it. A clear definition of this point will remove the difficulties with which the subject of exchange has been embarrassed by being discussed abstrusely. What reading and argument cannot effect is very often attained by perspicuity. It is only to be attributed to the want of this attention on the part of the several authors who have written on this subject, that they have not succeeded in impressing their readers with a clear conception of the nature of exchange, and in clearing up the doubts and obscurity which still exist, notwithstanding their works have contributed so much to advance commercial science.



The

The par of exchange between different countries is the comparison of the value of their respective currencies; when these currencies are of permanent value, a permanent per-centage will express the par of their mutual exchange of currency. Thus whilst guineas were the standard of the value of English and Irish currencies, the fixed and acknowledged par of exchange was 8⅓, being the exact difference between the number of pounds, shillings, and pence, contained in a guinea in the regulated currency of Ireland and in that of England *. If a practice of debasing coin had at any time become so general as to diminish the value of all the coin in circulation in Ireland 10 per cent, whilst at the same time no such practice existed in England, it would be evident that 8⅓ would not express the par of exchange between England and Ireland, the par under the new circumstances of the Irish currency would be exactly 18⅓ per cent. But if instead of the coin having been debased, it had disappeared, and a currency of paper been introduced in its place of a value less than that of the currency of specie by 10 per cent, it is equally evident the par of exchange with England

* This difference in the currencies arises from a difference in the copper coin, 12*d.* in England and 13*d.* in Ireland make a shilling, and therefore £.100 English is equal to £.108 6*s.* 8*d.* Irish.

would



would be 18⅓ *. As specie has actually disappeared, and as also a currency of paper supplies its place, of an inferior value by 10 per cent, it is clearly erroneous now to say, if the exchange of Dublin on London is 16⅓ per cent, that it is 8 per cent above par; the fact is, it is 2 per cent below par, and it is also a fact, that an exchange of 16 per cent is a proof of a balance of trade and remittances in favour of Ireland. The state and variations therefore of currencies are in this case and often the principal agents in producing variations in exchange; and where the variations are very great, unusual, and after some time cease, leaving exchange very different to what it generally had been, it is then certain that some great alteration in currency has happened. In the reign of King William, before the reformation of the silver coin, the exchange between England and Holland was 25 per cent against England; but the value of the current coin was at that time rather more than 25 per cent below its standard value. Before the reformation of gold in 1772, the market price of bullion exceeded the mint price, and the rate of foreign exchange was depressed; even the exchange with France was 2 or 3 per cent against England. It is understood that at that

* Guineas bear a premium of 10 per cent; this is the rate at which they are now selling at Mr. Frank's office in Suffolk-street, Dublin.

time

time the French coin, though worn, was not so degraded as the English, and was perhaps 2 or 3 per cent nearer its standard. Very soon after the recoinage in 1772, the market price of bullion fell to the mint price, and there was a corresponding improvement in the course of the exchange *; in consequence of the depreciation of French assignats, the exchange between London and Paris fell 70 per cent to the disadvantage of the latter place.

It is conceived by many, that the exchange depends entirely on trade. The effect of it however on exchange in comparison to the effect of currency is very small; because the only additional charges, which ought to occur, on remitting the balance of debts from Dublin to London, the currency being as it formerly was, are those of transmitting specie or bullion to London. Sir William Petty has observed, in regard to the exchange between England and Ireland, that "naturally it can never be more than the land and water carriage of money between the two kingdoms, and the insurance of the same upon the way, *if the money be alike in both places*†." The balance of trade might account for an exchange of three per cent above

* Wealth of Nations, I. 62. II. 215.

† Political Survey of Ireland, p. 349. Ed. Dub. 1769.

par,



par, and leave, in the present state of exchange, 7 per cent to be considered as the result of the depreciation of paper; but as it is well known, that the commercial intercourse between Ireland and the other countries with which it trades*, produces a balance actually in favour of Ireland†; it is reasonable to infer, not only that an exchange above par has been, and is the consequence of this depreciation, but that the depreciation has also prevented the natural result of a favourable balance, namely, a favourable exchange.

The rate of exchange between any two countries being, in the first instance, an arrangement for ascertaining the intrinsic value of a nominal sum in the one, in comparison with a nominal sum in the other, (as the livre with the pound,) it follows, if after the standard of exchange is settled, a variation takes place in the value of the currency of a country, that the par which had been first struck is no longer, in fact, the true par of exchange; and in the

* All payments and receipts on account of foreign trade made by Ireland, pass through London.

† According to the Custom-house returns presented to the House of Commons, for the year ending January 5, 1803, there is a balance in favour of the exports, of 996,858 *l.* These returns were formed upon the real, not the official value.

case

case of a depreciated currency, the amount of debts becoming nominally great in proportion as the value of the currency is diminished, without any actual alteration having taken place in the real value of them; it is a necessary result, that such a portion of the exchange, as is affected by this degraded currency, is not a correct index of the real value of the debts of that country wherein it circulates. In the case, therefore, of the depreciated state of currency in Ireland, the debts due by Ireland to England become apparently of much greater amount than they really are, and produce an apparent and merely nominal balance of debts against Ireland. "A currency in specie cannot possibly be degraded by an excessive quantity, since the surplus having an intrinsic value, may be exported to other countries; but paper not convertible into specie, possesses no such quality. Having a mere local value, confined to the country within which it circulates, it must remain in that country, and if multiplied beyond the demand, must be depreciated in the degree of its excess. In the course of commercial dealings, this increase of quantity is soon discovered, and prices are increased in proportion. A similar effect takes place in transactions with foreign countries, according to the states of their respective currencies. The degraded currency of one country being balanced against the pure currency of another,



ther, an allowance is made for the degree of depreciation, an addition exactly equal to this amount is calculated upon all the debts of the former country, and the apparent increase of debts has a corresponding effect upon the rate of exchange which is no longer a just criterion of the relative state of the commercial transactions between the two countries.

Though the imports and exports should be precisely balanced, though the debts and credits should be equal, yet as the currencies differ in their intrinsic values, the exchange, though really at par, will appear to be unfavourable to that country, where the currency is degraded*."

It is by attending to the definition of the par of exchange, as above explained, that the whole difficulty of comprehending this subject is at once removed. It exposes the errors which have been fallen into by attributing the high exchange between Dublin and London to any balance debt due by Ireland to England, and it points out the manner in which an unfavourable exchange may be produced, notwithstanding every circumstance may apparently exist, which is calculated to give rise to a favourable one. It is in fact this distinction which has been taken between the effects of currency, and of a balance

* Lord King's Pamphlet, page 28.

of

of trade and remittances upon exchange, that places the cause, the consequences, and the remedy of it as existing between Dublin and London in its true light, and affords both in theory and in practice the most satisfactory proof of the impossibility of accounting for the very high rates of it by any other method than the depreciation of Bank paper.

The means by which the extent of the evil may be calculated, are the price of bullion as compared with the mint price of it; the discount on paper; and the state of exchange. What we have hitherto urged will be greatly supported, if upon examining these tests, the result should be a corresponding proof by each of nearly the same degree of depreciation.

The price of bullion becomes a criterion of the depreciation, as it is affected equally with the price of any other article. The mint price of it being of a certain established amount, it follows, that if the bullion price advances without the actual quantity of bullion brought to market throughout Europe having diminished, or the demand for it having increased—that the advance is nominal, and arises from the diminution in value of the currency with which it is purchased; and it therefore becomes a just measure of the depreciation of that currency. There is not the same opportunity in Ireland of investigating the prices of bullion



bullion at different periods, as there is in England, because there is not any regular return of its prices published there, as in Lloyd's List. It has however been ascertained, that the price of silver in Dublin has experienced an advance, having varied from 5*s.* 8*d.* to 6*s.* 8*d.* Irish currency per ounce, from which it may be inferred, that the increase is 17 per cent.

By the discount on paper, there appears to be a depreciation of 10 per cent *.

By the state of exchange between Dublin and London, there is reason to conclude that the depreciation of Irish currency compared with the currency of England, is at least 8 per cent. The exchange now being seldom under 14, and frequently 18, and even 19 per cent making 16½ about the average.

It is very evident that the rates of exchange fall very far short of explaining the exact depreciation of paper. The real balance of trade be-

* The discount has been objected to as a proof of this depreciation, upon the supposition that guineas have risen in value. If it is true that the prices of all commodities have risen, corresponding both as to the periods and the rates of their increase, with the periods and rates of increase in the value of guineas, no further explanation is necessary to prove that the real value of them is not risen. That the prices of all things have risen, and risen in the full proportion to the rise in the price of guineas, is matter of general notoriety.

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ing in favour of Ireland, justifies a belief that the depreciated currency has not only operated, so as to raise exchange 8 per cent above par, but also to counteract the natural tendency of our trade to produce an exchange two, three, or four per cent in our favour.

Nor is the rate of exchange between England and Ireland the exact measure of the depreciation for another reason; namely, that the paper currency of England is itself depreciated.

In resorting to the rates of exchange for evidence, an accurate idea of the depreciation can alone be formed by comparing the currency of Ireland with the currencies of those countries where specie still is current; and by examining the exchanges between Dublin and London, and between London and them*. Thus, if a Dublin merchant have to make a remittance to Hamburgh, and the exchange between London and Hamburgh is 8 per cent, as was the case in 1801, against London, and at the same time the exchange between Dublin and Lon-

* If the pound sterling, which is the English unit, shall be found any how changed, and if the variation it has met with be difficult to ascertain, because of a complication of circumstances, the best way to discover it will be, to compare the former and the present value of it with the money of other nations, which has suffered no variation.——This the course of exchange will perform with the greatest exactness.

Sir J. Stewart's Political Œconomy, V. 2, B. III, p. 110.

don



don is 8 per cent above par against Dublin; the tax upon the merchant will be 24½ per cent. This is not matter of mere speculation, but of absolute fact; not occasionally, but in a great measure permanently existing. For although the great stimulus which the peace gave to English commerce, produced a more favourable course of exchange with the continent, and the operation of remitting a loan borrowed in London, to Dublin, may occasionally render the Irish exchange more favourable, yet if the averages of exchanges between London and Hamburgh, and between Dublin and London, are taken for the last two or three years; and likewise the averages of the quantities of paper issued by the National Banks of England and Ireland, it will be found, first, that the state of the exchanges are permanently and uniformly unfavourable; and, secondly, that the rates of their increase, and variation from the original and usual rates have been most uniformly porportionate to the increasing issues of paper, and consequent depreciation of it. Had the Bank Directors of Ireland maintained the value of their paper, at the same time that the value of English paper was diminishing, the exchange between the two countries would have become in favour of Ireland; but the circumstances of both of them now prove, that the Directors of the Bank of Ireland have not only kept pace with the Di-



rectors

rectors of the Bank of England in the work of depreciation, but gone beyond them to a degree most truly astonishing and alarming.

As the trade of England with the Continent, since the restriction of payments in specie has been prosperous; as the trade of Ireland has been improving; as the rate of exchange between London and the Continent has varied from five per cent in favour of London to an exchange against London; and that of Dublin on London, from par to eight per cent against Dublin; the degree of variation in exchange, or in other words, of the depreciation of currency in comparison with that of the Continent, is at least 13 per cent *. This conclusion agrees with the conclusions, which arise from considering the mint and market prices of bullion, and the discount on paper; as the advance in the price of bullion makes a depreciation of at least 17 per cent, and the discount one of 10 per cent †.

It

* If the present rate of exchange between London and Hamburgh, and the mint and bullion prices of gold in London, can establish a depreciation in Bank of England paper of two per cent the rate of exchange between Dublin and London will prove a depreciation of 10 per cent in the value of Irish Bank paper.

† In estimating the degree of depreciation by such fluctuating means as those of exchange, prices of bullion, and prices of guineas, it is not to be expected, that the exact percentage



It is to be hoped, that when the subject is understood, the force of public opinion may be productive of some reformation; and that some plan may be adopted by the wisdom of Parliament, which may restore to Ireland a currency of steady and intrinsic value. That of imposing a limit upon the issues of the Bank appears in some measure advisable.

If a comparison be made between the amount of Bank of England paper, and that of Bank of Ireland paper in circulation, it will appear, that, in proportion to the state of trade in each country, the surplus of paper in Ireland is really excessive. It is £1,875,101 *, even on the supposition that the trade of Ireland, in consequence of the restriction of payments in specie, required the same proportional increase of paper as was necessary in England, and that the issues in England were increased 3. In order, therefore, to produce any good effect, this sum should be withdrawn from circulation. But if such a limit to the issue of paper were enacted, as would

centage will be the result. If they prove a depreciation differing only in amount three or four per cent, they prove sufficient to establish beyond a doubt what is endeavoured to be established. Each of them fully demonstrates, that a depreciation of 10 per cent has taken place in the value of Bank of Ireland paper, and by this concurrence of testimony they render this fact altogether incontrovertible.

* Vide note p. 5.



enforce

enforce this measure, it might be productive of most serious evils to the mercantile interest. The system of discounting adopted by the Bank has encouraged all men in business to trade much more beyond their capital, than they would otherwise have been able to do. It has certainly contributed to the establishment of private banks, and to induce them to extend their dealings to a very great degree. Might not, then, a sudden alteration in the accustomed method of making payments embarrass the whole operations of trade?

There is this dilemma, therefore, attending the enforcing of a positive limit, that if it do not withdraw from circulation as much paper as is productive of the depreciation, it will not operate as a remedy. And if it should suddenly take out of circulation this immense sum, it may be productive of still greater evils, by causing failures, and destroying credit and trade.—The measure, therefore, of fixing any precise limit to the quantity of paper, appears, from these considerations, to be of a nature too hazardous, to be applicable to produce a reformation in the state of the currency.

It is at the same time absolutely necessary, that some control should be placed upon the conduct of the Bank Directors. But before any particular measure of direct interference is adopted by the legislature, it might be advisable to try



try what effect would be produced by an inquiry into their proceedings, and the state of Irish currency, by a committee of both Houses of Parliament*. There is reason to suppose, that considerable advantages would arise from this investigation; for we have seen the Bank Directors of England, though equally tempted with those of Ireland by the powerful motives of self interest, so far resisting the temptation, and so far maintaining the value of their paper, as not to permit it to be subject to a discount; probably because they were obliged to come before the bar of the House of Commons, in every session, with a return of the amount of their notes in circulation.

The Bank Directors of Ireland were not called upon to make any returns to Parliament, before last session. They, no doubt, therefore, proceeded upon considerations of their own interests, in conducting the affairs of the Bank; very worthy men as members of society, possessed of as much individual probity, honour, and integrity, as any other men in the kingdom; but, most probably, fully convinced, that they discharged their public duty most correctly, and most ably, by taking every opportunity of promoting the interests, and

* The first Edition of this work was published near a month before the appointment of the Committee, which has contributed so much to elucidate the subject.

 increasing

increasing the profits, of the corporation which they represented. Had the slightest attention been applied to their conduct, which was given to that of the English Directors, they never could have overloaded the market, as they have done, with their paper. It would only have been necessary to compare, at the same periods, the issues of paper in both countries, and it would then have been evident to the most careless observer, that the issues of the Irish Bank were unjustifiable; and that they could not have proceeded from any other cause, than that of augmenting the profits of the Bank by a most unwarrantable system of discounting.

In further proof of the degraded state of Irish currency, there still remains a circumstance, namely, the currency of specie in a few counties in the North, which must be conclusive.

The result of the restrictions of cash payments in Ireland has been the disappearance of guineas throughout the whole country, these few counties alone excepted. It is not generally known, and it may appear in some degree difficult to explain the reason, why specie should have continued to form the currency of the North. It is to be observed, that the inhabitants of it at no period placed any confidence in bank paper, and being at the time of the first restriction in 1797 much dissatisfied with the established government, they considered it possible to embarrass it



it by refusing to receive bank paper for payments, and actually did so universally, notwithstanding the paper was then of equal value with the specie they required. The consequences of this determination prove how easy it would have been, to maintain a currency of specie throughout the whole empire, and how certain it is, that whenever trade is free, whatever particular commodity is required for carrying it on, will, under any circumstances, however unpropitious, be forthcoming in such quantities as are necessary to meet the demand. The resistance on the part of the weavers of the North to the receipt of payments in paper, encouraged the Landlords to require specie in payment of their rents, and thus a currency of specie has been maintained in the North pure and uncorrupted, whilst in every other part of Ireland the introduction of excessive quantities of paper has been productive of the greatest abuses, and the most serious consequences.

One most extraordinary circumstance has arisen from this peculiar state of the Northern circulation, namely, an established rate of exchange between Belfast and Dublin; not merely a rate which possibly might be the consequence of dealings upon bills of long credit, or of partial variations in the extent of their commercial intercourse, but steadily settled, even as

 high

high in some instances as 11½ per cent*. This circumstance, together with the practice of fixing a paper price and a cash price on all goods for sale in the North, amply corroborates every argument already made use of to prove the depreciation of paper, and also the effect of this depreciation upon the rates of exchange between Dublin and London.

It is easy to estimate some of the most striking consequences attending a currency of specie, of paper convertible into specie, or of paper issued to an excess not convertible into specie. For instance, if a Landlord in the North, previous to the restriction of cash payments, let 100 acres of land for 100 guineas per annum, and if a Landlord in the South did the same at that period, both of them would have received equal benefit, and exactly the same sum of money, because they both received their rents in specie, or what was of equal value, paper convertible into specie. The state of the case is now materially different; the Landlord of the North receives 100 guineas in specie, the Landlord of the South receives 100 guineas in Bank notes. If guineas bear a premium of 10 for every 100, the Landlord of the South does not receive from his 100 acres so much by 10 guineas, as is received from the 100

* See Appendix, No. IV.

acres



acres in the North.—If both Landlords sent their rents to Dublin, to purchase government stock, the Landlord receiving specie for his rents, would be able to buy stock to the amount of 10 guineas in each 100 guineas of rent, more than the Landlord could buy with his rents paid in Bank paper.

As the currency of the North may therefore be considered as supporting the former arguments made use of to demonstrate the degraded state of the paper currency; so does it also most clearly corroborate the position which has been laid down and proved, that this degradation is the cause and measure of the rates of exchange. For when the exchange from Dublin on London is 16¼ per cent, that of Belfast on London has been 5½, and of Belfast on Dublin 11¼ per cent. These were the exact rates in December 1803*, and are the usual rates now existing. We therefore have direct evidence of the rates of exchange of Belfast on Dublin, and on London, and of Dublin on London being so adjusted by the operations of currency, as exactly to maintain in favour of Belfast the superior value of a currency of specie, over the degraded currency of Dublin. In the South of Ireland, where bank notes are current, there exists a very unfavourable rate of exchange. In the North of

* See Appendix, No. IV.

Ireland,

Ireland, where bank notes are not current, this unfavourable rate of exchange entirely ceases.—These simple and obvious facts exhibit in one view the whole theory which this work has endeavoured to maintain, because it renders it incontrovertibly true, that the paper currency is depreciated, that this depreciation is the sole cause of the unfavourable state of exchange, and that the degree of it is not less than 10 per cent.

It is much to be wished, now that the Union of these countries has taken place, the same currency should be established in both; or what would be of the same effect, that the paper of the Irish National Bank should be convertible, on demand, into Bank of England paper. The difficulties, which are said to attend this plan, and are opposed to it, are, the distance of Dublin from London, and the loss which the Bank of Ireland would sustain in procuring Bank of England notes. The state of currency in Scotland shows the practicability of the plan, notwithstanding great distance; and proves that the paper of other banks may maintain the value of Bank of England paper, in a country where little or none of it is in circulation; and it is easy to be accounted for, by the facility with which the paper of the Scotch banks is converted into English bank notes. In respect to the second difficulty arising from the loss to be sustained by the Irish Bank in procuring English paper—it is to



to be observed, that this objection arises from the great issue of paper, and the high rate of exchange; and as this latter circumstance has been occasioned entirely by the Directors of the Bank, and been hitherto productive to the proprietors of very considerable profit, it may easily be done away; and even if it were possible that a loss should accrue, it is equitable, that they should sustain any which may be unavoidable in giving to their paper the credit and currency of Bank of England paper.

If this plan were adopted, it is not probable a very large quantity of English notes would ever come into circulation. In the same manner as in Scotland, a preference would be given to the paper of the country, because forgeries of that paper would be soon discovered; and, consequently, less risk attach to the receiving of it in payments. The only object of the plan being, to give to Irish Bank paper the value of that of England, by making the former convertible into the latter, not to introduce a certain regular quantity of English notes into circulation; it is not likely, that when that value was attained, much paper would, in reality, be converted into English notes, as all the large remittances to England would continue to be made by bills. Whatever quantity of English notes came over to Ireland, would be continually returning as remittances, and could not

not well become, considering the number of banks in Dublin, any considerable portion of the common circulation. No injury, therefore, is likely to result from this plan, either in consequence of an unavoidable increased issue of English paper, or from the practice of forgery.

Every objection that can be fairly suggested against this plan may be obviated, by giving sufficient time to the Irish Bank Directors to be prepared for carrying it into effect. For the superabundant quantity of paper being the cause of the high rates of exchange, and the power of withdrawing what is superfluous of it from circulation being possessed by the Directors, it clearly rests with them, whether they will permit these high rates to continue, or whether they will take measures for lowering them to that standard, which will enable them to obtain Bank of England notes, without any loss whatsoever. It is impossible, and a position altogether untenable, that the Bank can suffer a loss on this transaction, if they only adopt those precautionary arrangements, which they are fully competent to pursue. And it is evident, that, even admitting for the sake of argument, that there must be a loss, it would be merely temporary, and only to an extent sufficient to provide payment for some of the first remittances made under this plan, which remittances would soon cease to be made in English notes, because the very circumstance of



of making payments in them would take away the cause of an unfavourable exchange, by giving to the debts due by Ireland to England their true and real value. Thus, when the credit and value of English paper was attached to that of Ireland, the effect on public opinion would be such, as to produce an exchange at par. If it should afterwards happen, which is almost impossible, that the exchange should be against this country, it will arise from an excess of Bank paper being left or issued into circulation. But as this advance in exchange would immediately operate as a loss to the Bank in providing English notes, it is evident the Directors will never issue paper beyond such a limit as will maintain the exchange at par. This is the true limit which should be placed to their issues of paper. And it is only by adopting this plan, that any efficient, safe and equitable limit can be established, and the evil of a depreciated currency removed*.

In respect therefore, to this loss, which it is conjectured the Bank of Ireland would sustain, by making payments in English notes, it is only necessary to remark, that it so entirely depends upon the exchange; the exchange upon the currency of the country; and the currency upon the quantity of paper issued by the

* That is, so long as the restrictions continue.

Bank,

Bank, that, it is merely imaginary; and, in fact, no other than that which the Bank would suffer by limiting its discounts: in respect to the other point to be attended to in carrying this plan into execution, namely, the effect which the limiting of the discounts might have upon trade, it is clear that if the quantity of paper withdrawn is just of that amount, which is necessary to produce an exchange at par, no part of that, which is necessary to be left in circulation will be withdrawn, because only that part will be withdrawn, which was superfluous, and above the quantity which the demand of trade required. The depreciation and high rate of exchange being the effects of a superfluity of paper it will certainly be necessary for the Directors, to take care not to withdraw the superfluous paper too suddenly, and to produce during the period which may be allowed them for preparing to pay in English notes, such a gradual diminution of the quantity of paper in circulation as will give time to those persons in trade, who have been encouraged to speculate farther than their capitals would authorize, to be prepared also for the new state of exchange and currency.

The subject of Irish currency being now fully discussed, it remains only to bring into one view the consequences of the restriction of cash payments in Ireland, in order to point out the important duties which the members of the Irish Govern-



Government and of Parliament have to discharge.

The commercial dealings of nearly all Ireland being transacted by Bank paper, and the Bank of Ireland being by its capital, and the powers that have been vested in it by Parliament, the principal engine in the system which maintains the supply of circulation; it must necessarily form a considerable feature in exposing the effects of a depreciation of the value of that paper.

As Parliament, by relieving the bank of Ireland from the obligation to pay in specie, have taken away the only controul that can exist over its issues; as they have made the paper of the Bank of Ireland, in some instances, a lawful tender, as it has admitted of the payment in it of the taxes; as it has given to it so decided a superiority over the paper of other Banks, as that of placing private Bankers under the necessity of paying in it their own paper; and as the Bank of Ireland is the deposit of whatever money belongs to Government, the administration of its management must have great influence upon the state of trade, the credit and value of its own paper, the value of the currency of the country, and the state of the exchange. But however great its authority and enlarged its controul over the commercial world, by the nature of its first institution, inferior, indeed were its powers at that time

time in comparison with those attributes with which it is now invested by the restriction of cash payments. It is no longer under the necessity of filling the humble character of a cautious mercantile company, calculating the extent to which its dealings may be encreased according to the capital it possesses to give them security; nor regulating its proceedings by the apprehension of failure, or the hazard of commercial speculation; but in full possesion of an unconditional power of regulating the currency of the kingdom; of encreasing its profits at pleasure, by even making such issues of paper as may depreciate that currency; and of preventing or imposing upon the state those evils which must result from yielding to or resisting the temptation of gain. This power of issuing the medium of circulation, which, whilst specie was in circulation, was the immediate prerogative of the crown, is now wholly vested in the hands of the Bank directors. In the official character of these gentlemen a portion of the former duties of his Majesty's ministers is united with those of a trader, and their conduct must necessarily be at all times wavering between the instinct of mercantile gain and the duty they owe the public.

These are circumstances which were the immediate result of the restriction. Though of a nature not likely to produce a very correct management of the currency of Ireland, much injury might



might have been avoided, by upright and intelligent measures. Whether measures of this description have been adopted, the following review of the operations of the restriction will best explain.

We see in the short period of six years and eleven months, that currency depreciated in its value 10 per cent. The rate of Exchange between Dublin and London, during exactly the same period, advanced from an average below par to even 19 per cent against Dublin in its trade with England, and to 24 per cent in its trade with foreign countries. The issues of bank paper during the same precise period increased from 621,917*l.* to 2,911,628*l.* The landed property of the kingdom diminished in its annual value 10 per cent. The property of the widow, the annuitant, of every person deriving their means of living from fixed stipends, reduced in the same degree. A violation, in fact, effected, of all pecuniary contracts made previous to the restriction, and a further violation unavoidable of all that have been made since that period, whenever the restriction is removed. The prices of labour rose without making the poor man richer. The prices of the foreign materials of manufacture, and of foreign articles of prime necessity greatly augmented; the exertions of industry incumbered by heavy charges; and the profits of trade, the property of the landlord, the speculations

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of the farmer, were sometimes benefited, sometimes injured, at all times depending upon the free will and uncontrolled authority of the Bank Directors. We see them at their pleasure fixing the assize of property, and though a body unknown to the constitution, exhausting that property to a greater degree than the King, Lords, and Commons, to whom alone the constitution grants a power of interfering with the property of the subject, could exhaust it by the most oppressive taxes.

We are now to see what will be the conduct of Government and of Parliament. We may with reason expect attention to be paid to a subject of so great magnitude; and that such measures will be adopted, as will give the country the essential benefits of a steady and invariable currency. Though the circumstances of the times may not possibly admit of payments in specie, the vast importance of an intrinsic and fixed standard of currency, to the honour, to the justice, and to the prosperity of the country, calls upon the most vigorous exertions of those, in whom the charge and character of it is reposed, to relieve the country from a currency so notoriously degraded as the present.

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THE depreciation of Bank paper has been attributed to the excessive and uncontrouled issues of private banks.

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As no greater quantity of private bank paper can remain in circulation, than that which the demand of the neighbourhood requires, because the surplus would be returned, and converted into National Bank notes, it certainly appears difficult to discover the cause and progress of the increased quantity now so notoriously circulated. No improvement in the state of trade has taken place, of a sufficient extent to render it possible, that it originates from this cause. No new taxes have been lately imposed, and the payments of the Treasury being made in National Bank paper, there is no reason for supposing that either of these circumstances have contributed to it. The best explanation of the progress of these increased issues is contained in Mr. Malthus's Essay on Population; it accounts in the most satisfactory manner for the increased demand of private paper, the effect which this increased issue of it has produced upon prices, and of these prices to maintain the increased demand for paper, notwithstanding the original cause of the increase no longer exists. It will also contribute to show the utility of these private banks in times of emergency, and that it was the peculiar duty of the Directors of the Bank of Ireland to have limited their issues after the good effects of private issues had operated, in order to assist, by withdrawing from the circulation as much paper as possible, to lower prices, after the real cause

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of their increase ceased to exist, and maintain the value of paper currency. Mr. Malthus thus expresses his sentiments upon the subject:

"The paper issues of a country bank are, as I conceive, measured by the quantity of its notes which will remain in circulation; and this quantity is again measured, supposing a confidence to be established, by the sum of what is wanted to carry on all the money transactions of the neighbourhood. From the high price of provisions, all these transactions become more expensive. In the single article of the weekly payment of labourer's wages, including the parish allowances, it is evident, that a very great addition to the circulating medium would be wanted. Had the country banks attempted to issue the same quantity of paper without such a particular demand for it, they would have quickly been admonished of their errour, by its rapid and pressing return upon them; but at this time it was wanted for immediate and daily use, and was, therefore, eagerly absorbed into circulation.

"The very great issue of country bank paper, during the years 1800 and 1801, was evidently, therefore, in its origin, rather a consequence than a cause of the high price of provisions—but being once absorbed into circulation, it must necessarily affect the price of all commodities, and throw very great obstacles in the way of returning cheapness.

Corn



"In this respect, however, it is much better, that the great issue of paper should have come from the country banks, than from the Bank of England. During the restrictions of payment in specie, there is no possibility of forcing the Bank to retake its notes, when too abundant; but with regard to the country banks, as soon as their notes are not wanted in the circulation, they will be returned; and if the Bank of England notes be not increased, which they probably will not be, the whole circulating medium will thus be diminished*."

The same scarcity existed both in England and Ireland, and gave rise in both countries to a proportionate increase of private paper.

This great issue affected the prices of all commodities. The existence of these high prices has had the same operation in maintaining a demand for this great issue of private paper, which the scarcity originally had in producing it; and when these prices would have naturally fallen, upon the scarcity ceasing to exist, the great issue of paper, which was the effect of these prices, has become the cause of their remaining high. It was to be expected that the scarcity no longer existing, the increased issue of paper produced by it would have been returned to the Banks that made it.

* See Essay on Population, p. 403, 404.



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In England this appears to have been the case, or it is rather more probable, that the private bankers, imagining that the demand for their paper must, in the common course of things, cease with the high prices occasioned by the scarcity, very prudently limited the extent of their discounts. We are now to consider what circumstances have contributed to produce a different line of conduct on the part of private Bankers of Ireland. According to Mr. Malthus, "as soon as the notes of country bankers are not wanted in the circulation, they will be returned, and if the Bank of England notes be not increased, which they probably will not be, the whole circulating medium will thus be diminished." Mr. Malthus, in another part of his work, observes, that the issues of the Bank of England notes do not appear, by the returns made to Parliament, to have increased in consequence of the scarcity, and concludes the necessary augmentation of the circulating medium was provided by the country bankers. It is therefore very reasonable to infer, that the high prices in England ceased in a great measure with the scarcity, and did not maintain a demand for an unusual quantity of private paper. In the case of Ireland it will appear, by the returns made to Parliament, that in April, 1801, the issues of the National Bank had been advanced from 621,917*l.* (the amount in circulation, January



January 1797) to 2,266,471*l.*—which increase might have been in a great measure necessary, to meet the advance in the prices of all commodities. But as it appears by these returns, that the quantity of Bank of Ireland paper in circulation has been regularly increasing since 1801, and was, in 1803, 2,911,628*l.* and which the Bank "could not be forced to take back;" it is very evident, that whatever quantity of this paper was calculated to meet the demand of the augmented circulation occasioned by the scarcity, and remained in circulation after the scarcity was at an end, has contributed to maintain the high prices originally the effects of the scarcity, and thrown "a very great obstacle in the way of returning cheapness."—But this portion of paper, which would have been returned to the Bank, if it had been possible to do so, on the return of plentiful supplies of provision, has not only operated as an obstacle, by the mere sum of so many pounds, but has enabled private Bankers to maintain in circulation more of their paper, than the natural tendency of things to returning cheapness could have permitted. They had certainly the same reasons with the private bankers of England, to apprehend that a considerable portion of their paper would be returned to them, when provision became plenty, but the issues of the National Bank had contributed to maintain the high prices, and thereby maintain the

the demand for private paper; and they also enabled the private bankers to look forward without apprehension to a return of their notes, and the payment of them in National Bank paper; because they afforded so great a facility of acquiring it, by the extensive system of discounting pursued by the Directors.

In this manner the original cause of high prices may be traced to the scarcity, and the depreciation of paper currency to the neglect of the Directors in not withdrawing from circulation a portion of their paper, when the scarcity no longer existed. To this latter circumstance may the great issues of private paper be attributed, as the consequence, not as the cause of the depreciation of the currency. And by this investigation it will appear, that notwithstanding the Directors of the Bank of Ireland have not by law any control over the issue of private Bank paper, they in fact possess very powerful means of placing limits to it, by withdrawing their own paper from circulation, in limiting their own discounts. However great the powers of the Bank of England may be in regard to the issue of private paper, they can scarcely be of greater efficacy than the power possessed by the Bank of Ireland, of even taking from the private banker the means of fulfilling his engagements with his customers, namely, those notes



notes with which by law he must pay upon demand the paper which he issues*.

It is therefore evident from these considerations, that such arguments as have been advanced under the supposition, that the paper of private Banks has been productive of the depreciation, and that it is not under the control

* The force of this argument becomes greater by considering the effect produced upon trade and all commercial dealings by a deficiency of circulating medium. Seventy-one country Bankers stopped payment in 1793, according to Sir John Sinclair; (page 67 of his History of the Public Revenue;) Mr. Thornton says, (page 50,) "The success of the remedy which the Parliament administered, denotes what was the evil; a loan of Exchequer Bills was directed to be made to as many mercantile persons, giving proper security, as should apply; a remedy which proves, that the quantity of Bank of England notes in circulation was not sufficient for the state of trade and the state of the times. It is well known and universally admitted, that the difficulties which were felt in the commercial world in 1796, by private bankers and every other description of persons in business, and which produced the restrictions of cash payments, arose from a scarcity of money, either guineas or Bank paper. "This scarcity of money was easily accounted for, when the real state of the circulation of the Bank was explained to the public; it then appeared, that the average number of notes circulated Sept. 1795 was, 11,034,790*l.*, and in September 1796, only 9,720,440*l.*, making a difference in so short a period as one year, of 1,814,350*l.*, the want of which, considering the total sum circulated, must have been severely felt in the money market." Sir John Sinclair's Hist. Rev. page 311, vol. II.

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of the Directors of the Bank of Ireland, are not tenable; and it still remains for those, who will not admit the depreciation to be the result of the excessive issue of National Bank paper, to show, upon what grounds the Bank of Ireland is justifiable in increasing its issues of paper to near five times the quantity in circulation in the year 1797, whilst the increase which has taken place during the same period in the amount of Bank of England paper is not two thirds of the sum in circulation in 1797.

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IT is very generally believed, and very frequently asserted, that the remittances made from Ireland to England are the causes of the high rates of exchange. That this is an errour is easily proved, it being quite impossible that the interest on the Loans borrowed by Ireland in London, and the remittances made to absentees can be the principal causes of so high rates of exchange, or of so great a depreciation of currency.

The total amount of all sums sent annually to England from Ireland, under these heads, when compared with the whole export trade of Ireland, is so small, that it is clear the effect produced on exchange must be inconsiderable. It will be seen by examining the rates of exchange



change in the appendix, that these remittances did not produce an unfavourable exchange previous to the restrictions of cash payments in 1797, though they were at that time very considerable. That in the autumn of 1798, even during the rebellion, when it is known immense sums were remitted to England, exchange was at 8 and 8¼ per cent.

This point respecting the remittances is very easy of determination, by simply considering what the items are which compose them, as made from Ireland to England, and from England to Ireland. Since the year 1797, a Loan has been annually borrowed in London, varying in amount from 1,500,000*l.* to 3,000,000*l.** It is the practice to leave a portion of each new Loan in London to pay the interest due upon the former Loans, and therefore it is clear that no remittances have been actually made to England on account of interest. In respect to the remittances made to absentees, mortgagees, &c., even admitting for the sake of illustration, that they amount to twice the sum formerly computed, that is to 2,000,000*l.*, the balance of the Loan remaining after paying the interest due on former Loans, and the value of the balance of exports

* See Appendix, No. V.

ports in favour of Ireland will be sufficient to meet them.

The account between the two countries will stand thus for 1802:

| | |
|---|---|
| Remittances from Ireland for interest on 22,348,000*l.* being the capital created by Loans in England*, - | £.927,555 |
| Do. to absentees, - | 2,000,000 |
| | £,2,927,555 |
| Remittances from England to Ireland by the Loan for 1802, - | £.2,000,000 |
| Balance of exports in favour of Ireland above, | 996,858 |
| | £.2,996,858 |

It is evident therefore, that the balance of remittances cannot be the cause of the high rate of exchange, or the depreciation of paper, and it is manifest that the amount of interest payable by Ireland has been very much exaggerated, and the sums remitted to absentees very much *overrated* in a recent attempt to maintain, that the causes of the high rates of exchange and of the

* See Appendix, No. V.

depre-



depreciation are remittances made to England annually amounting to 4,500,000*l**.

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THE late occurrences in Dublin concerning the silver coin, add very considerable interest to the observations which have been made respecting the dangers to be apprehended from permitting the standard value of currency to become depreciated. The alarm which it occasioned in Dublin, by a total stagnation of business for three days, and the difficulties which still prevail, should operate as a warning to take measures in time for warding off the still greater alarm, and difficulties which would unavoidably attend a more extensive depreciation of paper. The silver coin

* See Political Register, p. 281; and Sir John Newport's speech.

Had it not been for the remittances from England to Ireland, of the Loans borrowed since 1797, the rates of exchange would have been much higher than they are. If this system of borrowing in England is not continued, and no measures are adopted either by Government or the Bank to prevent the depreciation of paper, the rates of exchange with London must soon be from 20 to 25 per cent; on the other hand, the continuance of this system will shortly produce effects upon exchange still more injurious than the remittances to absentees.

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of Ireland appears to have approached nearly the state of assignats in France immediately previous to their being altogether abolished. The debasement of it has been so tacitly acquiesced in by the public, and by Government, that the measure of depreciation has been filled, and no other remedy can be applied, than an immediate new coinage. The same acquiescence would produce inevitably the same consequences in regard to Bank paper. It is not, however, to be supposed that any such acquiescence will take place, now that the danger of it has been so clearly exemplified. But that the theory of the depreciation of paper currency having been so strongly supported by the fate of the debased silver coin, the danger of obliging the Bank of Ireland to pay their notes with those of the Bank of England, will not be considered so formidable as that of a more enlarged depreciation of Bank paper.

To attempt to reform the existing silver coin, will be labour in vain. If dollars only are issued, they will soon be fabricated into flat shillings. If coined shillings even are issued, they will also be melted, unless the issue of them is sufficiently great to render it practicable to call in the base coin. As a new coinage of silver might be effected without any loss to Government, by adopting such a seignorage as would defray the purchase money of the bullion, and the expense of stamping



ing, there does not appear any good reason why the trouble and exertion necessary for issuing it should be dispensed with. The price of silver bullion in Ireland being so much higher than it is in England, there is no danger of the new coin being remitted to England; and if it were made a practice with shop-keepers and public offices to weigh shillings, this circumstance, and a well-executed die on the coin, would completely put an end to the trade of making counterfeits *.

* The present appears a good opportunity for making the currency of Ireland in every respect similar to that of England. If, beside a new silver coinage, a coinage of copper was also adopted, and the value of it so settled, that 12 pence should be equal to a shilling, the great trouble and inconvenience attending the settling of accounts according to the present value of the copper coin would be removed. This plan should be attended with a regulation that all payments on instruments executed prior to the alteration, should be payable according to the usual coinage.

According to the Standard which has been adopted in Dublin for ascertaining the quality of a shilling, viz. its being equal in weight to a half guinea, which weighs 2 dwts. 16 grs. an oz. of silver, which costs 6*s.* 8*d.*, might be coined into seven shillings, and one six pence, which in Irish currency would be 8*s.* 1½*d.* Thus a profit of 1*s.* 5½*d.* would accrue to Government to defray the expense of coining an ounce of silver. But as this rate of seignorage would be too great, it will be found that silver at 6*s.* 8*d.* an ounce might be coined into six shillings per ounce, that each shilling would weigh 3 dwts. 6 grs. and that there will remain a seignorage of 2*d.* per oz.

THE

THE difficulty attending the question arising from the exertions of the linen merchants, to introduce the circulation of bank paper into the North of Ireland, appears to depend upon a distinction between payments made under contracts and agreements of some standing, or under those of the present day, or even of the moment of purchase *. Thus, if a tenant who executed his lease in 1796 pay his rent in Bank notes, he pays less by 10 per cent than the real rent reserved. If a tenant executed a lease in 1803, understanding that he was to pay his rent in Bank notes, as he would pay a rent in proportion to the advance which has taken place in the nominal value of land, and in the course of the ensuing year Bank notes became convertible into specie, he would then have to pay 10 per cent more than the real rent. Thus the great evil attending a depreciated currency is an actual violation of all money contracts. In the one case, the Landlord is the loser, in the other the Tenant; because they cannot increase their incomes in the same proportion in which the value of currency is diminished or increased. In all mercantile transactions the price affixed is the

* A General Meeting of Linen Merchants was held last November, at Dungannon, for the purpose of inducing the Landlords of the North to take bank papers in payment of their rents, in order that they might be relieved from the expense of purchasing guineas to pay the weavers.

real



real value of the commodity to be sold, compared to the value of that with which it is to be bought. If the manufacturer pay high wages to his weavers, he sells at a higher price to the shop-keeper, and the weaver pays a higher price for his food: and thus, if the linen merchant pay 10 per cent more for his linens in consequence of the depreciation of paper, he is repaid that 10 per cent, when he sells his linens in London, by the high rate of exchange against Dublin, produced by the same depreciation.

We cannot close these observations without adverting to the conduct of the Directors of the Bank of Ireland. To that only can be attributed the evils which are complained of; for though the restriction of cash payments may be the original cause, it must be admitted, that if it had been of a cautious and disinterested nature, no grounds of complaint could exist. It must have been at all times the principal object of the attention of the Directors to issue and keep in circulation as much of their paper as all their ingenuity and influence could render possible, because their profits arose from the discount on these issues. Whilst they were obliged to pay their notes in specie, a certain degree of caution was necessary in extending their discounts, and it was impossible for them to make their issues



excessive.

excessive. When this obligation to pay in specie was removed, they were at once relieved from a restraint, which they must always have considered as a great obstacle in the way of their interests. And it would appear from what has since taken place, that the liberty they acquired obliterated every sentiment of duty to the public, and gave vent only to such feelings and such measures as could only be the result of an inordinate thirst for gain. The depreciation of their paper cannot now be viewed in any other light than as a work of usury. The violation of every money contract in the kingdom has been of no weight in the scale when placed in competition with the 5 per cent to be made by accommodating the merchants of Dublin. Nor have these guardians of the commercial interests of Ireland permitted their measures to be influenced by the burthens imposed upon trade by the high rates of exchange. Though their proceedings may have arisen from a want of discrimination in comprehending the injury which might result to the public by a depreciation of the currency, and to themselves by being the source of a public calamity, it is however necessary for them to consider well the sentiments which are entertained respecting the credit and the utility of the bank. Should their rule of conduct continue similar to that which it has been, in defiance of the most correct and well founded arguments, and the clearest facts; and if they cannot discover a cause of



of the evils complained of, in an unfavourable balance of trade, in a supposed advance in the real value of guineas, or in the issues of private paper, the public certainly have a fair claim upon them, to explain upon what principles they proceed, and in what manner they can meet and subvert the reasoning of those persons, who have ascribed the depreciation to their misconduct. They must either adopt a new system of management, or prove that the value of Bank paper depends upon some other principle than that of the demand compared with the quantity in the market, and that the exchange between any two countries is regulated by some other circumstances than the balance of debts and credits, and the value of the currencies in each of them. The directors should remember, that their corporation was established as a measure of public utility; that it received many privileges from the public through parliament, and enjoys much of its profits from the species of banking monopoly which it possesses. When a charge therefore is brought against this institution of such a heedless exercise of its powers, as that of inundating the country with its paper; of diminishing the value of the greatest portion of the property of the country; of establishing a ruinous rate of exchange; and of bringing upon the state all the calamities attending a depreciated currency, it is full time for those who are interested in its future welfare to make an atonement to an injured public by some

 change

change in their system. It would be unreasonable in the Bank Proprietors to expect; it would be unjustifiable in Government and Parliament to permit a further trial of such a system of banking, if, after the consequences which have attended it, it be persisted in. To know that it is persisted in, it is only necessary to examine the amount of notes in circulation in February and November, 1803. It was not to be expected after the conduct of the Directors had been so severely censured in Parliament in the month of February, after the writings of Mr. Boyd, Sir Francis Baring, Mr. Thornton, and Lord King, had fully explained that a depreciation must necessarily result from an excessive issue of paper, that the increase in their issues should be no less in the short period between February and November, than 328,179l*. When it is also in the recollection of every one, that in the month of last December, an advertisement in the public papers announced a dividend of 7½ per cent, and a bonus of 5 per cent, upon the stock of the company †, who

* See Appendix, Nos. II, & III.

† BANK OF IRELAND.

A Dividend of 3¾ per cent will be made to the Proprietors of Bank Stock, for the half year ending the 25th instant, on and after the 2d of January next.

And a Bonus of 5 per cent will be paid at the same time to the said Proprietors. By order,

THOMAS WILLIAMS, Sec.

*Bank, 13th of Decr.* 1803.



who can say that the Bank of Ireland, incorporated by the public, and receiving from the public every benefit of monopoly, have fulfilled their duty?

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NOTWITHSTANDING the previous discussion has immediate reference only to the local circumstances of Irish currency and exchange, the result is of a nature which contributes much to explain the science of currencies in general, and to corroborate the opinions of those who maintain that the currency of England is depreciated.

The same mode of reasoning applied to the state of English Bank paper will afford a proof of improper issues of it being the cause of this depreciation, and of the unfavourable exchange between London and the continent; and this inference may be drawn from it, as applicable to both England and Ireland, that paper credit, now that Bank notes cannot be converted into specie, no longer possesses the essential and vital qualities which in the first instance secured to it the confidence of the public, and justly affixed to it the character of being the main pillar of the wealth of these realms.

Thus has the restriction of cash payments produced a complete revolution in the commercial opera-

operations of the British Empire, rendering the appearance of their prosperity delusive, and its future stability, should the restrictions be continued, highly problematical. Though salutary in the first instance in relieving the difficulties of the Bank; though it may be possible, that a currency of paper might exist of steady value, and also notwithstanding the renewal of cash payments may be thought a measure fraught with great difficulty, it would appear, now that the original cause of them no longer exists, they should have ceased with it.

It is agreed upon by most writers that the commercial difficulties of 1793 and 1796, the latter of which gave rise to the restriction, were the consequences of a circulation not sufficient to meet the demands of trade. The evil now complained of both in England and Ireland being a superabundant circulation, it is evident the policy of continuing them must rest upon circumstances entirely different from those which occasioned them. The ministerial argument in favour of their being continued is, that the exchange between London and the continent being against London, it must necessarily follow, if cash were issued by the Bank, that it would be immediately taken out of circulation and exported. That this would be the result, while exchange was unfavourable, it is not difficult to comprehend, or necessary to deny. But it is very evident from what has



has been before advanced respecting the plan of obliging the Bank of Ireland to pay in English notes, that the immediate consequence of the payments of cash by the Bank of England would be a favourable exchange with the continent; and it is more than probable, that the very determination to take off the restrictions would produce a favourable exchange even before cash was issued. For it is notorious, that the adopting merely of the plan in 1793 of making loans to merchants by exchequer bills relieved trade from its difficulties, before any loans were actually made.

If the reasoning advanced in this work be correct, and if the facts which have been stated be well authenticated, there evidently does not exist any good cause for continuing the restriction of cash payments. The disadvantages which must result from it are certain, the danger that may be the consequence of relinquishing it is merely conjectural: under such circumstances there should not be any hesitation, in removing without delay the origin of all the evils which are complained of, and are still to be apprehended.

# APPENDIX.

## No. 1.

*Tables of the Course of Exchange between Dublin and London, from* 1789 *inclusive.*

| | January. | February. | March. | April. | May. | June. | July. | August. | September. | October. | November. | December. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1789 | 8¼ | 9 | 9½ | 9¼ | 8¼ | 8 | 8½ | 8⅛ | 7⅛ | 8 | 8 | 8¼ |
| 1790 | 8¼ | 8⅜ | 8½ | 8¾ | 8¼ | 8½ | 8½ | 8⅞ | 8⅝ | 8 | 8¼ | 8½ |
| 1791 | 8¼ | 8⅜ | 8⅝ | 8¼ | 8⅝ | 8¼ | 8½ | 9 | 8½ | 9 | 8¼ | 8⅛ |
| 1792 | 8¾ | 8¾ | 8½ | 8¼ | 8⅛ | 8⅝ | 9 | 8⅞ | 8⅝ | 8¼ | 8½ | 8⅜ |
| 1793 | 8½ | 8¾ | 9½ | 9½ | 10⅞ | 10½ | 10½ | 10 | 9¼ | 9 | 8½ | 8⅝ |
| 1794 | 8½ | 9 | 8½ | 8 | 8⅜ | 8⅝ | 8⅝ | 8⅝ | 8⅝ | 8¼ | 8¼ | 8¼ |
| 1795 | 8⅝ | 8¼ | 8½ | 8¾ | 8½ | 8¼ | 8¾ | 8½ | 8⅝ | 8 | 8¼ | 8⅜ |
| 1796 | 8⅓ | 9¼ | 9 | 9½ | 9 | 10 | 9⅞ | 10¼ | 10¼* | 10¼ | 10¼ | 10¼ |
| 1797 £.621,917 of Irish bank notes in circulation | 10¼ | 8¾ | 6¼ | 6½ | 8½ | 8¼ | 7¾ | 7¾ | 7* | 7¼ | 7¼ | 7 |
| 1798 | 8⅝ | 9 | 9¼ | 9 | 9¼ | 9½ | 9¾ | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9¼ | 9¼ |
| 1799 | 10 | 9¾ | 9⅞ | 11 | 10 | 11¼ | 11¾ | 11⅝ | 11⅝ | 12 | 12½ | 14½ |
| 1800. | 13½ | 12¼ | 12 | 11¼ | 11¾ | 10¾ | 10¼ | 11¼ | 12¼ | 10⅛ | 10⅝ | 10½ |
| 1801 £. 2,266,471 of Irish bank notes in circulation | 11 | 12¼ | 12½ | 14 | 14 | 13½ | 16 | 14 | 16 | 13½ | 11 | 11 |
| 1802 £. 2,678,980 of Irish bank notes in circulation | 11½ | 12 | 12½ | 13 | 11¼ | 12½ | 12¾ | 11½ | 12¼ | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| 1803 £. 2,911,628 of Irish bank notes in circulation | 12 | 12⅞ | 13⅜ | 14¼ | 14¼ | 13½ | 14½ | 17 | 15½ | 17 | 15½ | 16¼ |

*N. B. The rates here stated are the averages in each month. In December,* 1803, *the exchange was at one time* 19 *per cent.*

* In September, 1797, exchange was as low as 6 per cent. It was in this year that the first Loan was borrowed for Ireland in England; and it appears to have been the cause of this unusual low rate. In September of this year there were £. 800,000 of the Loan to be received by the Irish Treasury, and as the sending of it into the market would have caused a still lower rate of exchange, and great loss would ensue to the public, an application was made to the Bank of Ireland in order to raise upon the English notes in which the Loan was paid, such a sum as was necessary for the usual treasury payments. The Directors would not be concerned with these notes, "further than was consistent with the good of the "public, by preventing the exchange from falling unnaturally low."

This circumstance is an additional proof of the operation of a depreciated currency upon exchange.

No.

No. 2.

*Account of Bank of Ireland Notes in Circulation at different Periods, (including Post Bills under £.5.) presented to the House of Lords, pursuant to an Order, dated February,* 1803.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1797, | January 1, | £621,917 |
| | April 1, | 737,268 |
| | June 1, | 808,612 |
| | September 1, | 959,999 |
| 1801, | April 1, | 2,266,471 |
| | May 1, | 2,405,214 |
| | June 1, | 2,350,012 |
| 1802, | June 1, | 2,678,980 |
| | August 1, | 2,628,958 |
| | Oct. 1, | 2,528,951 |
| | December 1, | 2,530,867 |
| 1803, | February 1, | 2,633,864 |

No. 3.

*An Account of the Amount of the Notes of the Bank of Ireland, in circulation (including Post Bills), on the 25th Day of each Month, from February to November inclusive, presented to the House of Lords, pursuant to an Order dated December 12th* 1803.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Feb. 25 | 2,583,448 | 11 | 9 |
| March 25 | 2,599,759 | 0 | 0½ |
| April 25 | 2,688,289 | 10 | 7 |
| May 25 | 2,722,401 | 6 | 11½ |
| June 25 | 2,567,202 | 10 | 4½ |
| July 25 | 2,855,801 | 18 | 5½ |
| August 25 | 2,919,736 | 1 | 10 |
| Sept. 25 | 2,752,370 | 0 | 2 |
| Octob. 25 | 2,803,364 | 8 | 5 |
| Novem. 25 | 2,911,628 | 4 | 1 |

No. 4.



No. 4.

*Exchange between Belfast and London, and Belfast and Dublin.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1803, June 1, | Belfast on London, | 8¾ | to 9, |
| | ——— on Dublin, | 5¾ | |
| July 1, | ——— on London, | 8¾ | |
| | ——— on Dublin, | 6 | |
| August 1, | ——— on London, | 8¾ | |
| | ——— on Dublin, | 7 | |
| Sept. 1, | ——— on London, | 7 | |
| | ——— on Dublin, | 11½ | |
| Oct. 1, | ——— on London, | 7½ | |
| | ——— on Dublin, | 8½ | |
| Nov. 1, | ——— on London, | 5½ | |
| | ——— on Dublin, | 11¼ | |
| Dec. 1, | ——— on London, | 5¾ | |
| | ——— on Dublin, | 11½ | |

No. 5.

*The Amount of Loans borrowed in Great Britain for the Service of Ireland.*

| Year. | Sums raised. | Capital created. | Interest, &c. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1797 | £1,500,000 | £2,925,000 | £126,775 |
| 1798 | 2,000,000 | 4,000,000 | 167,340 |
| 1799 | 3,000,000 | 5,250,000 | 212,314 |
| 1800 | 2,000,000 | 3,140,000 | 127,001 |
| 1801 | 2,500,000 | 4,393,750 | 188,000 |
| 1802 | 2,000,000 | 2,639,250 | 106,125 |
| | 13,000,000 | 22,348,000 | 927,555* |

* Sinclair's History Public Revenue, Vol. II. page 145.

No. 6.

No. 6.

*An estimate of the remittances to Absentees.*

Mr A. Young in the second part of his 2nd. vol. of the Tour in Ireland, has given a list of the Absentees, which he formed from the information he received in each county, during his tour, and with as much accuracy as the nature of the subject would admit.—It appears that the amount of rents payable to absentees, was in 1780 - - - - - £732,000

Deductions necessary, in order to show how much of this sum is at this time actually remitted to England.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Five per cent fees to Agents, &c. | £36,600 | |
| Two per cent quit rents - | 14,644 | |
| Sales to persons resident in Ireland | 50,000 | |
| Rents now paid of the above to do. | 60,000 | |
| Interest on money secured on the above to Irish Creditors ⅓ of the whole. - - | 90,275 | |
| | 251,519 | —251,519 |
| Actual remittance of Rents payable in 1780. | | £480,681 |

Additions to show what the actual remittances now are.

For net rents payable to new absentees since the Union, and remittances to members of Parliament, and remittances in general, in consequence of the Union and the rebellion, suppose - - 500,000

For interest on money secured on Irish property to English creditors, suppose 500,000

£.1,480,681



To be added to make the remittances for 1803, £.2,000,000, £.519,319, which sum is much more than sufficient to meet any deficiency in Mr. Young's estimate, and together with the £.1,000,000 added already, fully proves that the remittances do not amount to so large a sum as £.2,000,000, 519,319

£.2,000,000

No. 7.

*The following is an extract from the evidence given by Mr. Marshall, inspector of Irish Imports and Exports, to the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the state of the Currency in Ireland, &c *.*

"Thus we have received for our exports, for the year ending January, 1803, £.9,010,928, and paid for our Imports, £.7,194,868 which leaves consequently an actual balance in our favour of £.1,816,060.

"Do you state this sum of £.1,816,060 to be the whole of the real value of the Balance?

"I do, so far as results from the Imports and Exports returned to my Office, but to this should be added the value of such articles of Irish produce exported as are never returned to me, namely:—

"1st. The value of a considerable portion of the linen shipped for Chester, and I believe also for Bristol

* This extract was made from the manuscript, by permission of the chairman of the Committee.

and

and Liverpool, which is omitted to be entered for the purpose of evading the payment of small local duties exacted at those ports.

"2dly. The value of provision, &c. shipped by the Navy Agents in Ireland, for the use of his Majesty's Navy.

"3dly. The profits arising to Ireland from tons of shipping of Irish property.

"4thly. The value of the fresh provision, &c. purchased for the use of outward bound vessels, making upwards of 7000 voyages yearly from Ireland.

"The total value of these several articles, and of some others of less consequence, omitted to be returned to me, must amount yearly to a very considerable sum; but I have not at present the means of ascertaining it.

"It should be observed, however, that the import side of our statement is also defective, 1st, by the non-entry of smuggled goods, and 2dly, by the underrating sometimes of certain articles which are charged with duty according to their declared value."

This evidence is introduced here, as so clearly corroborating the opinion entertained throughout this work, that the balance of trade and pecuniary remittances is in favour of Ireland, and as also so completely subverting the positions of those who have maintained the opposite doctrine.

Bryer, Printer, Bridge Street, Blackfriars.



# ADDITIONAL APPENDIX.

The following Notes comprehend Extracts from the Evidence given to the Committee of the House of Commons, appointed to inquire into the State of Ireland, as to its circulating Paper, &c. They have been made with a View of showing the Nature of the Evil complained of, the Cause of it, and the appropriate Remedy.

NOTE I. p. 2.—*Depreciation of Irish Bank Paper.*

MR. Burrowes, Mr. Barnwell, Mr. Coningham, Mr. Roach, and Mr. Marshall agree in considering the premium on guineas, as proof of a depreciation of Bank paper.—P. 13, 43, 56, 88, 116, of Evidence.

Mr. Colville stated that "depreciation is entirely a relative term. The Irish Absentee feels it in purchasing a bill in London; in that relation he feels a depreciation of 10 per cent."—P. 143, Evid.

Mr. D'Olier. "The mere buying of gold at an advanced price, beyond that of the mint, is the effect, and not the cause of the exchange, and therefore no proof of the depreciation itself."—P. 105, Evid.

Mr. Irving. "I attribute the premium I have heard is paid on guineas to the disposition in its inhabitants, to hoard or conceal the precious metals."—P. 58, Evid.

Mr. Harman. "I should rather say, that gold was increased in value, than paper depreciated."—Ibid.

It is necessary only to make a few very short observations, to show that the opinions of these three last gentlemen cannot be maintained.

To admit the position of Mr. D'Olier, would be to subvert the whole system of that part of political science, which relates to exchanges and currencies. To assume for cause what is effect, and to expose the practice of the Banks of England and Ireland as useless in limiting their discounts, as

 they

they formerly did, when exchange became unfavourable, and it was necessary to vary its rates in order to prevent a drain of specie.

The Banks, before the restriction, found out, that whenever exchange was unfavourable, a considerable demand for specie ensued. To obviate this, they contracted the quantity of their paper, exchange became favourable, and the demand ceased. Their interests made them adopt this policy to save their guineas, their duty should have made them adopt it to preserve the value of the currency, and keep the exchange free from fluctuation. But they acted upon the rules of practice, not upon the principles of science, and therefore after the restriction, when they could be no longer affected by the demand for specie, whenever exchange became unfavourable, they no longer considered it necessary to contract the quantity of the paper, and thus the degree of depreciation and the rates of exchange advanced pari passu.

Mr. Irving's opinion that the premium on guineas is to be attributed to the hoarding of them cannot hold. The hoarding of guineas is one and the same thing, as it affects the currency, with the exporting of them. They are taken by both methods out of circulation; but unless such a quantity of paper was issued upon their being withdrawn, as was sufficient to supply their place, it is very evident they would soon return to supply the demand of trade, and therefore no such thing can exist as a premium for guineas either in consequence of their being hoarded or exported.

The opinion of Mr. Harman, that paper is not depreciated, but guineas advanced in value is already refuted in Note to P. 15. Mr. Marshall, in his evidence, says, "It is contended, that the value of Bank Notes is not depreciated, but has remained stationary: and that this difference of 10 or 12 per cent is occasioned by the rising of specie. Specie could not have risen so high in Ireland, or which is the same thing, all her commodities could not have fallen so low as 10 or 12 per cent, and have continued in that state for any considerable time, circumstanced as that country is with regard to Great Britain; because such a degree of cheapness of all commodities in Ireland would have attracted specie from Great Britain, where it is not risen materially, and reduced the value of it to the ordinary level."—P. 116. Evid.

NOTE II. P. 2.—*Cause of the Depreciation.*

THE evidence of Mr. Barnwell, Mr. Coningham, Mr. Roach, and Mr. Marshall, confirms the doctrine already advanced



vanced that the cause of the depreciation is an excessive issue of Bank paper.—Evid. P. 43. 55. 88. 117.

Mr. Puget stated that he did not think the Bank of Ireland paper excessive.—Evid. P. 3.

Mr. Burrowes. "The depreciation arises from withdrawing the common medium of circulation, guineas, and from the local situation of Ireland, that is, from her not making part of Great Britain, not having the same means of defence, and being exposed to internal rebellion. It arises from a want of confidence in Bank paper, not from any excessive issue: and this want of confidence from political causes, not from doubts of the solvency of the Bank of Ireland. The paper suffers a depreciation in common with all the property in the country, and is not influenced by the quantity within what may be deemed a fair proportion for the gold in the country."

"A disadvantageous balance of trade cannot be the cause of the depreciation."—Evid. P. 7. 10. 11. 14.

The evidence of Mr. Burrowes is deserving of attention; it accounts for the depreciation of paper as a necessary attendant upon a depreciation of property, the consequence of Ireland being exposed to foreign invasion and internal rebellion. Mr. Burrowes appears to consider fluctuations of politics as more intimately connected with fluctuations in currency, than the state of Ireland will authorize. If the property of the country were at any time in a precarious situation; if three years of war, three years of internal commotion could diminish its value, it would have been very much depreciated in December 1796. Yet the Bank paper of Ireland was not then depreciated; nor was it depreciated in 1798, the year of the Rebellion. Since this year, the country has been more safe from invasion or rebellion than during any former period; and though of late the prospect of being subject to these scourges has been greater than ever, the security both of persons and property has been increased in a much greater proportion, and no inconvenience or injury has yet been experienced in carrying forward the commerce, the manufactures, and the agriculture of the country; on the prosperity of which the property of the country certainly is depending.

It appears from the Appendix to the Evidence, that the amount of the imports and exports in the year ending 1804, was near ten millions; in 1803, eleven millions; in 1797 it was 8,900,000*l.* in 1796, 9,600,000*l.* in 1795, 8,800,000*l.* in in 1794, 7,800,000*l.* in the year ending 1793, the year before the commencement of the war, 9,000,000*l.* (See Appen. R. Evid.)

From these considerations it is very evident, that the property of Ireland is not diminished, and therefore that the opinion

nion of Mr. Burrowes, respecting the cause of the depreciation of Bank paper is not tenable. The only exception to be made to this conclusion is, the depreciation of the landed property, which is clearly the effect not the cause of the depreciation of paper. The cause of this depreciation must be sought for among other recent events than those affecting the security of Ireland; and as the principle upon which the excessive issue of paper is considered as a sufficient cause, is one upon which the value of every thing is regulated, viz. by the proportion between the quantity and the demand, it is evidently safe to coincide in the opinion of Messrs. Barnwell, Coningham, Roach, and Marshall.

NOTE III. P. 7.—*Cause of the high Rates of Exchange.*

THE object of the appointment of the Committee being the attainment of some efficient remedy for the unusual high rates of exchange between Dublin and London; the investigation of the cause of them has necessarily occupied a considerable portion of their attention. The persons examined are all perfectly conversant in the practice of exchange dealings, and have acquired very great estimation for them knowledge as experienced and enlightened merchants. The questions which were proposed carry with them evident marks of great knowledge in commercial polity, and of the impartial and unbiassed manner in which the proceedings of the Committee were conducted. It remains to examine how far the answers which were made contribute to unfold the true cause of the high rates of exchange.

The opinions, contained in the evidence, may be ranged under two heads. The one formed on the supposition that there is a debt annually incurred by an unfavourable balance of trade, remittances to Absentees, and to interest on loans, by Ireland to be paid to England. The other under the conviction that no such debt exists, and that even if it did, an excessive issue of paper could alone cause such high rates of exchange.

The solution of the question, therefore, respecting the cause of these rates, depends upon this one fact, whether or no the balance of trade and remittances is in favour of or against Ireland. Eight of the gentlemen have given it as their opinion, that the balance is against Ireland, and that it is the cause of the advance in the rates of exchange*. Mr. Burrowes,

* Mr. Puget. "I should suppose the rise in exchange arose from the balance debt being in favour of England."—Evidence, p. 2.

Mr. Harman. "The cause of the exchange is the same which has always operated, and will continue to operate, in the negociations between



rowes, Mr. Coningham, and Mr. Marshall are decidedly of opinion, that the balance is in favour of Ireland, and that the depreciation of Bank paper is the only cause of the unfavourable exchange. It is not attempted, by either of the eight gentlemen, to enter into the accounts, as they stand, between the two countries, to show in what manner the balance becomes against Ireland, farther than by stating the sums remitted to England in payments of interest on loans, and of rents to Absentees. They, for the most part, argue, that the existence of the unfavourable exchange proves the unfavourable balance. Mr. Marshall has given in evidence a very elaborate and minute account of the trade and items of pecuniary remittance between England and Ireland, which exhibits, in the clearest manner, the respective relations of both their debits and credits, and affords most convincing proof of the correctness of the positions advanced in this work, in regard to the operations of currency on exchange, and to the cause of the high rates of it.

The importance of this investigation is so great, that the insertion of the following long extract will, it is hoped, be excused. It is copied verbatim from the evidence of Mr. Marshall,

"You stated in your last examination, that you would lay an account of the pecuniary intercourse between England and between any two countries, when the balance of debt is against the one of them."—Ib. 27.

Mr. Winthrop. "I am persuaded the balance of trade is considerably in favour of Ireland." "If the sums of money remitted to the nobility and gentry, residing in England, amount to 2,000,000*l.* or half this sum, it would fully account, in my opinion, for the high rate of exchange."—Ib. 34.

Mr. Barnwell. "It is at present very high (the exchange) attributable to the demands of this country on Ireland, exceeding the demands of that country upon this."—Ib. 43.

Mr. Irving. "Judging from the state of exchange, I should be of opinion, that the balance of trade, or rather of payments, is in favour of England."—Ib. 60.

Mr. Roach. "I conceive them (the general balance of payments) against Ireland."—Ib. 89.

Mr. Colville. "I decidedly and clearly consider the unfavourable exchange to be, that Ireland owes a great deal more money to Great Britain than she is able to pay."—Ib. 141.

Mr. Beresford. "The considerable sums of money which we remit for the charges and interests of loans, and a number of other things, render the amount of payments, to be made by Ireland to England, considerably greater than what she has to receive from England."—Ib. 108.

Ireland,

Ireland, before the Committee; are you now prepared so to do? — Mr. Marshall. Yes, I will now state the account. The objects of it are to ascertain, first, whether the balance of debt has upon the whole been more or less favourable to Ireland in the six years which followed the suspension, than in the six years immediately preceding it; by balance of debt, I mean the balance on the entire pecuniary intercourse between the countries. The second object of this account is, to show whether the balance of debt has influenced the depreciation of the paper currency. With regard to the first object, there are no documents which ascertain, with any degree of certainty, the drains by smuggling, the remittances made to absentees, and many other matters; but all the difficulty which arises from the want of such documents may be removed, by assuming that the general balance of debt must have been favourable to Ireland at the period of the suspension, as the exchange in Dublin was then steadily favourable; because we are able to show whether the circumstances which have since arisen have had any, and what effect, upon the state of things assumed to have been favourable at that period. The general balance of debt may be divided into six heads; in the dividing of them, I will beg leave to state under each head, whatever new circumstances have arisen since the suspension. 1st head; the drains by the practice of smuggling; It does not appear, that smuggling has increased, though we were at peace during a part of the period, as far as can be judged from a statement, which I beg leave to submit to the Committee, of tobacco legally imported; tobacco being the principal article smuggled into Ireland. [Statement delivered in, and read.]—Appendix (Y).—2d head; the balance between the contribution of Ireland, and her expenditure for the public service at home; no remittances have actually been made hitherto from either country to the other on this head. 3d head; the drains by absentee-landlords, mortgagees, placemen, pensioners, &c. The drains which have been added since the suspension can scarcely have amounted to more than 500,000*l.* per annum. I beg leave to submit to the Committee a short statement on that subject. [Statement delivered in, and read.]—Appendix (Z.) By our having ceased to pay, since the Union, the six regiments on foreign stations, and to remit to England, ever since the suspension, the sum of 176,000*l.* per annum for the interest of the old debt to Great Britain, that debt being now deducted from the Irish loan raised in London, we may consider that half the additional drains above mentioned, of 500,000*l.* per annum, has been counterbalanced. 4th head; the balance of remittances on account of the sale of estates and funds, and of loans and lotteries; a larger sum than usual is said



said to have been remitted to England, on account of estates and funds sold in Ireland, but the excess probably has not amounted to 500,000*l.* or 600,000*l.* since the suspension; as to loans and lotteries, the balance is rather in favour of Ireland. 5th head; the balance of the imports and exports of Ireland, not only from and to Great Britain, but from and to the rest of the world, our foreign trade being paid for in general by bills on London; from the defectiveness of the official rates of value upon which our trade has been computed (except during the last five or six years) we are not able to exhibit our balances even with relative accuracy; but a pretty good idea may be acquired of the favourableness or unfavourableness of them, upon the whole, by running the eye over the quantities of the leading articles for any two periods.—Appendix (X.) An account, which I will deliver to the Committee in a day or two, is made out for that purpose; it contains the annual average quantities of the leading articles of the imports and exports, during the seven years ending 25th March 1796, and during the seven years ending 5th January 1803; but we must bear in mind that the exports have risen in value much more than the imports in the latter of the two periods; such a general inspection of this account will be satisfactory as to this point, namely, that upon the whole, notwithstanding the two years of scarcity, the result will not be more than a million, or a million and a half, against Ireland *. 6th head; the remittances from the British Treasury to the Irish Treasury, on account of loans raised for Ireland: the British Treasury deducts from the last loan the interest upon all former loans, and sends the remainder to Ireland; and (though it is a fact not generally attended to) not a single shilling of the interest upon these loans has ever left Ireland since the suspension. The actual sums remitted to Ireland during the six years ending the 5th January 1803, produced, as I have been informed, in Irish currency, about 8,000,000*l.* or 9,000,000*l.* and as no money was sent to Ireland on account of loans for many years prior to the suspension, the whole of this sum of 8,000,000*l.* or 9,000,000*l.* is to be added to the favourable side of the general balance of debt; from this statement, it appears, that no material alteration has taken place in any one of the two first heads; that the third head cannot possibly have drained Ireland in the six years which followed the suspension of more than 1,500,000*l.*; nor the fourth head of more than 500,000*l.* or 600,000*l.*; nor the fifth head of more than 1,500,000*l.*; and that under the sixth head the sum of about 8,000,000*l.* or 9,000,000*l.* has been actually remitted to Ireland, which is

* See page 80.

more

more than double the amount of all the drains above-mentioned, widely as they have been certainly estimated; and therefore, the balance of debt which was assumed to have been favourable to Ireland at the time of the suspension, has, since that event, been very considerably improved.

"Do you mean, upon the whole of your evidence, to give it as your decided opinion, that the general balance of debt between England and Ireland, including trade, remittances, and every pecuniary transaction, has been each year since the restriction on specie in favour of Ireland?—I do very clearly, except during the two years of scarcity; and upon the whole six years taken together, the general balance must have been considerably in favour of Ireland.

"Can you state particularly to the Committee the grounds upon which, in your opinion, the balance of trade ought to be computed between any two countries?—I will endeavour to do so; but before I proceed, I beg leave to observe, that the balance of trade has always been very vaguely defined. The difference between the "value of our imports and exports," leaves us in much uncertainty as to the place where they shall be valued; that is, whether on the wharfs of foreign countries, or on the wharfs at home; whether we should include the profits of the merchants, &c. &c. And it is owing, perhaps, to this vague definition, that, in computing the balance of trade in Great Britain, our writers upon the subject have been led to take the imports at the increased prices which they produced when sold upon the wharf of importation, exclusively of duty, as if Great Britain paid such prices to foreign countries; whereas she did not, generally speaking, pay so much as the prices upon the wharf by the amount of the inward freight, insurance, and merchants profit. And the exports also have been stated only at the prices current upon the wharf, exclusive of duty, though they were sent to foreign countries, charged not only with the duty, but also with the amount of freight, insurance, and the merchants profit; all of which came into Great Britain as well as the prices current upon the wharf.

"However, the prices current upon the wharf will serve as a good and safe foundation upon which the prices paid by the country may be computed; as will be shown hereafter in the case of Ireland.

"Every doubt as to what should be the component parts of the estimate of our imports and exports would be easily removed, were we to form in our minds a clear and precise notion of what we really mean by the balance of trade. In my humble opinion, it is, 'the difference between the value which a country *pays* for its imports, and *receives* for its exports.'



"Can you state the balance of the trade of Ireland for the year ending January 1803, upon these principles?—I can, the balance was 1,816,814*l.* according to the returns of exports and imports made to my office. In computing the balance of trade upon these principles, I begin with stating the value of the imports estimated upon our own wharfs, exclusively of duties, to have been 7,654,114*l.* As this estimate is the basis upon which it is intended to proceed, I own that very great pains must be taken by the Inspector General, in order to form it; which, however, a little practice will enable him to do with considerable accuracy. The prices current of all the leading articles should be ascertained at the end of every quarter, and the value of quantities calculated upon each of them; by dividing the total value of each article for the four quarters by the total quantity of it, very fair average rates may be obtained for the whole year. From the above sum of 7,654,114*l.* should be deducted,

"1st, The expense of inward freight: as we have few ships of Irish property, we are obliged, for the most part, to pay other countries for freight; and therefore no great reduction can be made on this head; Ireland, possesses however, about tons of shipping, which must save some money in freight, the amount of which may be pretty nearly estimated, as soon as I shall be able to procure some documents as to the destinations of ships and their respective cargoes, which the proper officer at the Custom-House is at present prevented from making out by a severe indisposition:

"2dly, The expenses of insuring: few insurances are made in Ireland, except upon coasting vessels, which do not enter into this statement of our external trade:

"3dly, The next deduction to be made is the profit of the merchant: the imports, as above stated, were worth 7,654,114*l.* exclusively of duties; of this sum, one fourth was either entered upon value, or computed from the ad valorem duties, in both which cases, the profit expected by the importers was not included; but the sum of 5,740,586*l.* being the remaining three fourths, includes the merchants profit, as the articles of which it is the value were computed upon the prices current, or, in other words, *upon the prices which the articles would sell for (exclusively of duties) on the wharf of importation.*

"In order to ascertain as well as circumstances will permit, the merchants profit upon these three fourths, or 5,740,586*l.* it should be considered, that a part of the articles of which that

that sum is the value has been sold here on English and foreign accounts as it is called, that is, on commission, for the benefit of persons not residing in Ireland; in this case, almost the only profit of our merchants arises from a commission of 2½ per cent upon the value of the article, including the duty, which last is a considerable portion of the whole value in rum, sugar, wine, &c. &c. &c. The commission in this case, when calculated upon the value as stated by the Inspector General, who always leaves out the duty, will, however, be augmented to 4 or 5 per cent nearly. In estimating the profit upon the articles thus circumstanced, as also upon those which are sold on Irish account taken together, much accuracy cannot be expected; I am informed by some of the most intelligent merchants of extensive dealings, that 8 per cent would probably be near the truth, and certainly within it. At all events, in calculating the average profit at that rate, upon the proportion of the imports which is valued at the prices current, and upon all the exports at the rates hereinafter mentioned, we cannot err to the extent of 200,000*l.* or 300,000*l.* a sum which is of the less consequence, when we consider that it is in this particular alone we meet with any great degree of uncertainty in valuing the trade of Ireland, as far as it is returned to the Inspector General.

"The merchants profit at 8 per cent upon the three fourths of the value of the imports came to 459,246*l.* which, being deducted from 7,654,114*l.* left 7,194,868*l.* being the value paid by Ireland for her imports.

"I come now to apply the same criterion to our exports, and to state what the country has *received* for them.

"Having ascertained their value upon the wharf (after deducting the bounties upon exports) to be precisely 8,571,412*l.* I must add to it,

"First, The duty, as the exports left Ireland charged with it; but the amount of duty upon exports is hardly worth our notice, being only about 11,000*l.*

"2dly, The next additions would be freights and insurances; but we have little to add on either of these heads at present, for the reasons above stated.

"3dly, The profit of the merchants: a very considerable proportion of our export trade is carried on by English and foreign merchants on their own accounts. Sometimes they send factors over to us to buy our linen, in which case it does not produce any more money to Ireland than its value upon the wharf, and the duty, if any. In many instances, the Irish merchant is employed by persons residing out of Ireland to ship our linen, provisions, and corn, for English and foreign markets, for which he receives only a commission of from 2½ to 5 per



5 per cent. Above three fourths of our linen are exported on English account. Under this circumstance, and taking into consideration the money which we pay for factorage in foreign markets, the rate of the merchants profit upon the whole of the exports ought to be estimated much lower than upon the imports; if it is averaged at 5 per cent upon the value of all the exports sold on English, Foreign, and Irish account, taken together, it will amount to 428,570*l.*

"These two sums which come to 439,570*l.* being added to the value of the exports upon the wharf of exportation, will make 9,010,982*l.* which is the value this country received for its exports.

"Thus we have received for our exports 9,010,982*l.* and paid for our imports 7,194,868*l.* which leaves, consequently, an actual balance in our favour of 1,816,114*l.*

"Do you state this sum of 1,816,114*l.* to be the whole of the real value of the balance?—I do, so far as results from the imports and exports returned to my office; but to this should be added, the value of such articles of Irish produce exported, as are never returned to me; namely,

"1st, The value of a considerable portion of the linen shipped for Chester, and, I believe, also for Bristol and Liverpool, which is omitted to be entered, for the purpose of evading the payment of small local duties exacted at those ports:

"2dly, The value of the provisions, &c. shipped by the navy agents in Ireland, for the use of His Majesty's navy:

"3dly, The profits arising to Ireland from tons of shipping of Irish property;

"4thly, The value of the fresh provisions, &c. purchased for the use of outward-bound vessels, making upwards of 7,000 voyages yearly from Ireland.

"The total value of these several articles, and of some others of less consequence omitted to be returned to me, must amount yearly to a very considerable sum; but I have not, at present, the means of ascertaining it. It should be observed, however, that the import-side of our statements is also defective, 1st, by the nonentry of smuggled goods; and 2dly, by the underrating, sometimes, of certain articles which are charged with duty according to their declared value."

In reviewing the arguments and facts which have been advanced on both sides, it is by no means difficult to determine to which of the two a preference should be given. The accurate enumeration of every circumstance by Mr. Marshall, which may affect the balance between the two countries, renders it evident, that any argument deduced from the supposition that it is unfavourable to Ireland, is erroneous; and that

that the high rates of exchange have been attributed, without sufficient reason, to this supposed balance. If any thing were wanting farther to illustrate the correctness of Mr. Marshall's conclusion, it would be afforded by an examination into the principles upon which large pecuniary remittances from a country operate on its export trade; and it would appear from such an examination, that these remittances from Ireland, instead of being causes of high rates of exchange, are direct causes of such an advanced export trade, as is commensurate to prevent every tendency of the remittances to advance the rates of exchange; and that the loans borrowed in England for the use of Ireland, though apparently of service in forming a balance of remittance between the two countries, are, in truth, of great injury to the export trade of Ireland, inasmuch as they provide a method for paying, without trouble, the annual remittances to absentees, which must otherwise be paid by, and would, in fact, be the direct cause of, an augmented export trade from Ireland.

Under all these different considerations, what has been advanced in this work respecting the real cause of the variation in the rates of exchange, may justly be said to have been stated upon good grounds, and that no circumstances have been advanced throughout the evidence which are calculated to disprove the theory upon which this variation is attributed to the depreciation of Bank paper.

NOTE IV. P. 26.—*Remedy of the Depreciation and high Rates of Exchange.*

IT appears from the evidence that one opinion only prevailed respecting the best remedy to be applied. The establishing a circulating medium common to both countries is this remedy. To effect it, Mr. Burrowes proposed a consolidation of the national Banks, which project is considered impracticable by Messrs. Puget, Harman, Winthrop, D'Olier, and Colville.* The

* Mr. Puget, "I conceive the measure almost impracticable, and it might, at periods, prove very prejudicial to the commercial interests of Ireland."—Evid. p. 21.

Mr. Harman. "As far as I am able to consider the consolidation, it does not appear to me practicable; nor do I see how the object could be attained by it."—Ib. 25.

Mr. Winthrop.—Question. "Do you think that if the paper of such consolidated Bank was to be current in each kingdom, that it would become a common circulating medium between the two?" "I do not," Ib. 31.

Mr. D'Olier. "I have certainly an opinion that it (the consolidation) will not answer any useful end, as to providing a common circulating medium. I know no practicablity of the consolidation of the two Banks; and I do not believe that it would meet with the approbation of the Proprietors or Directors of the Bank of Ireland."—Ib. 164.

Mr. Colville. "Such consolidation would, in no shape, answer the purpose for which it is intended, to create a circulating medium, common to both countries."—Ib. 144.



The most efficient means of attaining this common circulation, is pointed out by the evidence of Mr. Mansfield, a banker in Edinburgh, because they have been already resorted to; and in the case of Scotland were eminently successful.

The following is the substance of Mr. Mansfield's evidence.

After the peace of Versailles, exchange was 5 or 6 per cent against Scotland. The cause of it arose from artificial means, by people collecting gold from the different Banks, bringing it to London, and passing their bills at Edinburgh for the same. This lasted for a considerable time; it began to alter about 1770. The two chartered Banks of Scotland, seeing that exchange arose from artificial means, began to think of collecting as much funds as they could to bring to London of their own. Those funds they lodged partly with the Bank of England, and partly with their own Bankers; and the Banks then began to reduce the rate of exchange gradually, by beginning at, perhaps, half per cent, or one per cent, less in drawing on London than the common rate, till they reduced it to what it has since been.

At the time exchange was most against Scotland, the currency of Scotland was principally paper, and that to a greater extent than the natural trade of the country required. After May, 1766, the chartered Banks of Scotland finding that they had given imprudent credit to Bankers and their agents to issue notes, they curtailed them very much, and cut off the credits of the agents of the country Banks who held accounts with them. The unfavourable state of exchange commenced nearly at the time when these extraordinary credits were given, and the new Banks were instituted. The system of the chartered Banks contributed to diminish the too great extension of paper, which was composed partly of that of the old and new Banks. Mr. Mansfield said, "I certainly think that the over issue of paper was the cause of the high rate of exchange." No inconvenience arose from the change of the system, besides the temporary one of the Banks being obliged to provide funds in the first instance in London; on the contrary, it has been productive of the greatest good. The exchange was brought gradually to a fixed rate, and has contri-

nued at that rate ever since the Banks paid their notes by bills on London, at a fixed date.

Mr. Mansfield farther stated, that he thought the balance of trade and remittances was against Scotland, and that a mutual communication of trade might exist between the two countries, without creating any exchange at all.

This evidence of Mr. Mansfield's is of a nature particularly applicable to the state of Ireland. The evil complained of in Ireland is the same as was experienced in Scotland, an excess of paper. The effects, produced by it in Ireland, are the same as those which were the result of it in Scotland, viz. an unusual and fluctuating high rate of exchange. The remedy, therefore, which was successful in Scotland, is one that ought to be successful if applied to Ireland.

Mr. Irving's evidence coincides with this opinion. "I think a fund being invested in London, upon which the Bank of Ireland might, at all times, have it in their power to operate, would give them the ability of correcting fluctuations of exchange. The fund which would be most convenient to invest, I should consider to be Government securities of England, bearing interest, which, at all times, might be converted into cash, according to the demand; such as exchequer bills. I take it for granted, that there is a fund in England to be remitted to Ireland, which, in place of remitting, I would invest in the manner before stated."—Evid. p. 60.

The only difference in the state of Ireland from that of Scotland, when the chartered Banks first began to lower the exchange, is this, they had to form a fund in London, at a considerable expense and some risk; but the Bank of Ireland may have one to the amount of five millions without any expense or risk, if the loan for Ireland be invested, according to Mr. Irving's plan, in the Bank of England.

The operations of this plan require to be examined in two points of view, first, as to its efficacy in maintaining exchange at all times, at one steady rate; and, secondly, as to the effect it might produce in diminishing the quantity of paper in circulation in Ireland.

In regard to the first consideration, it would appear necessary, that the Bank of Ireland should be obliged to form a fund of their own in England, as an equivalent for the expense which will be saved to them by Government, in the first instance, permitting the loan to be at their disposal: for were it not made obligatory upon them to do so; and should the practice of making loans in England be discontinued, and the restriction of cash payments be further deemed unavoidable, it must necessarily follow that the exchange would again become fluctuating and disadvantageous. That any loss would attend the



the forming of such a fund in England is not either probable or possible, consistent with the fact of a balance of payments in favour of Ireland.

The evidence of Mr. Coningham corroborates this opinion. "This project (of obliging the Bank of Ireland to pay in Bank of England paper) would not much increase the Bank of England paper, my reason for thinking so is, that the people of Ireland would not have occasion to call for a great quantity of these notes; for I think the rate of exchange would instantly fall to such a price as would enable the remitters in Ireland to purchase bills of exchange on London on cheaper terms than they could procure the notes payable at the Bank of England."—Evid. p. 57.

The effect of this plan upon the quantity of paper in circulation, would certainly be an immediate and extensive diminution of it. The Bank of Ireland would no longer be in a situation, to issue paper to whatever extent they pleased; the power of converting their notes into bills at par on London, would afford as efficient a control over their issues, as the payment of their notes with specie. This control, as it would operate to limit their issues, so would it by that limitation operate as a control over the issues of private bank paper; and thus a complete remedy would be attained for the depreciated state of currency in Ireland, and the high rates of exchange between Dublin and London, so long as the paper of the Bank of England itself remains free from depreciation.

We cannot conclude without apologizing for the great length of this Appendix to so short a pamphlet. But when it is considered, that it was first published in the early part of last February, previous to any investigation in Parliament, and almost even mention, of the subject, it will not appear extraordinary that an attempt to examine into its nature, has been extremely difficult, and that any arranged course of proceeding with the investigation of it, has been frequently interrupted by the necessity of refuting the several arguments that have been advanced since the attention of the public has been bestowed on a similar inquiry. The author has the satisfaction of observing, that notwithstanding the theory he adopted was rejected, in the first instance, by the unanimous opinion of every person who had, or who had not, considered the subject in Ireland, and was since rejected and opposed by several of the most experienced gentlemen, who gave evidence to the Committee, that the correctness of it is most amply substantiated by the result of the exertions of the Committee.

* See page 28.

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The author has also the farther satisfaction of observing, that these exertions have been productive of such information as points out a safe and efficient remedy for the evils which have been experienced, and cannot close this work without bearing testimony of the great benefits which have already been derived from the active and persevering zeal of that able statesman who proposed, and conducted the proceedings of the Committee of Inquiry.

## APPENDIX (No. 11.)

*BALANCE of DEBT between the Two Countries, as far as it is necessary to make out the same, for the Purpose of the Statement which refers to it.*

| | YEARS. | Balance of Imports and Exports, computed at the Prices current upon the Wharfs at Home. | Remittances from the British Exchequer to the Irish Exchequer, for the Balance of Loans, computed only at Par. | Together, being the Balance of Debt |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | £. | £. | £. |
| To 25 March | 1798 | 1,371,382 | 1,251,098 | 2,622,480 |
| | 1799 | 218,066 | 852,046 | 1,070,112 |
| | 1800 | 2,271,170 | 1,919,996 | 251,174 |
| To 5 January | 1801 | 2,492,898 | 1,202,587 | 1,290,311 |
| | 1802 | 193,789 | 1,605,240 | 1,799,029 |
| | 1803 | 917,299 | 1,401,273 | 2,318,572 |

The Balances underlined are unfavourable.

### ERRATA.

Page 7, line 10, dele Parenthesis.
Page 34, line 1, dele "were."
Page 47, line 24, for 6*s.* 8*d.* read 6*s.* 6*d.*

Bryer, Printer, Bridewell Hospital, Bridge Street.