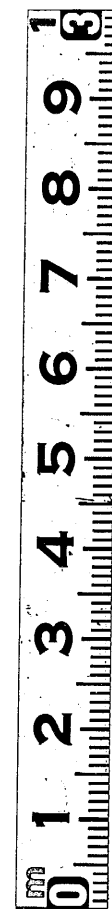


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P L E A  
FOR THE  
P O O R:  
OR  
R E M A R K S  
ON

The PRICE of PROVISIONS, and the PEASANT'S  
LABOUR:

The BOUNTIES allowed on the EXPORTATION of  
CORN, especially WHEAT:

WITH  
PROPOSALS for their EMENDATION.

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*—Tantique operis mercede negata.* OVID.

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By ROBERT APPLGARTH.

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T O  
ARTHUR YOUNG, Esq; F. R. S.

A U T H O R O F  
THE ANNALS OF AGRICULTURE;

T H I S P L E A

I S

WITH ALL RESPECT  
MOST HUMBL Y INSCRIBED.

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A P P L E A, &c.

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**T**HE Price of Provisions in this Kingdom for several Years last past, has been abundantly greater, than what it was on the Average betwixt the Years 1744 and 1755 inclusive.— Bread at this \* Time in London is at 15 *d.*  $\frac{1}{2}$  per Gallon, and Flour at 44 *s.* per Sack; but in 1744, Flour was at 18 *s.* per Sack only, and Bread in Proportion.—Now it happens commonly, that when Bread is at an high Price, every other Sort of Provisions follows after; agreeable to this coarse but significant Proverb among Farmers; that *when Corn is dear, Horn is dear.*— This may be accounted for *thus: Dearness and Scarcity* being for the most Part synonymous; when there is a *Scarcity* in any one *particular* Sort of Corn or Victuals; it may be said truly, that *there is a Scarcity in the General Mass;* and consequently, — *This General Mass in all its*  
 B Parts

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\* August 6th, 1790.

*Parts will be affected by it.*—As for Example: Suppose Wheat at 16 £. per Load, with only *half a Crop*; but at 8 £. with a *full Crop*: Now it will follow, that at 16 £. there can be but *One Half* as much *Bran* and *Fine Pollard* made from the Wheat throughout the Kingdom, as at 8 £.; and therefore such People as were wont to feed their Horses with *Bran*, must have Recourse to *Oats* as a *Substitute*; which will accordingly advance the Price of *Both*:—The Failure *too* of the *Fine Pollard*, would be felt in *Hogs* and *Bacon*.—But let us further imagine some pestilential Disorder, and consequent Mortality, to happen amongst our Sheep: *This* would not only advance the Price of *Mutton*; but of *Beef*, *Pork*, *Fish*, and *Poultry* also; perhaps *too* of *Cheese* and *Butter*.—And thus the Influence that the Price of One Sort of Corn or Provisions has upon Another, is clear and evident.

But though the Price of Provisions has been *thus* enhanced for many Years last past, beyond what it was formerly; yet, alas! the Wages of the poor Peasant have not been raised more than about *one Sixth*; that is to say, from one Shilling per Day, to fourteen Pence; so that the Case of this Sort of People, as well as of the Soldiery, is extremely piteous and deplorable, and

and calls aloud for Redress; especially as this Dearth of Provisions, is not the Effect of Shortness in the Crops of Wheat; as *These* have been good for several Years past; and if we except *that* of 1789 (which *too* was none of the worst), they were for four or five Years together next before, as great as ever have been remembered at any time in the last Forty: And yet Provisions are still at a Price remarkably high: And as *Dearth* and *Dirt* and *Starving* amongst the Poor, are frequently productive of Epidemic Disorders; what if we place that *Putrid Fever*, which has been so prevalent in the Nation of late Years, to this very Account?—*Dr. Buchan* in his *\* Domestic Medicine* says, “Fevers of a very bad Kind are often occasioned among Labourers, by *poor Living*.”—And here let the Rich consider, that what is *thus* generated in the *starved Cottage*, may reach *their gilded Palaces*.

Now as much hath been said lately, (and with great Propriety), in Favour of the African Slaves, in our West-India Islands; suppose, Reader, we were to say something in Behalf of *John Bull's Children*; (who are worthy of at least *some* notice);

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notice);

\* Page 48.

notice); and endeavour to shew the *real* Cause of their Calamities, and point out a Remedy; in part at least? Which I therefore humbly attempt.

For many Years last past, the Legislature, sanctioned by Parliament, has granted a Bounty of 5*s.* per Quarter, the Exchequer Measure, on all Wheat exported from this Kingdom into foreign Parts, whilst it is under 44*s.* per Quarter in the Port from whence it is shipped.—So that if the Price shall average but the veriest Trifle under 44*s.* (and the Port not open at the same Time for Importation), the Bounty is paid to the Shipper; though it must be acknowledged, that by a late Act of Parliament, no Bounty at any Price whatever is to be paid, just at this Time; nor will be probably, till after February 28th next; the Ports being absolutely shut, for the present, against all Exportation.

But after that Time, this Bounty will again take Place as formerly; unless again suspended by another temporary Act.—Now the mistake, methinks, lies principally here;

*The granting the Bounty on the Exportation of Wheat, at very high Prices; but especially whilst it*

*it is at so exorbitant a One as 43*s.* 11*d.*  $\frac{3}{4}$  per Quarter, the eight Gallon Measure;—Because this Price bespeaks Bread at twelve Pence the Gallon Loaf at least.*

It was the allowing this Bounty on high Prices in the Autumnal Quarter of 1788, during the late Famine in France and other Parts of the Continent, that has occasioned that Dearth of Bread principally, which we have felt ever since; and to similar Causes, the same Calamity, for several Years before.

Now 44*s.* per Quarter eight Gallon Measure; is exactly 12*£.* 7*s.* 6*d.* per Load, the nine Gallon Measure: But let any unprejudiced Person judge, whether or no it be not high Time to think of a Scarcity, as impending; when Wheat is even at no more than 40*s.* the Quarter, or 11*£.* 5*s.* per Load; and Bread at 11*d.* per Gallon: For it is a short *ex tempore* Mode of Reasoning amongst Millers and Mealmen, and very rarely erroneous, that as many *Pounds* as the \* Load of Wheat costs, so many *Pence* the Gallon Loaf should be sold for.

#### A Bounty

\* The Load, nine Gallon Measure, is the common Method by which Wheat is sold, in most of the principal Corn Counties;

A Bounty on all Grain exported at certain Seasons, is both prudent and politic. (1) To counterbalance the Land-Tax; and (2) the Poor-Rates: (3) For the Advancement of Agriculture: And (4) and *Lastly*; for the Encouragement of Trade and Navigation; especially the Latter; for Corn is a bulky Commodity, and affords much Freightage; and were this Trade to be generally lost; we must lose of our Seamen and Shipwrights proportionably.

Yet there seems to appear less Reason for a Bounty *now* than formerly; as we have at present, if I mistake not, a much larger Consumption at Home, in consequence of the Nation being more populous; to which Circumstance, that most excellent Art, *Inoculation of the Small Pox*, has contributed not a little.—Within these last 40 Years, I think it must have saved the Lives of numberless People; for there is scarcely a decent Family in the Kingdom, where one Half of it, at least, has not been inoculated.—Before this Invention, it was by no means uncommon, for this dreadful Distemper, when it broke out in a Town or Village, to carry off a considerable  
Part

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Counties; and it is exactly 45 Bushels the Exchequer or Standard Measure.

Part of its Inhabitants, before it left the Place:—And besides *Inoculation*; such as take it now-a-days in the natural Way, are more skillfully treated, and oftner saved than formerly: And Many of those who were rescued from the Grave by this Art, thirty or forty Years ago; have had Children since, who have again been inoculated and spared, and added to the Number of our Inhabitants.

But let any reasonable Man consider, how the Peasant with a Wife and Family can possibly subsist, with Bread at twelve Pence the Gallon, when his general Earnings are only fourteen Pence per Day:—The Case of the poor Soldier *too* is nearly as hard:—Indeed, I mention twelve Pence the Gallon only; though Bread at this Time is considerably dearer in most Parts of the Kingdom.

And this, I judge, to arise (as hath been already observed) from giving the Bounty on the Exportation of Wheat, at the high Prices abovementioned: For if 5*s.* per Quarter be a *sufficient Bounty*, when Wheat is at *no more* than 20*s.* per Quarter; certainly it must be *too much* when at 43*s.* 11*d.*  $\frac{3}{4}$ .—Or if it be not *too much* when Wheat is at the last mentioned Price, it must be

*too*

*too little* at 20*s.* per Quarter.—For who would not wish to see it at a more even Price?—Never at 20*s.* per Quarter; for that would almost ruin the Farmer: Nor at 43*s.* 11*d.*  $\frac{3}{4}$ ; because *That* starves the Poor; and injures all the middling Housekeepers, by laying the Foundation, frequently, of Insolvency and Beggary amongst them.

It is therefore with Submission to the Publick, that I offer the following Plan, by Way of Emendation. *Viz.*

That there should be a Bounty allowed,

Of 10*s.* per Quarter on the Exportation of Wheat, when the Price is under 20*s.* per Quarter:

Of 7*s.* 6*d.* per Quarter, when at 20*s.* and upwards; but under 26*s.*

Of 5*s.* per Quarter, when at 26*s.* and upwards; but under 32*s.*

Of 2*s.* 6*d.* per Quarter, when at 32*s.* and upwards; but under 38*s.*

With

With Liberty to export without any Bounty at all, when at 38*s.* and upwards; but under 40*s.*

And Liberty to export, paying six Pence per Quarter Duty, when at 40*s.* and upwards; but under 44*s.*

At 44*s.* and upwards, the Ex-  
portation to be prohibited;

And at 48*s.* the Ports to be  
opened for Importation at the low  
Duty;

*as is at present the Case.*

Now it is easy to perceive, that on the above Plan, or some One nearly similar; the Price of Wheat would be kept more even: Seldom remarkably *high*, excepting in the Case of a *real* Failure in the Crop; and as seldom remarkably *low*; for I think the Bounty of 10*s.* per Quarter, would be to be paid but rarely; as that of 7*s.* 6*d.* at the Prices above stated, would supersede it; by preventing Wheat from sinking below 20*s.* per Quarter: And as rarely should we need an Importation; (unless in Case of a Failure); which would save immense Sums to the Nation.

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I have

I have known the Price in Hampshire (about the Year 1744) *even* below 20*s.* per Quarter, for a considerable Time together; notwithstanding the Bounty of 5*s.* was allowed at the same Time.—Had it been 10*s.* instead of 5*s.* agreeable to my Plan; Wheat would have advanced: But 5*s.* (I have been credibly informed) was insufficient for the Purpose; as there was no foreign market, at which it could be sold, to make it answer at that Bounty.

But lest this Scheme should be thought to bear too hard on the landed Interest; I beg Leave to propose, by Way of Compensation; that whereas the Bounty allowed on the Exportation of Barley, is at present but 2*s.* 6*d.* per Quarter; *This* should be advanced to 3*s.* 6*d.* Rye from 3*s.* to 4*s.*: Oats from 2*s.* to 3*s.*: And Something might be done to favour the Exportation of Beer; perhaps by giving a Bounty on the (*supposed*) Quantity of Barley, &c. from whence it was made: And because there is at present no Bounty at all on Beans and Grey Pease; I would further propose, that these Articles, under certain Prices, should also receive it; the Beans 5*s.* per Quarter (whether whole or split), and the Grey Pease 4*s.*: But Those of the boiling Sort I pass over; as they are wanted at Home to vic-  
tual

tual our Shipping.—And as this proposed Increase in the Bounty on the other Sorts of Grain, may be thought scarcely adequate to the Alteration of *that* on the Wheat, and the consequent Reduction of its Price; I therefore desire the Reader to recollect, that in the Introduction to this Pamphlet, I demonstrated, that generally when Bread is dear; most other Sorts of Provisions are proportionably so: or in other Terms, that they keep Pace together for Dearness and Cheapness.—Now as this is the Case; let us suppose Some Landholder's Table to cost him 400*£.* per annum, when Wheat is at 12*£.* per Load, and Bread at 12*d.* the Gallon: It will follow, that if Wheat were at 9*£.* per Load, and Bread at 9*d.* the Gallon; the same Person would be able to keep as good a Table for 300*£.* as he did before for *Four*; and thus save *One*: And is not this an Object worthy of Attention?—The Farmer in his Household Expences *too* would make a similar Saving; and his Poor-Rates be lowered.—Every Housekeeper in the Kingdom would be eased by it; and the Poor Man's Cottage smile with Peace and Plenty.—Add to these happy Circumstances; that the Nation at large would be better able to bear Taxation in Case of a War; seeing Taxes agree best with Plenty and Cheapness.



And to prevent any Difficulties which might arise, in settling the Average-Prices from Time to Time, of Wheat and every other Sort of Grain in the Markets; I beg leave further to offer, that *Mark-Lane Market in London, should be the SOLE Guide to the whole Kingdom, in every Thing relative to these Matters.*

Because, in this Market, the Average-Prices are regulated with the greatest Care and Exactness, beyond what they possibly can be in the Country; where there are frequent mistakes, and sometimes Juggling, of which I have known Instances.

I am aware, that this Method was proposed to Parliament, some few Years ago; but resisted by the Merchants, Millers, and Others, of some of the Maritime Counties; alledging, that it would be giving the Merchants of London the Advantage over them, with respect to Intelligence, and consequent Foresight.—But to prevent this Obstacle, I would propose further, that the Printer of every New's Paper in London, should be obliged by Law, to recite in it, the Returns of the the Prices of different Sorts of Grain, as early as possible, after their Appearance in the Gazette; not as an Advertisement, but by way  
of

publick Information. And if the Provincial News-Writers were to be obliged in like Manner; it would be an Amendment.

And because oftentimes an unavoidable Error arises in the Average of Wheat particularly; what if this Article were generally to be sold by *Weight* instead of Measure?—In London, however, if no where else?—For it now frequently happens, that the Wheat proper for Mealing shall advance in Price, whilst the low Prices of the ordinary Sorts, perhaps damaged, and fit only for Starch and Biscuiting, being added to the Prices of the Good; the Average of the Whole appears cheaper; whereas in fact the Market was dearer; And thus the Port is opened for Exportation with the Bounty, when it ought to be shut; and the Affize of Bread set erroneously. Seventy Pounds Avoirdupoise per Bushel would, I conceive, be a suitable Standard Weight; leaving the Agents of Government nevertheless, to purchase in such Manner, for the Use of the Publick, as they might think most proper. In Ireland all Sorts of Grain, and even Malt, are sold by Weight; and I believe the same Method is generally used at Liverpool; for Wheat, at least, I am certain it is: In Essex too this Article

ticle is fold by Weight; or in other Terms at 66 lb.  $\frac{1}{2}$  per Bushel.

But it would not be needful that this Regulation should extend to Wheat when removed from one Port or Place to another, whether by Barges, Shipping, or otherwise: *This* might be conducted by Measure, as well for Exportation as Importation, according to the Mode now in Use. —I propose Weight *only* as the Standard, in case of an *actual Transfer*, betwixt Buyer and Seller.

*In fine*, had the above Plan *generally*, or Some One similar been established in this Kingdom formerly, instead of *That* now in Force amongst us; I have no Doubt but Bread would have been much cheaper than it has been for a long Time past, and by Analogy, most other Sorts of Provision; with little or no Detriment to the landed Interest; and greatly to the Comfort and Happiness of many Thousands of Families, especially of the lower Orders of the People: And I hope these Proposals, therefore, may be considered, as meriting the Attention of the Publick.

T H E E N D.

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