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A
 WORD FOR THE POOR:
 OR,
 GENERAL THOUGHTS,
 CANDIDLY SUBMITTED TO THE GOOD SENSE, DISCERNMENT, AND
 PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION, OF THE
 BRITISH PUBLIC,
 ON THE
 LATE SCANTY HARVEST,
 AND THE
 DREARY PROSPECT OF A HARD WINTER,
 &c. &c. &c.

By A TRUE LOVER OF HIS COUNTRY.

“ A Word spoken in due Season, how good is it ? ” — Proverbs.

PRINTED BY H. L. GALABIN, INGRAM-COURT, LONDON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

SINCE the following sheets were given to the Press, the Author has had the satisfaction of perusing the BISHOP OF DURHAM's Circular Letter to the magistrates of that county, in which his Lordship's reasonings chiefly proceed upon the assumption of an actual scarcity. Under this impression, the remarks contained in it are truly valuable, and worthy of the eminent Prelate's exalted character for pure patriotism, and enlarged and well-regulated philanthropy.—The Author of this Tract has ventured to proceed on other grounds, and (as he is induced to believe) not without pretty good authority. His arguments, therefore, have naturally taken a different turn.

A
WORD FOR THE POOR:

OR,

GENERAL THOUGHTS,

CANDIDLY SUBMITTED TO THE GOOD SENSE, DISCERNMENT, AND
PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION, OF THE

BRITISH PUBLIC,

ON THE

LATE SCANTY HARVEST,

AND THE

DREARY PROSPECT OF A HARD WINTER.

INTERSPERSED,

Are a few homely, but wholesome, Hints (if rightly taken) to all deep
Speculators, and greedy Monopolists, whether Farmers or
Cornfactors, Usurious Contractors, Forestallers,
Engrossers, or Regraters.

WITH A

GLANCE AT LEVELLERS,

AND A

PARTING WORD OF ADMONITION TO THE POOR.

BY A TRUE LOVER OF HIS COUNTRY.

“ A Word spoken in due Season, how good is it ? ” — Proverbs.

LONDON:

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1799.

[Price One Shilling.]

To those whom it may Concern.

Forestalling, Engrossing, and Regrating.

“ *WHOSOEVER shall buy, or cause to be bought, any victual, or any other thing whatsoever, coming by land or by water toward any market or fair, to be sold in the same, or coming toward any city, &c. &c. from any parts beyond the sea, to be sold; or make any bargain, contract, or promise, for the having or buying the same, or any part thereof, so coming as aforesaid, before the said victuals, &c. shall be in the market, &c. ready to be sold; or shall make any motion by word, letter, message, or otherwise, to any person for the enhancing of the price, or dearer selling, of any thing above-mentioned; or else dissuade, move, or stir, any person, coming to the market or fair, to abstain or forbear to bring or convey any of the things above-rehearsed to any market or fair, &c. &c. to be sold, as aforesaid; shall be deemed a forestaller.*

“ *Whosoever shall engross, or get into his hands, by buying, contracting, or promise-taking, other than by demise, grant, or lease of land, or tithe, any corn growing in the fields, or any other corn or grain, &c. &c. or other dead victuals whatsoever, to the intent to sell the same again, shall be deemed an unlawful engrosser.*

“ *And whosoever shall by any means regrate, obtain, or get into his hands or possession, in a fair or market, any corn, &c. &c. &c. or other dead victual whatsoever, that shall be brought to any fair or market to be sold, and do sell the same again in any fair or market holden or kept in the same place, or in any other fair or market within four miles thereof, shall be deemed a regrater.”*

“ *These offences are punishable, upon indictment at the common law, by fine and imprisonment.”*

BURN.

A
WORD FOR THE POOR:

OR,

GENERAL THOUGHTS, &c.

FRIENDS and COUNTRYMEN,

I HAVE never been able to read or reflect upon that sentence in the Book of Proverbs, — “He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him,” — without the most lively emotions of resentment and indignation: and, did not experience unhappily convince us of the certainty of its existence, it would be difficult to believe, that a crime of so unfeeling a nature as that of speculating to the detriment of all, but with the most oppressive consequences to the poor, could ever have obtained a place in the human breast.

I know not, whether the thoughts I am about to submit to your consideration would have appeared precisely at this, or indeed at any subsequent, period, had not my attention been accidentally at-

starving his own flesh also, our resentment, it must be confessed, is ready in some degree to give place to pity and commiseration.

But this is not precisely the man under consideration. The character we are contemplating, so far from denying himself a moderate share of the good things in his possession, though he refuse every thing to another, may yet be even profuse and extravagant in his own personal gratifications. Nor does the humane and enlightened monarch, in the pursuit of his object, rest here. He glances at a kind of selfishness and injustice, which they who are inclined to think more favourably of former times than of the present, might otherwise have supposed never antecedently to have existed.

There were, it appears from the writings of Solomon, amidst all the vast riches and abundance of his prosperous reign, men, *even in those days*, who, with more than brutal savageness, preyed on their fellow-men; who, in other words, but precisely to the same purport, indulged their voracious appetites, whether of sensuality or covetousness, of grain or gain, without any regard to the wants and sufferings of their poor neighbours; in the strong language of the royal Psalmist, "eating up God's people as it were bread." In Solomon's days, it should seem, there were overgrown farmers (for instance) ready, we may suppose, to take advantage of an unfavourable season, and to conspire together for the diabolical purpose of creating

ating a factitious dearth, by shutting up in their barns the produce of the fruits of their grounds, and withholding it from the public market, till the appearance and dread of scarcity should have augmented its value, and enhanced its price. And there may also have been, in the days of Solomon, greedy corn-factors, of dispositions equally cruel and unfeeling; and an imposing crew of forestallers, engrossers, and regraters; — those *middle men*, whose interferences, like the cruel mercies of the wicked, magnify the evils which they ought to remedy, or lessen; who, in their eager pursuit of gain, realize in all their conduct the fabled insatiableness of ravenous harpies. — Yes, these and such like detestable characters were found, for aught that appears to the contrary, in Solomon's days; all linked and leagued together for the most criminal purposes, beating God's people to pieces, and grinding, without shame or compunction, the faces of the poor. Beings of this class, when and wheresoever they have existed, or continue to exist, have been, are, and ever will be, reprobated among men; their persons shall be for ever held in contempt, and their memory delivered down to the remotest periods with disgust and detestation.

We will not stop here to inquire how far, in instances where this offence prevails in a Christian country, a Christian (of whatever denomination) is justified in venting curses against any one who may have injured or oppressed him. Indeed our Lord has told us, (and may our conduct always be

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in obedience to his precepts and commands,) that, however indulgent the *Jewish* law might be on this head, his disciples were peremptorily restrained from all expressions of rage and rancorous resentment: " Bless them which curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you: bless, and curse not:"—These are the benevolent injunctions; this is the rule, under every provocation, in all instances of real or supposed injury, by which we are directed to walk. But, with due deference to the rule, we may remark, that it would, perhaps, be extremely difficult to state a case, where the inducement to transgress it is more powerful and persuasive than in the one immediately under consideration:— " He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him." On the other hand, continues the wise monarch, " Blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it." In this, at least, every humane and liberal-minded man, from the prince on the throne to the lowliest peasant in his cottage; every man, who is capable of distinguishing good from evil, what is honest and of good report from that which is base and scandalous, gladly acquiesces. Though endued with but a moderate share of penetration, without being remarkable for any very elevated attainments in benevolence and virtue, he readily discerns the beauty of such a conduct, and is more or less enamoured of it, if on no better grounds, solely as it stands contrasted with the meanness and mercilessness of an opposite behaviour.

" He

* He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him."— Might I have my wish, these words should be unceasingly sounded in the ears of those, who are either guilty of the crime alluded to, or who even hesitate in their determination between duty and selfishness. Never have I read or reflected on this memorable sentence, I repeat it, without experiencing the most lively, and at the same time involuntary, emotions of rage and resentment towards the obdurate wretch, who, *having no knowledge*,* can look for emolument, or hope for substantial and permanent gratification, in the possession of that, which he is conscious of having cruelly wrested from the poor, and which he knows at the same time to be absolutely wanting to the natural, unpampered, but importunate, demands of appetite: Who, in the case before us, can applaud and felicitate himself on his policy and foresight, in having filled his barns with plenty; disregarding the claims and accommodation of the people, with a view to future profit; and thus, in a hardened conspiracy with others, causing an artificial scarcity of this great and primary article of food, to be re-produced only, and exposed to sale, when, in consequence of its having been long previously secreted, it shall reach a price, which, to the labouring classes of the community, to the infirm and needy, shall operate as a prohibition to *their* becoming purchasers.

* " Have they no knowledge, that they are all such workers of mischief; eating up my people as it were bread?" — PSALMS.

Were

Were a man of this description capable of compassionating the miseries he occasions; had he a soul susceptible of fear for the sad consequences of inhumanity; (and, by the way, I am strongly inclined to suspect such a one of being more easily deterred from crime, by fears and threatenings, than reformed, or incited to virtuous actions, by promises and hopes;) did he entertain in his breast the genuine natural desire of providing for the future respectability and credit of those who are to come after him, I could lay before him, in impressive language, and a lengthened detail, the various sorrows and sufferings which his inhumanity heaps upon others; those sighs, and tears, and lamentations, which, ascending up to heaven in supplications for relief, (in so far as they are imputable to him as the guilty cause,) may fall down with all the dreadful effects of execration and cursing on his devoted head. I could moreover expose to him his *want of knowledge*, by authoritatively insisting upon the precarious possession, and almost invariable misapplication, of wealth, gotten by vanity, which shall speedily be diminished. I could farther represent to him the infamy which is, for the most part, entailed on the descendants (even to the third and fourth generation) and representatives of him, who, in his haste to become rich, throws behind him whatever is most excellent in our common nature, and at once ceases to be innocent and happy. I could insist, that neither the blessings of the people, nor yet (which is of infinitely greater moment)

moment) the divine blessing, can be expected to descend upon the man, who, in the unhallowed attempt to enrich himself at the expense of others, withholds the necessary means of subsistence from general circulation, to the still greater impoverishment of the already poor. And I would close my representations, by extolling, on the other hand, the amiable temper and commendable consideration of him that selleth it; who is content with a fair and reasonable profit; and rejoices when the people are enabled, by their industry and labour, to procure, on moderate terms, for their sustenance and support, those fruits of increase, which, by God's blessing, they are so instrumental in producing and preparing for the use of man.

Friends and countrymen; you have, no doubt, anticipated from the commencement of this address the particular subject to which I am desirous to call your attention; and, God knows! it is a subject upon which we are but too sore. We have not had time to recover from the state of alarm, nor to forget those serious inconveniences, under which we so lately laboured from the most dreadful of all monopolies, the monopoly of bread-corn. Never was a people more cruelly oppressed by the wickedness of interested and conspiring individuals than in the year *ninety-five*, of unhappy memory. Never, perhaps, was any people so grossly insulted by interested, impudent, and lying representations, which ascribed to actual want, what was merely the result of an unprincipled monopoly. The fact,
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by many clearly ascertained at the time, has since that period been made sufficiently evident to all. And this temporary dearth, however great, was succeeded by, and I may add, in some measure productive of, a time of plenty and cheapness. Indeed we may venture to assert, that, provided the seasons be not very inclement, and the earth unusually unproductive, this must ever be a genuine effect of an over-strained monopoly; though I would not be thought to insinuate that the end justifies the means; or, that the advantages resulting from this circumstance are to be looked upon as an adequate compensation for the evils previously occasioned. But, referring to the situation of the country at the crisis above alluded to, such was the then general state of terror and dismay; so prevalent were the dispositions to impatience and turbulence in the breasts of the lower orders of the community; so observably was the whole body of the people dissatisfied, whether because of the irritation excited by the pressure of actual sufferings, or the extreme apprehension of still greater calamities to ensue, that, as you well remember, (and truly, for one, I shall not hastily forget,) there appeared such a mixture of solicitude and despondency on one hand, on the other such virulent symptoms of disgust, ready to break out into open violence, that some of the most collected and stout-hearted amongst us had not resolution sufficient to contemplate the then existing face of things with tolerable composure. Happily, however, for us,
and

and for the cause of humanity, concurring favourable circumstances, under the direction of an all-wise Providence, timely intervened, and checked the ravages of the extortioner; of the unjust and covetous, "whom God abhorreth."

Now here some one may perhaps be apt to remark, that the crime, which I so unreservedly condemn, presupposes a former plentiful harvest; and that, if I mean to adapt my reasonings and conclusions to the present state of things, I shall be at a loss to shew the propriety of the application: for, the present season, it will be objected, is alike known and acknowledged to be a season of *scarcity*; and that any inconveniencies or difficulties, which the people now labour under, are to be attributed to an inclement summer, and a very unkindly autumn; to seasons of immoderate rain and waters, in which the fruits of the earth have but imperfectly ripened, and could neither readily or securely be reaped; and that there is no need to resort to sinister and adventitious causes for effects which are plainly natural. All this I am ready to allow: I am willing to admit the whole force of the objection, so far as it goes; and, did it necessarily exclude other considerations, it must remain valid and unanswerable. I do, indeed, admit that the late seasons have been unfavourable, and pregnant with disappointment to the hopes of the husbandman; the harvest, of consequence, unproductive, and consequently also (had we entirely depended for a supply on the late damaged and
scanty

scanty crops) we must, under these circumstances, have been grievously disappointed. But let me be allowed to ask — Were, then, the crops of the preceding year, and the vast quantity of *imported* grain, already consumed? Had the farmer threshed out his ricks, and emptied his granaries? Were our store-houses — those necessary commercial depôts, but not unfrequently also the very sinks of monopolies — were these totally exhausted of the former year's almost unprecedented abundance? And are we, then, I repeat it, left without any other resource, any other means of consumption, than the injured and inefficient supplies of the present year's produce? Suffering, as we do, under the merited displeasure of Almighty God, is there nothing to impute to *man's misconduct*? Have we nothing to regret from the *un-merited* effects of the mischievous destructive efforts of the unruly lusts and passions of *man*? And, though the result of all operations be *ultimately* referrible to the Supreme Being, is not cruel man, in the case before us, and in no inconsiderable degree, the apparently *immediate* cause of our present exigencies, and magnified apprehensions?

To the inflictions of God's punishments on a voluptuous and sinful nation, it behoves us to submit without murmurings or repinings; and we are, or ought to be, duly affected with a deep sense of our unworthiness, and those manifold transgressions, because of which we have greatly incurred the tokens of divine displeasure. Amid that profusion of blessings,

ings, which he showers down upon his creatures; shall man receive good at the hand of God, and shall he not receive evil? God is alike good and kind to all. He is still the same merciful and beneficent being, whether we trace the footsteps of his omnipotence in the milder blessings of creation and providence, or in the arduous paths of his more mysterious and awful dispensations. Him we bless and adore, him we recognize, as in the still small voice of his benign and bounteous communications, so also in the storm that rends the mountains, in the hideous yawnings of the earthquake, and in the sorrowful wastings of the raging fire. In the brightness of his invigorating and ripening sun-beam we behold him. When on the parched places, and the thirsty soil, his clouds drop fatness, we laud and magnify his glorious name: and, though he smite with the drought, with blasting, and with mildew; though he “turn a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein,” still he is the same almighty and providential Father, before whom we tremble; whose tender mercies are always over all his works. The wind and storm fulfil his word. By him all things were made, and continue to be upheld; the events of all things are by his divine direction, or come to pass in conformity to his will. But, at all times more sensible of his frowns than of his favours, *then* most of all do we feel his judgements, when, *by the agency of man*, he thinks fit to intercept the natural and fructifying course of blessings intended

for the immediate service and happiness of man. And it is an alarming circumstance to reflect upon, but the frequency of its occurrence too often prevents reflection, that man should by his crimes subject himself to a curse, that, as the punishment of his disobedience, constitutes him the willing instrument of divine chastisements on his fellow-man, at the very instant that it dreadfully operates to his own perpetual shame and everlasting condemnation.

Here I again repeat the words on which I am so anxious to occupy your attention. "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him." Of all monopolies (disgraceful as all are) this monopoly of the bread of life—the subsistence of the living—is most iniquitous, and exposed to the bitterest execrations. And I must adduce it as a prevailing opinion, in which I coincide, (notwithstanding all that has been previously acceded in consideration of a scanty harvest,) that, to the scandalous complots and insatiate speculations of unprincipled men, much of the evil, of which we have but too much cause to complain, is justly chargeable.

In the most plentiful seasons, so far as his influence extends, (and, by means of conspiracy, the evil becomes of great extent and magnitude, and is most destructive in operation,) the monopolist is an accessory in producing the sad effects of deficiency: in less favourable and propitious seasons, proclaiming a dearth where there is no dearth—where the evil exists but in a moderated degree—he exaggerates and augments actual distress. Labour-

ing,

ing under the dire effects of such a conduct, how difficult will it be found, even for a Christian people, to refrain from invoking curses on the covetous and unfeeling wretch, whom they perceive (with *self* only in view) filling his coffers and increasing his substance, by grasping the hard-earned mite, and appropriating the scanty pittance, of the poor.

"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," was the humane and considerate prohibition of the Mosaic law, with a view of securing to the harmless, useful, and plodding brute, wherewith to satisfy the cravings of hunger, and recruit exhausted strength. Under the *Christian* code, shall less favour and consideration be shewn to man himself, in the person of him who wasteth himself over the fire, fashioning on the anvil the plowshare with his hammer?—Of the careful and industrious husbandman?—Of the temperate and toiling labourer, who bindeth the heifer in the furrow; who with a faithful and attentive hand deposits the seed, secures it with the harrow, and in due time reaps the golden harvest? To what peculiarly flagrant and unmanly deeds of turpitude does covetousness, this idolatrous temper of mind, this ungodly thirst of gain—of filthy, filthy lucre, impel men! And how terrible are the divine denunciations on all the groveling worshippers of Mammon!—What saith the Scripture? "Go to now, ye rich" and covetous "men, weep and howl for the miseries" which you have inflicted upon others, and "which shall

“ shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupt-
 “ ed, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your
 “ gold and silver are cankered; and the rust of
 “ them shall be a witness against you, and shall
 “ eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped
 “ treasure together,” ye have collected abundant
 matter of terror and torment, “ for the last days.
 “ Behold the hire of the labourer, who hath reap-
 “ ed down your fields, which is of you kept back
 “ by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which
 “ have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord
 “ of Sabaoth.” — But, if innocent of the guilt of
 this charge, and therefore ready to contemplate
 themselves with complacency, what is the crime of
 those with whom we more immediately have to do?
 How inveterate is its malignancy? What have *they*
 to plead in mitigation of punishment, who, when
 by dint of toil, and the efforts of unremitting in-
 dustry, the laborious peasant shall have securely
 lodged in their spacious barns, or copious granaries,
 the produce of a well-cultivated grateful soil, and
 cheerfully returned to his former task in the length-
 ened furrow, shall raise the price of this material
 article of his frugal repast beyond the power of his
 now scanty, but hitherto competent, wages to pro-
 cure?

But does the crime, of which I profess to com-
 plain, exist in reality? Or, have I not conjured up
 a ghastly spectre, a mere chimerical evil, on which
 to exercise the powers of my imagination?

But,

But, allowing that a scarcity does unquestion-
 ably exist, do I not seem inclined to attribute it to
 another, not to the true, cause? Are not the cala-
 mities, with which we are menaced, properly (if not
 solely) attributable to the inclemency of the skies,
 and necessarily consequent on thin and impoverish-
 ed crops? If so, countrymen, how is it, let me ask
 — whilst the markets are so very poorly supplied —
 that your ricks are undisturbed, and your barns and
 store-rooms teeming with grain? And is it not
 on good grounds suspected by numbers, is it not
 well understood by *not a few*, that an INCALCU-
 LABLE WASTE* of this necessary article of food

* It will all along have been observed, that I presume upon the
 idea that there is not at present any actual deficiency. This, then,
 is the object to which we would implore the attention of the Legis-
 lature. Without the interposition and co-operation of the Legisla-
 ture, it is not perhaps in the *sole* power of the community, by any
 sumptuary or economical regulations on the part of the rich, or by
 the substitution of other kinds of food for the support and nourish-
 ment of the poor, altogether to remove the evil. Heaped together
 in immense quantities in his warehouses, and there confined till the
 grain re-vegetate, or be put in motion by the weevil, the loss of one
 half of it (obliged to be thrown to the dunghill, or cast into the
 neighbouring stream) is no loss to the monopolist, who looks for
 his advantage in selling the remainder at an exorbitant price;
 considerably greater, perhaps, than the sum which the whole would
 have fetched had the market been fairly and honestly supplied.

Either there is some general misapprehension gone abroad on
 this subject, or the evil prevails to a very alarming degree. Surely
 it is in the power of our rulers to institute an inquiry. A little
 investigation would go a great way to obtain the requisite intelli-
 gence; and, the fact once ascertained, one would hope that the
 wisdom of parliament might be subsequently induced to search out
 a remedy.

is (with the scandalous design of still more enhancing the price) daily occasioned by the sullen and unrelenting hoardings of extensive monopolies? The fact I, for one, believe to be authentic; the crime is assuredly rife. And if you are not to look up to your superiors for the remedy, may it originate, friends and countrymen, (I address the more prosperous, humane, and considerate among you,) *in yourselves* — in your virtues of kindness and charity; and be carried into effect by your patriotic exertions. And I will take leave to remind you in this place of a political axiom, the salutary tendency of which has never been more fully investigated, or clearly seen, than of late years in this prosperous isle; — “When bad men conspire, good men must combine.” It is morally incumbent upon them *to do so now*, that they may be the better enabled to thwart the purposes, or repair the ravages, of worthless and designing men. And, in order the more effectually to obviate the inconveniences to which they are exposed, the welfare of society at large, but, most of all, the cause and interests of the *poorer classes* of the community, (which, perhaps, even in this great, free, and wealthy nation, form the bulk of your fellow-subjects,) imperiously demand your zealous, ready, and steady co-operation in this work of considerate charity and brotherly love. Let the purse of the affluent man, then, be open to relieve; let the prudence of the circumspect also be at hand to administer to the wants and exigencies of his poor brother.

Let

Let him, whose barns are filled with plenty; let the man whose storehouses are loaded with superfluity, instantly be prevailed upon (*to give* is not absolutely required) *so to sell*, that the poor may be enabled to purchase. On these easy terms shall he secure to himself a blessing. — “He that hath
“pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and
“look, whatsoever he layeth out, it shall be paid
“him again.” — But, from the words under consideration, that he may obtain a blessing, it is not even expected of a man to advance a loan, though with full interest, and upon the most unquestionable security; much less is there any obligation to a forced, any expectation of a voluntary and gratuitous, distribution. No; all that is required is, a seasonable exchange of the article in question for a fair and equitable compensation. That we may the more readily be induced to comply with the dictates of humanity, our dearest interests and our finest feelings are concerned in the decision. We are called upon to decide by all our hopes and fears of future happiness and misery. Life and death, cursing and blessing, are set before us. Shall we not, then, choose life, that both we and our seed may live? — “He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; but blessing shall be on the head of him that selleth it.”

And here, under the strong impression which this remarkable passage cannot surely but leave on the minds of my countrymen, I might perhaps safely dismiss the subject to make way for itself. If,

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however,

however, in conjunction with other powerful considerations, it should unhappily fail to reform, and bring back to a sense of duty the plunging speculator, the designing monopolist, the factor, forestaller, engrosser, regrater, and the rest (of whatever denomination) of this selfish, usurious tribe, it may, notwithstanding, I would gladly hope, deter others, who are yet innocent, from adopting such sinister and disreputable methods, either of obtaining a livelihood, or amassing unjust gain. And, on the other hand, I would farther presume to hope, that it may operate as an incentive to the charitably disposed to occupy themselves, without delay, in substantial acts of kindness and liberality towards such as stand in need, and to heal as much as possible the wounds inflicted by cruel and avaricious men.

It should seem, that the laws of the land, which are admirably framed for the punishment of crimes, and the reform of abuses in general, are inadequate to the suppression of monopolies, either in the way of prevention or punishment.* If this observation do not properly apply to the offences of

* Confident as we are in the discretion, vigilance, and energy of his majesty's councils, there must exist some hidden, but wise and weighty reasons, which deter them from interposing their saving authority between the monopolist, and the people. Else, a practice so very flagrant, so unjust in principle, and so cruelly oppressive in its consequences, would not be permitted to continue with impunity.

forestalling,

forestalling, engrossing, and regrating; if the laws be competent to the correction and remedy of these and similar misdemeanors, *when carried into execution*, they notwithstanding remain, as it were, a dead letter, from a principle of false delicacy idly indulged, and a prevailing reprehensible aversion in the breasts of the people at large to lodge the requisite informations. And it is moreover sincerely to be regretted, that in particular cases *of equity*, where the penal law fails to attach, to punish, or to enforce a satisfactory indemnification for injury sustained, the only means in the hands of society for the chastisement of the aggressor, is either not at all, or but partially and very feebly, employed. Would to God it were more practicable, in instances of premeditated fraud and hardened villainy, where crime is permitted to elude justice, for the good and virtuous, those who have any weight or influence in their respective neighbourhoods, promptly and unanimously to *separate themselves* from these wicked doers, and thus consign them to shame (if they be capable of it) and the most marked and merited contempt. Vice would then experience something like mortification: it would lose somewhat of that ascendancy which it at present, to the great scandal of religion and morality, derives and maintains from countenance and example: — the weak would thenceforth, in some measure, be preserved from oppression; the unsuspecting and credulous from imposition; much of its great and growing credit would be taken from it, its tyranny opposed, and

and its present power of doing mischief circumscribed within narrower limits. Thus effectually restrained from associating with those, whose credit and reputation in life he is at all times expert at availing himself of, and appropriating, the delinquent would have an opportunity afforded him for reflection. And it would then remain with himself, on contrition and reformation, either to be re-admitted into the society of the good, which he had previously offended by his vices, or otherwise condemned to herd for ever with the partakers of his crimes, and his partners in unreclaimable wickedness.

So long as virtue possesses any sway over the minds of men, such a regulation, I am convinced, could not but be attended with satisfaction, and productive of the most beneficial consequences. By this means encouragement would be held out to the timid and unassuming, virtue would be brought into repute, and recover its long-lost rights and privileges; whilst infamy and disgrace would be the portion of the wicked; for, I know of no law, human or divine, which forbids us to discountenance and repel those, whom we vainly strive to conciliate and reform. The Gospel, I think, warrants the proceeding; and, if so, we may pronounce it, not merely reconcilable to, but exactly conformable with, the most pure, perfect, and comprehensive system of morals ever delivered for the direction and happiness of mankind. Civil institutions and the welfare of social life *seem to demand it*. And

I presume

I presume farther to assert, and without fear of contradiction, that, whatever be his political creed or religious opinions, amongst the worst of patriots as of men, is he, who deliberately defrauds, or wantonly oppresses another; and who, with a pointed reference to the subject under consideration, endeavours to make, or dares to pronounce scarceness, where a good God has graciously been pleased to bestow plenty. Or if, under a change of circumstances, he exculpate himself from this charge, yet neither will his character for humanity rise *very high* in the general estimation, if it be conceded, that he *only* employs himself in *aggravating* those calamities, which the same good Providence may at any time think fit to inflict upon his sinful creatures. Whatever may be the nature or manner of the divine dispensations, (always gracious, even though occasionally, and when apparently most severe,) God wills that man (to the utmost of his ability) be ever kind and charitable to man. And, being therefore fully persuaded that mutual benevolence and friendly offices are strictly enjoined by the immutable decrees of Providence, every ungenerous propensity in word or deed, all force and fraud, robberies, and every exorbitant exaction or demand, (whatever fair and specious appearances these vices may respectively assume before men,) are solemnly denounced as being contrary to the revealed will of God; they unavoidably fall under the curse of the law, and, under the heaviest pains

pains and penalties, are alike expressly condemned and prohibited.

The charitable and humane are actuated by the most amiable motives. They are ready instruments in the hand of God to *execute* his will and dispense of his munificence. Towards the poor members of Christ's body, they exemplify afresh God's former goodness to his people of old; and, by care, circumspection, and liberality, *so* provide, by God's blessing, for their necessities, that even *in the time of dearth they shall have enough*.*

If we admit the difficulties of the present time, and are inclined to attend to the magnified apprehensions of the approaching winter; and if it be inquired how your endeavours, friends and countrymen, in the cause of humanity, are most efficaciously to be directed, in order to afford the most seasonable and essential succour to the poor and needy, I presume to recommend an immediate recurrence to, and a speedy and vigorous re-adoption of, such prudential systems and remedies as the inconveniences arising out of former deficiency suggested, and experience at the period alluded to approved. The distress of the people is to be alle-

* This is more particularly true of those, who, in addition to their largesses to the poor, enforce a prudent, parsimonious use of wheat-flour in their families. Bread is the poor man's support: fine bread is his greatest luxury. Let the rich and the great, then, who have various resources, a profusion of dainty viands for the sustentation and enjoyment of life, yield — where there is not enough for all — *a moiety of their portion* of fine bread to the poor.

viated

viated by gratuitous distributions; — by liberal combinations with a view to counteract the destructive tendency of monopolies; — by selling, (if you have not wherewithal to give,) subject to fair, open, and equitable conditions, without basely indulging in the unconscionable demands, or listening to the unfeeling suggestions and remonstrances, of extortion; or, in the last place, (I now address myself to the most rigidly penurious, to those who are exquisitely nice in their discernment of loss and gain; who, in matters of expenditure, cannot prevail on themselves to listen to any propositions, save such as come strongly recommended under the garb of economy,) by embracing every favourable opportunity of employing certain considerable sums, to be raised by subscription, in the purchase of necessaries (such as bread-corn, rice, and potatoes*) *for the use of the poor*; to be stored, and set

* Potatoes, I know, are said to be a *failing crop*. But, unless the monopolist cruelly interferes *here also*, we may hope for a tolerable supply in the market, on reasonable terms, because of the greatly-increased cultivation of late years of this excellent root.

The distribution of *cheap soups* has been strongly recommended, and the recommendation partially attended to; but I am sorry to observe, that the poor have *their prejudices* with the rest of their fellow-citizens, who are not equally exposed to be so materially incommoded by them. In some cases, they are much more dainty than wise; and I take this opportunity of making the observation, having, on former occasions, remarked their aversion to avail themselves of this mode of relief.

There are some valuable directions for preparing these soups, and other cheap and nourishing diet, in the judicious and entertaining collection of "*Repository Tracts*."

apart,

apart, and seasonably retailed to them, (whatever advancement the article in question may subsequently experience in the public market,) at the prices, and on the same easy and advantageous terms, on which I will suppose the purchase to have been originally made. But far be it from me to countenance that over-solicitude for the possession of the paltry goods of this life, that worldly-mindedness which blinds men to their best interests; which renders them indifferent to the possession of the true riches, and never more cordially disposed to serve God and their neighbour, than when their services shall *cost them nothing*. In the hope that the humane methods, which were so lately adopted for the relief of the poor under distress similar to what now actually does, or may be apprehended hereafter to exist, have not escaped the recollection of my benevolent fellow-citizens, I deem more minute suggestions on this head, in this address, inapplicable or superfluous.

It has been observed, quaintly indeed and no less foolishly, (and when I survey the quarter whence it is derived, and scan the circumstances under which the observation is made, *it comes in such a questionable shape* I cannot but suspect the *wish to have been father to the thought*;) that *General Famine* would do more to make us give place to the great and wicked Republic, with which we are at war; contending, and I trust resolute to contend, if need be, for all that is near and dear to Britons;— it has, I say, been quaintly, foolishly, and, let me add, insidiously observed, that *General Famine*

Famine would do more to make us give place to the greatly wicked Republic, than all the boasted exploits and united malevolent efforts of her revolutionary, vain-glorious, false, and faithless generals. Now this idea ungenerously presupposes the inability or indisposition of the people to sustain a temporary pressure, without incontinently seeking for redress in a change of government. And, it may be, the idea is roundly thrown out, and industriously circulated, as a bait to deceive — a hook to catch — a well-meaning but too credulous populace, and to drag them to their ruin. But the opportunity, I persuade myself, is gone by. The populace of this country, *at this day*, are neither ignorant of their duty, nor insensible to the various and inestimable blessings they enjoy as British subjects.

As a true lover of my country, and a friend of the poor, my strenuous efforts, in my narrow sphere, and to the best of my slender judgement, shall always be exerted to remove, by all temperate measures, any reasonable cause of complaint from the breasts of my fellow-citizens. But to the *people*, whom, I suspect, numbers (under plausible but undefinable pretences) are ever on the watch to ensnare or mislead, I will observe by the way, and must take the liberty, in few words, to remind them (smoothly at the same time, but frankly and honestly) of TRUTHS of which they ought never to think slightly, or lose sight of; and these are, that “*The law of the land is the poor man’s best friend and greatest security;*” — And that “*Whoever would prevail upon him to believe the contrary, or think otherwise,*

“ otherwise, and act in opposition to it, means every
 “ thing but his advantage, welfare, and happiness.”
 Britons know how to *contend in arms* for their laws,
 their country, and their king. Should they be exposed
 to certain peculiar hardships, from which none are
 totally exempt, and such as the exercise of *patience*
alone can overcome, I will not be persuaded but that,
 in their *civil* capacity, their piety, patriotism, and
 loyalty, will conspicuously shine forth, and direct
 and encourage them magnanimously *to endure*.

Friends and countrymen; if, in my eagerness to
speak a word in due season, I have spoken inaccurately
 or unadvisedly, I do not hesitate to throw myself
 upon the candour of that public, which is ever ready
 and willing favourably to receive what is candidly
 offered. It is in the exercise of the good sense,
 discernment, and benevolence, of the British public,
 that I reckon upon the attainment of the object,
 which I have solely in view in this address, namely—
“ The comfort of the poor.” And with that cordial
 regard which I entertain *for all*, and for the
populace, as constituting so great a part of my
 fellow-subjects, I take my leave in the admonitory
 words of one of the primitive propagators of the
 Faith, which we believe, and confess, and to which,
 I trust, we shall all for ever closely adhere;
 “ Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious
 “ fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it:
 “ BE YE ALSO PATIENT: STABLISH YOUR
 “ HEARTS.”

I am, &c. &c.

A TRUE LOVER OF MY COUNTRY.

Nov. 16.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

THE following observations are extracted from a weekly
 publication; and, because of their similarity to the substance
 of a remark towards the close of his pamphlet, the Author
 here takes the liberty to lay them before his Readers.—
 “ There is every reason to hope,” says a writer in the
 VOLUNTEER Paper of the 24th November, “ that the
 “ wheat-produce of our own island, with the foreign im-
 “ portations already secured, will, if carefully managed,
 “ prove sufficient for our necessary consumption. It is
 “ painful to see the exertions daily made to excite in the
 “ public mind the dangerous horrors of *a national famine*.
 “ Compounded as such statements evidently are with so
 “ large a portion of *political leaven*, the object of this despe-
 “ rate speculation must fail with the discerning; but the
 “ great body of the people, on whom the terror is calcu-
 “ lated to act, are susceptible of different impressions.
 “ The writers who so sedulously incite to this national de-
 “ spondency, are aware, that the anarchy, which devastated
 “ a neighbouring kingdom, originated in a scarcity of *bread-*
 “ *corn*, artificially created by the monster EGALITE'; and,
 “ therefore, they are not without hope, that something like
 “ the same calamitous events may be produced here, by a
 “ well-wrought expectation of similar distress!” If such
 indeed be the hope of the disaffected, God forbid that it
 should be realized! Happily for our feelings, we entertain
 little apprehension on this head. Nay, we do, on the con-
 trary, firmly trust, that these incendiaries will be egregiously
 disappointed; and we cannot forbear calling to their re-
 membrance, on this occasion, another very interesting pro-
 verb, highly deserving of their especial notices and regards;
 —“ Judgements are prepared for scorners; and stripes for
 “ the backs of fools.”

THE END.

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[Faint, illegible text from a document or manuscript, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side. The text is too light to transcribe accurately.]