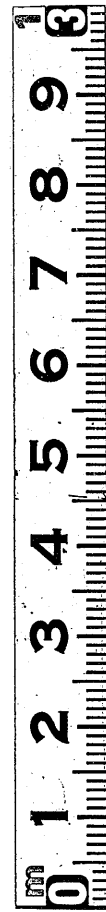


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THE  
EXPEDIENCY  
OF A  
FREE EXPORTATION  
OF  
CORN

AT THIS TIME:

With some OBSERVATIONS on the  
BOUNTY, and its EFFECTS.

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By the Author of the FARMER'S LETTERS to  
the People of England.

*A YOUNG*

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THE  
 EXPEDIENCY  
 Of allowing the  
 EXPORTATION OF CORN, &c.

THE Legislature of these kingdoms having lately passed a temporary act to prohibit the Exportation of Corn, that time may be gained for a due consideration of the expediency, either of continuing the embargo, or allowing exportation; I shall venture a few observations on the subject, and endeavour to elucidate those circumstances, which at present call most for the attention of those whose situation gives them a voice in the decision of so important an affair.

No law, however manifest and acknowledged its utility, can ever be expected to pass without exciting the dissatisfaction and clamour of such as are, or think themselves, injured by it. The allowing a free export from this kingdom, and

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the granting a bounty on it, at certain prices, have of late occasioned numerous disquisitions:—we have had divers papers and pamphlets published against such measures: every art——every fallacy has been used to misrepresent the real tendency of such laws; and as they do not admit a mathematical proof in the demonstration of every tittle of their excellence, some impartial men have questioned their propriety; which, as in other cases of the same sort, has occasioned an echoed clamour from such as are, or believe themselves to be interested; with no slight contributions from others, who chuse, whatever the subject, to offer their opinion on the talk of the day. Were the whole a matter of amusement, or of but slight importance, the consequences would not be feared, but when the most capital interests of the state are concerned, it much behoves every man to be cautious of too quickly determining on which side of the question to arrange himself.

I have in another place\* endeavoured to prove, that the corn trade of Britain is,——I beg pardon, *has been* one of the

\* *Farmer's Letters*, second edition, page 51.

most

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most valuable she ever possessed; that it has, since the bounty was first granted, brought immense sums into the kingdom, near forty millions sterling to the year 1765: I have there shewn how infinitely valuable this trade has been as a branch of commerce: but as the severest enemies of the bounty, either assent to such indubitable facts, or pass them over, I shall confine myself at present to the other effects of these measures; and which are now the most agitated.

It is asserted, That the old corn laws raise the price of bread, and provisions in general——

Which occasions the high price of manufacturing labour——

And thereby causes the loss of trade by competition with foreigners whose men work cheaper.

This is the train in which the argument has so often been thrown. It looks pretty enough, and seems consistent to those who will for ever plague themselves with theories and never recur to facts.

The gradation of the prices of wheat at Windsor for 169 years is as follows.

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	Years	£.	s.	d.	Years	£.	s.	d.
From 1594 to 1612	19	2	2	5	} 69	2	8	5
1613 to 1637	25	2	7	4				
1638 to 1662	25	2	15	8				
1663 to 1687	25	2	5	3	} 75	2	2	5
1688 to 1712	25	2	8	5				
1713 to 1737	25	2	0	7				
1738 to 1762	25	1	18	2				

This little table shews the real state of prices \*, and proves upon the whole, that the bounty on the exportation (which began in 1688) has caused a regular decline of price. If exportation, and the bounty raised the price—when both ran at the highest ever known, we must surely look for its effect?—the following table will answer this quere.

Years.	Bounty.	Price.
1746 ———	99,388	— 1 19 0
1748 ———	202,637	— 1 17 0
1749 ———	228,566	— 1 16 0
1750 ———	325,405	— 1 12 6

* 1763 ———	2	0	9	} Average	£. s. d.
1764 ———	2	6	9		
1765 ———	2	14	0		
1766 ———	2	8	6		

Which is less than many of the preceding periods; is undoubtedly a moderate rate, and under what was the parliamentary price: Yet has it occasioned much murmuring. Why? Because murmuring and riots have been regarded:—no fear of your having enough of them.

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Here we find the price falls at home in proportion to the quantity sent abroad.

But it is asserted \*, that the comparison between the prices of wheat at different periods should be confined to 20 years before, and 21 years after the bounty; in which periods it is (falsely) said, that wheat arose 6d. per quarter on the bounty: but the same candid author chuses to forget an argument that has more than once overturned this mistaken idea. In the 25 years before the bounty, a duty was first laid on the importation of corn, which with two others afterwards amounted almost to a prohibition: these measures partook so much of the nature of a bounty, that wheat, which had for many years been rising, then dropt 10s. a quarter. So that such a comparison would be absolutely inconclusive. It is principally for this reason that the decline of price in the last 75 years of the above table, is so much less than the fall from the first period to the second. It is of the same

\* Considerations on the Exportation of corn. 1770. page 35.

period, and in the same stile that another\*, after the minuteness of a folio of calculation, tells us from the low price of corn in the reign of James II, that *patience* would have brought on a plenty, and a cheapness of grain—*without any expence to the government*: tacitly giving up the point which he has so laboured to defend: by owning that the *plenty* and *cheapness* WAS brought on; though *with* an expence to government.

In another place †, he says, the proper period for comparison, is the reign of James I. that is, an age in which interest of money, was  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and the commerce and riches of Britain contemptible, compared with what they have been since the bounty was granted: what trifling to compare the prices of wheat between two periods, in one of which, land sold at 14 years purchase, in the other at 30!

But whence comes it that these and numerous other writers should be so extremely desirous of proving that wheat

\* *An Enquiry into the prices of wheat, malt, &c.* p. 61.  
 † Page 43.

has

has been dearer since, than before the bounty——though the excess they strive for, amounts only to 6*d.* a quarter? this point being aimed so much at, shews plainly that they think it of the utmost importance. But what say they to the rise of every thing but wheat? Why has the interest of money fallen?—the rent of land,——rates of beef——mutton——pork——manufactures, &c. risen so high since the revolution? why because the riches of the nation have increased, consequently the value of money fallen: but as this cause is equally applicable to wheat, as to other commodities, how comes it that that should, instead of rising, have sunk,——or, to grant the positions of these writers, have arose only 6*d.* a quarter?

The interest of money marks the increase of commerce, of income, of wealth; and in a word, of that aggregate improvement which raises all prices. In the fourscore years, from 1524 to 1604, interest was 9*l.* 16*s.* per cent. the fall to 1760 has been gradual and regular; to 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*; or about one third of the former height; whereas the price of land was, about the first period, 10 years purchase,

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chafe, and in 1760 about 30, which is exactly in proportion to the interest of money. In the 30 years from 1660 to 1690 interest was £7 6 6, and land at 22  $\frac{1}{2}$  years purchase, beef and pork were about 1 s. 2 d. per stone, and mutton 1 s. 4 d.: whereas from 1730 to 1760 beef and mutton were 2 s. and pork 2 s. 6 d.

The rise from the first 30 years to the second is in beef	} 71 per Cent.
Ditto in mutton	- - - 50 per Cent.
Ditto in pork	- - - 114 per Cent.
Medium	- - - 78 per Cent.
Medium of mutton and beef	60 per Cent.

Interest is fallen just an half, which bears no unexact proportion to this rise of mutton and beef; which are perhaps better guides than pork, from the variations in the amount of the navy.

From hence we have the greatest reason to judge, that wheat should be in the same predicament, unless some peculiar measure had been used with it. In the 30 years preceding 1690, the price was £1 16 3; the rise of 60 per cent. would have made it in the last 30 years

years	- - - -	£ 2 17 11
Whereas it was only	- - - -	1 9 5
		<hr/>
So that the fall in the price	} 1 8 6	
has been		
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That I fix upon the period which makes the least for my argument (according to the ideas of these writers themselves) will appear from the height of the bounty, in that ending in 1760; for in those 30 years no less was paid in bounty than £3,613,115, whereas it never arose in any other 30 years to more than £1,800,000, and yet, notwithstanding the exportation of such immense quantities to *starve our own poor*, did wheat stand at £1 8 6 lower price than it ought to have done according to the rise of every thing else: I say *every thing*, for tho' I have calculated from beef and mutton — yet labour, rent, cattle, &c. &c. — all are risen as high, and some much higher.

But it is said that the bounty has been the occasion of that *general* rise, for if you make a scarcity in one article of food it will heighten all the rest. This it must be confessed is a very curious argument — for, granting a false position, how

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very consonant to common sense, does it sound, that the exporting immense quantities of one sort of food should raise that sort only 6*d.* in forty three shillings, which is not 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and yet raise other articles 60 per cent! — Such is the reasoning of these writers; but there is no necessity to take them from their slippery ground of falsified facts to fight them fairly with the weapons of reason. I have shewn from facts that the position is false — that the exportation could not possibly *raise* the price of beef, mutton and labour, while it *sunk* that of wheat — and this upon their own principles, which are just, however false their conclusions may be, that raising the price of one article of food collaterally raises all others.

This opens a new view of the subject; wheat has fallen *greatly* since exportation: this is the real fact: nor could it so regularly happen, without having the effect of *sinking* the rates of the other articles of provision: so that we do not see the prices which beef, mutton, &c. would have yielded had no bounty taken place — the rise, instead of 60 or 70, might probably have been 100 per cent. —

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It has been said, how can such large quantities of corn be annually exported, without the farmers being thereby encouraged to break up pasture lands too much, for the converting them to the raising of corn: And that farmers make 70 per cent. profit by the bounty. It is here again taken for granted, that their encouragement arises from high prices: But in answer to this observation I must first observe, that the way in which the bounty has encouraged and raised the agriculture of Britain to its present height, has not been by *high* prices, but by *regular* prices. That corn has been the cheaper for the bounty, is a fact indubitable, and that will admit not of contrary proof in whatever manner facts are distorted: the profit of the farmer has therefore been the regularity of price, and the certainty of no foreign competition in his own markets. Before the 25 years preceding the bounty, prices, tho' very high in the average, were yet uncommonly low in certain years, even to 25*s.* a *Qr.* — And the ruinous mischief of this, was the circumstance of such low prices being as often occasioned by importations from abroad, as by bad crops at home, so that when the farmers ought

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to have had an high price, they received frequently a very low one. No height of price apparent in an average of many years could make amends for such fatal fluctuations: for the business of agriculture being in general carried on by men with very small stocks in trade, regularity of price is by far the most advantageous circumstance to them, or at least an exclusion of *low* prices. —

Attributing the high price of butcher's meat to the advantages reaped by the farmers from the exportation of corn, is an extreme false idea. Great quantities of beef arise from two sources, SUMMER GRAZING on *rich* meadow and pasture — and WINTER GRAZING on turneps, oil cakes, and various other articles of food. Now let me ask any unprejudiced man, how the greatest advantages in raising corn can affect either of these sources. To talk of farmers ploughing up rich meadow and pasture land on account of advantages accruing from the culture of corn, is so manifest an absurdity, that it shews these writers to be totally ignorant of country business: Such land lets from 10 to 30s. an acre more than the arable adjoining — it is a likely matter, that

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that landlords would allow *such* to be ploughed up!

The other source of the plenty of beef, viz. *winter fattening*, is indubitably enlarged by an increase of the culture of corn — it is even in exact proportion to it. Advantages in the corn trade, have occasioned very extensive tracts of waste lands to be inclosed and cultivated. But cultivated for what? Do they imagine for corn alone? Nothing farther. The corn laws have brought into culture more waste acres in Norfolk alone, than are sufficient to answer the whole exportation of Britain: and yet those acres have furnished Smithfield with a quantity of mutton and beef proportioned to that of their corn. Upon all those lands only two crops of corn are taken in six or seven years; their course being 1. turneps; 2. barley; 3. clover and ray grass from 2 to 5 years; 4. wheat: their flocks of sheep are consequently great, and the quantity of turnep fed beef sent to market every salesman in Smithfield will testify. Hence we find, that the bounty encouraging the growth of corn is not an encroachment upon grasses or on the other food of cattle, but actually increases both



both in an immense degree. Can these men possibly be so infatuated as to imagine that because corn is high, the farmer can sow all his land with corn, and every year? It is a most false idea. The increase of culture has been by breaking up wastes, which, as I have shewn, increases the quantity of beef as much as of corn: — It likewise acts in the breaking up indifferent pastures that have been badly managed, or that are upon an improper soil for grass. Who imagines that such a conduct lessens the quantity of beef? It is an effect which mere general good husbandry requires.

The same assertions have been made respecting mutton. But not to be too diffusive in proving that light is not darkness — let me only remark that the same reply is applicable here as in the former case: but in a greater degree; for no instance can be produced of an increase in the culture of corn, that has not increased the quantity of mutton and the value of wool.

Pork is likewise produced as another instance, which is an admirable one to shew how totally ignorant these enemies of

of the bounty are in its real effect. Increase the culture of corn, you lessen the quantity of pork: One can only smile at such reasoning. If I was certain that these people really knew a hog from a rabbit, I would take them into the yards of great corn farms gained from warrens and wastes, and ask them if they thought herds of some hundreds of swine, the number of which depends on the quantity of corn — lessened the quantity of pork? There is no end of answering such absurdities: can one believe that upon such crazy foundations, a sensible man could gravely assert\* the rise of provisions *owing to the bounty*, to have amounted to £525,000,000.

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\* *Enquiry into the prices of wheat, &c.* p. 108. "The large and extended gratuity given to export corn, had occasioned so great a quantity of land to be tilled, as lessened the means to raise other provisions." *Ib.* p. 98. Another calculates the mischief done by the bounty in the article pork, at a million per ann. *Considerations on the Exportation of corn*, p. 39. Whoever will take the pains to read all that has been written against Exportation, will find every argument knocking down its brother, and not unfrequently destroying itself.

I shall

I shall now come to the second general assertion of those who strive to prove that the bounty is the source of all our evils, moral and political, viz. *the raising the price of provisions, raises the price of manufacturing labour.*

To follow these gentlemen through all the mazes of their perplexity, would be useless: this argument carries in the face of it, its dependance on the preceding; for if bounty and exportation have *sunk* the price of provisions, as I think I have clearly proved they have, then the conclusion drawn in this argument is *ipso facto* false,

In the year 1767, I took a journey into Wales, the minutes of which I laid before the publick, under the title of *A Six weeks Tour*. I found in that journey, that there was not any proportion between the rates of labour and those of provisions. The year following I made a similar journey through the North of England, and found throughout above 2500 miles of country, that the rates of labour in no respect depended on those of provisions: Bread, butter, cheese and meat, being thrown into one aggregate price,

price, and the earnings of a family the same, the following was the comparison which arose.

<i>Price of Prov.</i>	<i>Labour.</i>		
Aggregate price of 2d. $\frac{1}{2}$ } per lb. - - -	51	8	0
Ditto of 2d. $\frac{3}{4}$ - - -	51	3	10
Ditto of 3d. - - -	53	2	4
Ditto of 3d. $\frac{1}{4}$ - - -	47	16	0
Ditto of 3d. $\frac{1}{2}$ - - -	50	1	11
Ditto of 3d. $\frac{3}{4}$ - - -	50	17	11
Ditto of 4d. - - -	50	10	8

*Bread alone.*

$\frac{3}{4}$ d. per lb. - - -	47	5	10
1d. - - -	51	9	6
1d. $\frac{1}{4}$ - - -	51	17	11
1d. $\frac{1}{2}$ - - -	50	12	3
1d. $\frac{3}{4}$ - - -	50	12	11
* 2d. - - -	51	16	4

Were the price of provisions the director of that of labour, these tables would be in exact degradation, but the contrary is as near the truth; so very far is the rate of the one, the rule of the other,

\* *Six Months Tour through the North of England.*  
Vol. 4. p. 459.

that they are mostly in opposition. Those who pay 4*d.* per *lb.* earn less by 3*l.* a year, than others who are fed at 3*d.* The rate of 3*d.*  $\frac{1}{2}$  is attended by less earnings by 6*l.* a year than 3*d.* the *lowest* price of provisions; 2*d.*  $\frac{1}{2}$  is attended with 18*s.* a year greater earnings than 4*d.* the *highest* price. In bread alone, the man who pays 1*d.* a *lb.* earns as much within a few shillings, as he who pays 2*d.*: and he who eats it at a 1*d.*  $\frac{3}{4}$ , more. In whatever view the table is thrown, the same contradictions appear; the very average of all — the table being thrown into but two divisions — is a flat contradiction.

The average aggregate price of 2 <i>d.</i> $\frac{1}{2}$ , 2 <i>d.</i> $\frac{3}{4}$ and 3 <i>d.</i> being the three <i>lowest</i> prices — give the average earnings of	}	51	18	0
Ditto of 3 <i>d.</i> $\frac{1}{4}$ , 3 <i>d.</i> $\frac{1}{2}$ , 3 <i>d.</i> $\frac{3}{4}$ and 4 <i>d.</i> the four <i>highest</i> prices		49	16	7
Excess of the former		2	1	5
Average of the <i>four lowest</i> prices	}	50	17	6
Ditto of <i>three highest</i>		50	10	2
Excess of the former		0	7	4
				Turn

Turn and twist the comparison how you will, in no instance will you find that labour is high, because provisions are the same: you will in more instances find the reverse to be the fact.

In the same work, I compared the earnings of manufacturers with the rates of their provisions, and as little consonance was found between them; indeed the same reasoning is applicable to the one as the other.

If a man attempts to solve every difficulty that arises in the various combinations of this subject from mere reasoning, he will certainly meet with various contradictions that cannot be accounted for: labour *ought* absolutely to depend on the rates of provisions, and be regulated by them alone; but what ought to be, and what is, are here, as every where else, two very different affairs. In certain places and districts, provisions being much higher than usual — (whether the rate be reasonable or unreasonable) occasions a great clamour, and much rioting among the drunken idle part of the poor, who sometimes prevail so far, if they coincide with the private opinion of the

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neighbouring justices of the peace, as, either to gain a rise of wages, or an increase of poor rates; but provisions falling in price, will lower neither the one nor the other, nor will they rise according to any proportion. A set of justices in any neighbourhood will have it in their power either to raise labour extravagantly, or to keep it as unreasonably low, if it was so before; the private conduct and opinion of parish officers and masters, will also have a great effect. When the changes of rates of labour are subject to such variations as exceed the utmost power of the keenest calculator to lay down in proportions, can we be surprized that so little agreement should be found between the present rates of labour, and the prices of provisions? And with what degree of propriety can the enemies of the bounty clamour against it, for raising the price of labour, from heightning that of corn, when it in fact lowers the latter; and in no case could possibly affect the former?

One general proof of the truth of what I am now urging is the indubitable fact, that the price of corn has *fallen greatly* since the bounty took place; it

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is equally certain that the rates of labour have *risen*; how then, can one be said to be regulated by the other?

It is much to be regretted that we do not find juster ideas of prices of provisions, which ought really to be reckoned high or low: the prices which have occasioned so much clamour, certainly have not been so high, on comparison with former times, as the value, and quantity of money might have made one expect they would rise to. What reason can be given, why the general harmony between prices of all sorts should be broken, in the instance of provisions and in no other? Yet is not any article of food advanced out of proportion to the general rise of all commodities: labour since the bounty has doubled its price, whereas flesh meat is only 60 per cent. dearer; and bread, the staff of life, is *cheaper*. Hence arises a great difficulty in drawing the line of distinction between high and low prices, for in fact they ought not to be denominated high, unless they exceed the proportion which commodities in general bear to the value of money. Interest since the bounty has fallen half, and yet the aggregate of provisions (allowance given

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given for the great importance of bread) certainly has not risen near a quarter.

But clamour takes its rise not from general, but particular comparison: *Provisions are dearer now, say the poor, than I ever knew them*; they are dearer this five years than they were the last ten; this is the consideration that pinches: no matter what the rates are. *I have been used to have them cheaper, and so I am determined to be discontented. Four pence a pound is too dear. Why is it too dear? Because I have been used to three pence.* It is in vain to urge the rise of labour — or to instance the advances in every commodity under heaven; where private interest is so strongly concerned, prejudice will have place.

But when there is no sort of probability of the prices of provisions raising to any thing like the proportionate rates of other commodities, why should we be so very solicitous for altering those valuable corn laws, which have been proved to be of such great importance to the welfare of this country. Parliament in 1688 thought 48 s. a proper bounty price; were we to take the rise of labour, of  
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other commodities, or the rate of interest for our guide, the exporting price *now* should be much higher; instead of which it is clamoured that no bounty at all should be given: how wisely the Legislature must judge.

Were the bounty discontinued for ever, the effect would undoubtedly be the *average* price of corn *rising*; an effect by no means objectionable, were the prices to be regular: but the misfortune would be a certainty of variation. Those who urge a total repeal of the bounty, *to make corn cheaper*, talk against all principles: there cannot with sensible men be a shadow of doubt, but that the more you encourage the growth of corn for exportation, the more you will have for home consumption. Is beef too dear? would you make it cheaper? give a bounty on the exportation of it: where is the real politician that will assert your making it the dearer?

Lastly, I come to the conclusion, that the high price of labour ruins our manufactories. And I will venture to pronounce this, as mere a vulgar error as the rest. I have never omitted any opportunity of gaining information on these  
points,

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points, from the most able manufacturers I have met with: all agree, that the idea of our being underfold by the French, is false: they on the contrary assert (particularly the manufacturers of Manchester) that wherever they met the French, with the same goods, they underfold them: but the effects which follow from family alliances, and the intrigues of courts, should never be confounded with the price of a manufacture. Often has it been affirmed, that the French have underfold us in all the markets of Spain, at the very time that higher duties have been laid on the goods of Britain, than on those of France; and numerous other advantages given to the subjects of that crown. I shall not be surprized by and by to hear the bounty objected to because english manufacturers do not underfell french ones in the city of Paris.

Those who are so ready to talk of the ruin of our manufactures, should consider better what the ruin is, they harangue about. Except the unhappy consequences of American regulations, I know not a manufacture in Britain, that is not in the most flourishing situation: but that the aggregate of them is highly prosperous,

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prosperous, cannot for a moment be doubted. The evil therefore which these writers pretend to explain, has no existence: they think themselves such masters of reasoning that they raise monsters of the imagination, for the mere pleasure of logically accounting for them.

But in the name of common sense, where are the facts, and what are the reasons, that prove a high rate of provisions, an enemy to manufactures? It is a matter indeed that has been taken so much for granted, that these gentlemen have disdained to exercise their powers of reasoning upon it: They give you an ipse dixit, to make what you can of.

It is a fact that this kingdom never made any advances in manufactures, that are worth speaking of, until provisions became what is called *dear*. Now although the rates of labour (as I before shewed) are not decided by those of necessaries; to be in exact proportion to each other; yet in all countries, where provisions are very dear, labour must be dearer than in other countries, where provisions are very cheap. It was before found that provisions have advanced perhaps 20 or 25  
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per cent. since the revolution; but labour, has advanced probably 100 per cent. I am not therefore guilty of a contradiction, in having asserted before that the price of labour does not accurately depend on that of provisions; and in now advancing, that where provisions are comparatively high, labour will be so too: both propositions are true, because used in the supposition of different degrees. I repeat therefore, that such an high price of provisions, as must be attended by an high price of labour, is absolutely requisite for the prosperity of manufactures: living must be rendered dear before that general industry, which can alone support a manufacturing people, will be rooted amongst them. /

There is not an instance in Europe of a country making great advances in manufactures, while such country continued under the possibility of labour being low. Dearness of living—high taxes—great riches—some causes or other, must have operated to render high rates of labour necessary. In those countries where manufactures make the greatest shoots, provisions are the highest: viz. Holland and Britain. Listen for a moment

ment to a writer of candour and penetration. “ A Dutch manufacturer, pays “ near one third of what he earns in “ taxes; an English manufacturer, not “ above one tenth, and from necessity “ not above one 36th part of the pro- “ duce of his labour. Such bread as our “ people eat, is sold in Holland at 3d. a “ pound, and flesh at 9d\*.” Notwith- standing such high prices, who will as- sert that manufactures are carried to greater perfection in countries, where provisions and labour are lower? Where is such a country to be found that exceeds the fabricks of Britain?

The importance of enforcing general industry, is so great; that without provisions being high enough to do it, manufactures must go to ruin.

It is a fact well known through all the manufacturing towns of this kingdom, that the labouring poor work no more days in a week than are sufficient to maintain themselves: the remainder is spent in idleness. When provisions are very cheap, they

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\* *Considerations on taxes, &c.* p. 24.

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are more distressed, and their families more unhappy than in the very dearest times; for a man who wastes half his time in idleness, or perhaps in what is worse, will be a poor workman the other half. This is by no means to be wondered at: it would be surprizing, were the fact otherwise. Those therefore who would favour the manufactures of this country should take especial care, not to argue against what, they are pleased to call, the high price of provisions. The bounty having lowered the price of bread, would not have operated in favour of our fabrics, but on the account I before mentioned of causing a *regularity* of price, far exceeding any thing known before.

Upon the whole; the arguments which have been used at various times against the bounty, and free exportation of corn, are all, either mistakes, or frivolous and trivial objections; dictated either by interested men; or by those, who through a false idea of charity, think the poor cannot be fed too cheaply,——and that the only bar to such cheapness, is the exportation. Such a diversity of opinions must always be found on topics that admit dispute; but it is to be hoped, that  
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the legislature will consider the subject quite independent of the influence of opinions so often mistaken——generally false——and in which such manifest contradictions are to be found.

This important point will soon be the subject of debate. *What should be done?* this is a difficult question, when the answer must be framed to avoid offending too harshly, the prejudices of a numerous party. I shall not presume to assert what ought to be done; but I shall venture to state some plans of conduct, which perhaps may not be liable to capital objections.

Considering the subject with a steady eye to facts——experience——and the principles on which the bounty was first given, I think there is great reason to adhere closely to it: this kingdom has risen infinitely in wealth, income and power, while her corn laws continued on that footing; and those laws have undoubtedly advanced her agriculture, and consequently the value, and rental of land, to a height unknown before——and to which they could never have arrived, had it not been for the influence of those  
laws;



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laws ; which all Europe have admired as a master-piece of policy. The conduct therefore apparently the least exceptionable is to adhere to the general laws already made.—

But unhappily ideas very contrary to these, have been so much listened to, that suspensions of these laws—with absolute prohibitions of exportation—and even taking off the duties on importation—have of late been practised with so little ceremony, that we may expect the old laws to continue, but under a perpetual course of new patch-work: such a system I must be allowed to think much worse than a total repeal. The corn trade, for near a century, was the source of vast riches to this nation, and while prices were higher than at present: it was a regular object to many traders in the kingdom—and even formed nine tenths of the commerce of whole ports: such perpetual alterations, tend to destroy this trade—to throw the corn merchants into other pursuits—and in a word, to overturn all those noble effects, which that trade has so amply caused.

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For these reasons, and many others, too numerous for the compass of a pamphlet, it is to be wished, that the corn trade be rather thrown on a total new footing, than remain the subject of such hotch potch work, as it has for some years past been liable to. I will venture to assert, that it had better be placed on an indifferent footing, than left on the best in the world, but subject to perpetual alterations.

There is not a variation that can be imagined, that might not be provided for in one comprehensive and immutable law.

At such a price—a bounty to be given.

At another price importation to be allowed with a certain duty for six months.

At a third price, importation to be allowed duty free for 6 months.

Exportation never to be prohibited, because by such prohibition you do not merely prevent your own corn being sent abroad,

abroad, but you destroy the TRADE OF CORN. Why are your merchants to be cut off from a branch of commerce, which in one respect, has nothing to do with your object, but in another, may much assist it? While the Corn TRADE is permanently free, merchants may store it up from all quarters, and if the price in the mean time rises at home——home will have it: which is the grand principle of preserving an equality of price in any commodity. Without instancing Holland, in whose markets, corn scarcely ever varies, and merely from this principle; how can you want a commodity for your own consumption, which you make an article of trade? When corn is cheap at home, the merchant is not allowed to import (neither will he want it); when it is dear, he is allowed to trade as he pleases.

In such regulations I suppose the legislature to be desirous of keeping corn at an high (according to present ideas) but not an extravagant price: to think of keeping it low, would be so preposterous a conduct, that I shall not suppose the case.

If

If corn could be preserved permanently at a fixed price, I should apprehend the following rates, not an undue mean between the genius of our old laws, and the rage of novel ideas.

The best wheat, at 48s. a quarter.

The best rye, at 28s.

The best barley, at 20s.

I have supposed three variations of price: now if allowances be made for the fineness of the corn; and those variations provided for; quere if the stages in the price, and the regulations consequent might be upon a similar plan, with the underwritten.

A bounty of 5s. a quarter on wheat, 3s. 6d. on rye, and 2s. 6d. on barley, each at the average quality, when at or under these prices; to cease for 6 months, when they are exceeded: and if the excess continues at the end of	}	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Rye</i>	<i>Barley</i>	
		s.	s.	s.	d.
		42	— 26	— 17	6

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that 6 months, the suspension to conti- nue for another 6 months, and so on.	}	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Rye</i>	<i>Barley</i>

Importation with a slight duty when they rise to — — —The variations to hold as above, for 6 months.	}	<i>s.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>s.</i>
		45	— 28	— 19

Importation duty free for 6 months, as above, when they ex- ceed the price of —	}	50	— 31	— 21
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These prices are far lower than the former parliamentary ones; — lower than they ought to be, if exportation was not always allowed, which is a point of the utmost consequence; that it could, in no respect, be justly feared will appear, from reflecting that the ports being opened for importation, at prices by no means high, and a regular *trade* always carrying on in corn, a *supply* would ever be at hand, whenever *demand* arose: nor could the price of wheat ever rise higher in Britain, than among both the trading, and growing nations of Europe: for in such

such case all exportation would stop of itself, and importation take place instead of it. Why have embargoes been so often laid on our exportation, when corn would have been sent away without a bounty? There is no sound reason can be given for such a conduct, but false and mistaken ideas of prices that ought to be esteemed high or low. The very state of the case proves, that corn was lower here than in other countries, or such could not pay our price, with our merchants profit and freight; and on what rational account, are you desirous of having corn cheaper here than elsewhere? It was on different principles that our ancestors reasoned when they passed laws, the wisdom of which we have *felt* for near a century; and heard, the object of Europe's admiration.

I again repeat, that a *free trade* is the foundation of these regulations, and of every other that can rationally be proposed; if a price is fixed at which exportation is to cease, (a most useless clause, as the balance of prices will ever effect it) or if embargoes are ever allowed — then the rates above mentioned ought greatly to be raised. If I was arguing

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for an high price of corn, upon the average of the next 20 years, I would urge you to lay all possible restrictions on exportation — to annul the bounty; and to allow importation duty free. What! will the keeping our corn *at home, and increasing the quantity from abroad, make it scarce and dear?* Doubtless, such an argument was advanced in 1688: but reason, aided by long experience, converts a seeming paradox into a plain and self-evident proposition. We will suppose you to command an artificial plenty; you import so much that wheat is at 20s. a quarter, it is certainly cheap, but how long will it remain so? The farmers can see nothing but loss in that culture, they will not sow it — oats, grasses, turneps, any thing pays better than wheat when at a low price. Thus you have next year a scarcity; — this is unavoidable; it may likewise be scarce among your neighbours — then your scarcity at once rises to a famine. This was the corn history of England before better ideas took place. It is at present, and always has been the case in all countries where the exportation is prohibited. In twenty years, to cast up the average price, we should find wheat at four or

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five pounds a quarter, for it would rise to an equal height with other commodities, according to the value of money, as well as its immediate worth, under which rates it has hitherto been kept, by the operations of our corn laws. But we should have all the evils of high prices without the advantages, for our farmers would be ruined — *regular, not high prices are their object.*

Before I conclude, I shall venture an observation or two, on the landed interest, as peculiarly concerned in this important question. The gentlemen who have urged so many arguments against the bounty, have not forgotten their usual ingenuity when they touch on this head; they tell you, first, that your advantage will be best fought, by annulling your corn laws, for then, prices of all commodities will so fall, that an estate of five hundred a year, will be as good as a thousand. — Here, you find the bounty is your enemy; but turn a page or two further and he shall be your very good friend, for there you will find, But why are the interests of the landed part of the nation to get the better of all the rest?

Why

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Why are rents to be raised to the ruin of manufactures?

But not to lose time in answering people who scarcely ever advance a position without presently answering it themselves; let it be remarked, that the rents of England have been greatly raised by the effects of the bounty, and free exportation. The regularity of the price of corn, has raised a great competition for farms in every part of the kingdom; agriculture has been so animated with the advantages resulting from regular prices, that she possesses a spirit unknown before. In such a situation, who doubts that the interest of landlords is nearly concerned? Is it possible that rents should not rise? The fact has proved it. And the nobility and gentry may be assured that their truest friend is a regular price of corn, as *high* as is consistent with *regularity*, for then rents will not only be well paid, but farms will never be unoccupied: and let them break up and bring into culture whatever number of waste acres they please, tenants will not be wanting, let the quantity be as considerable as it may. These are advantages which one would think, should speak too feelingly to be effaced

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effaced by the whipt cream of phantastic ideas: you may be promised heaps of imaginary profits; — adhere to those which are real.

But we are further told, that in proportion to your profit, is the nation's evil: Strange doctrine indeed! The falsity of the assertion is sufficiently proved, in the preceding pages; but, a word or two to those who hold the landed interest of Britain so cheaply. Agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, most flourish, when most harmonized: none but fools would suppose their interest separate: but when the rage of party will draw comparisons, such odious parallels must be answered; the landed interest of this country, is of ten times the importance of all other interests, and this in every respect that could come into such an enquiry: wealth; income; population; stability. If interests are ever separately considered, it demands preheminance, and it ought, and must have it. But may it never be falsely thought to be raised, at the expence of either of the others, nor in return, ought any interests of commerce or manufactures absurdly to expect advance-

vancement, by lowering the value of the products of the earth.

A rise of rent, of only one shilling an acre, adds £1,600,000 a year to the total of England alone. When the advance of income is so great, and all attendant consequences so important, would it not be madness to hazard such advantages;— not for the good of manufactures;— but in compliance with wild notions, that have nothing but chimera for their foundation?

Keep the products of the earth at a regular price, and the higher the better;— you thereby are sure of increasing the value and rental of estates, and you at the same time give those advantages to manufactures, without which they never flourished.

F. I. N. I. S.