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AN  
APPEAL  
TO A  
HUMANE PUBLIC,  
FOR THE POORER  
*MILLERS and BAKERS,*  
RESPECTING THE HIGH PRICE OF BREAD,  
AND THE INJURY SUSTAINED BY THEM  
FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE  
*London Flour, Meal & Bread Company.*  
WITH  
AN ACCOUNT OF THE EFFECT THE INSTITUTION OF THIS  
NEW CHARTERED COMPANY  
HAD IN IMMEDIATELY  
*Raising, instead of lowering, the Price of Corn.*  
BY  
AN ATTENTIVE OBSERVER.

“—————He takes my Life  
“ Who takes the Means by which I live.”  
SHAKESPEARE.

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was stoutly denied by them, and so well resisted, that not a shadow of proof appeared of misconduct on their parts, though their conduct was sifted into with a degree of severity bordering on rancour and malevolence, and although incredible pains were taken to criminate them.

Nevertheless Lord Liverpool in the House of Lords, and Lord Hawkesbury in the House of Commons, the Patrons of the Charter, persisted in bringing the bill forward; and after one solitary evening's debate in the House of Commons, the bill was carried there by a majority of *one* vote only.

In the House of Lords the Bill met a more vigorous resistance, the Millers and Bakers having there the aid of the Corn Merchants, whose arguments made so powerful an impression as to impede the progress of the bill in the Upper House for a month; and it was at last carried in what is deemed a full House of Lords by a majority of Proxies.— Thus at the time of an active and enlightened commerce, a bill was passed to unite by Charter, what it has been the care and wisdom

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dom of ages to keep separate, viz. the three trades of Corn Merchant, Miller and Mealman, and Baker—a proceeding which the manhood of Commerce spurned and trod under foot, and which the *dotage* of Commerce alone would have sanctioned. This Charter got the name of *Lord Liverpool's Scheme* from the strenuous endeavours of his Lordship in the House of Lords, and the uncommon pains he took to carry the bill, in which he was not sparing of abuse of his opponents, the poor Millers and Bakers.— His Lordship stated abuses existing from the want of such an institution, which this Charter, he said, would remedy; and quoted the high price of bread as a proof of some combination which this Charter was to destroy. He also exerted his eloquence in stating his commiseration for the poor, who were, he said, to be materially benefited through this institution, by a considerable reduction in the price of bread, and by the manufacture of an inferior quality, at a cheaper rate.

The arguments of the Corn Merchants against this novelty are detailed in the London  
Petition

Petition against the bill; and in the Liverpool Petition, which last was inserted in the Newspapers of the 17th and 18th of July, 1800. The general arguments of the Corn Merchants, Millers, Mealmen and Bakers were adduced by his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, Lord Westmoreland, Lord Hobart, and Lord Stanhope, in sundry speeches and debates of singular eloquence and great precision; which made a deep impression on the public mind. Those arguments were supported by facts and proofs, and were found unanswerable; but a profit of 10 per cent. per annum to the parties concerned, carried a bill, which had many subscribers in both Houses. Great promises were made to the public on behalf of this new Company by its Patrons, Lord Liverpool and Lord Hawkebury.

After the abuse those two Lords of Parliament poured so profusely on the Millers and Bakers, as if they were the cause that bread was at 17½ d. the quarter loaf, it ought not to be deemed unreasonable on the part of the Millers and Bakers to enquire into

into what benefits the public has received, and to state what injuries the Public and the Millers and Bakers have sustained, and do sustain, by the New Chartered Company.

The first injury the Public sustained from this New Chartered Company, was, an advance of 21s. per quarter in the price of wheat in August last; for so soon as the bill passed into a law and the Charter was established, the King of Prussia, alarmed at this novelty, and conceiving it intended as a British monopoly, which might produce some disagreeable effect on the grain trade, the chief trade of his dominions, laid a duty of 120 guilders per last on the export of wheat from thence, about 11s. 3d. per quarter British sterling, which had the effect to advance wheat immediately in England 21s. per quarter; which is a fact notorious on the corn exchange, and has since cost the bread-buyers at least 500,000 pounds sterling.

The next injury the Public sustained on this account, was from the interruption of the commerce in the grain trade with Prussia, on account of this new duty, which occasioned

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sioned a distrust, and a delay of shipments of foreign corn for England. The merchants abroad being alarmed at this new Charter, and the language held out by its Patrons, were afraid to ship at an advanced price, fearing lest their adventures might, through the competition of this powerful Company, suffer loss as in 1796; and during this delay a fresh customer, Portugal, whose harvest had failed, came into the foreign markets, and not only advanced the price of corn abroad, but intercepted the grain intended to be shipped for Great Britain, and thus lessened the supply; and the merchants consignees in England were ordered to ship the foreign wheat on hand for Lisbon. These are the two first injuries this country sustained from the new chartered privileged Company.

The next injury occasioned by this Company was this. The capital engaged in the Corn Trade, prior to this new Company of united Millers, Mealmen and Bakers, was not only sufficient for dealing in the first necessary of life, but it was more than sufficient, because it included not only the capital  
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of the British, but it included also the Capital of the Foreign Corn Merchants, which united, had enabled them already by the ability of holding, not only to keep up grain to the utmost price a full market would allow, but empowered them in case of a brisk demand and lessened supply, then to withhold and so still further advance the price of bread, the first necessary, the staff of life. To the already too powerful capital employed in the Corn Trade, this Company has added a capital of £150,000, with all the weight of its credit; and so has increased by every guinea employed, the competition in the purchase of grain, and thus enhanced instead of lessening, as Lord Liverpool asserted this Corporation would do, the price of corn and bread, which is proved by an advance of five pence in the quartern loaf.

In vain were they warned by the most experienced and enlightened Merchants in the Corn Trade of the effects which must follow such a Charter.

In vain were they warned in writing, in plain and precise terms, that if this charter

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were established the King of Prussia would lay a protecting duty on the export of grain from his dominions, and so enhance its price in Great Britain, or perhaps prohibit the export in the needful hour.

In vain were they told, that in times of calamity they could do no good, but in doubtful times might do considerable harm, by deterring others at a needful period, from attempting the supply; which experience had proved before in the year 1795 to be a national mischief.

In vain were they told, that the little Miller and the little Baker would be deeply injured or ruined by their operations. They nevertheless persisted—the consequences followed—the King of Prussia laid a duty on the export from Poland, the price of wheat and corn was enhanced, the supply was lessened at a needful moment, and the Bakers deprived of their customers are now in a fair way to ruin.

Lord Liverpool and Lord Hawkesbury asserted publicly that as the Company were to bake only inferior bread for the use of the poor and limited to a capital of only £150,000, that

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that no prejudice could from thence result to either Miller or Baker.

But experience proves that the Bakers and Millers were right, when they asserted, that if this Company were established, it would materially injure the Millers and Bakers as Manufacturers; which is already matter within proof.

The new Chartered Company for the Manufacture of Flour, Meal, and Bread, has commenced its operations, and has with the usual eagerness for business, common to young traders, taken very great pains to get customers for the purchase of its Flour and Bread, and has already had the success which might be expected from the powerful interest and influence engaged in its favor. This has already injured in some degree the little Millers and more materially injured the little Bakers in the Metropolis. The diminution of the consumption of Flour in wealthy families has reduced many Bakers from the manufacture of fifteen to eleven sacks of flour per week, or in that proportion; and the deduction of the quantity of bread made by the new Company

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has affected many Bakers, by a still further reduction of their sales; by taking away those old customers who are now served with bread by the New London Company. Surely this is a very hard case.

When a Baker sells fifteen sacks of flour per week, he perhaps is doing well; when he is reduced to eleven sacks per week, he perhaps may live; but reduce him to nine sacks per week, and he may not be able even to exist and pay his rates and taxes; and may thus be conducted to ruin. So the little Miller, who can exist by his present share of grinding, may, in like manner, by a like interference equally suffer.

If the Company confined itself to supply the poor as a charity, at a lower price, and chose to suffer loss by its humanity; if it confined its manufacture of bread to that purpose, the injury to the Baker might be less; but at present the very reverse is the case. The Noblemen and Gentlemen concerned in the New Company, actually solicit customers for this plan, not among the poor, but among the highest, most opulent, and middling

ding ranks of society; and by their influence actually force an unnatural sale of their bread and flour, and thus deprive the Baker, not only of his customers, but his *very best* customers, whose ready pay and large demand have hitherto enabled him to trust his poorer neighbour; and thus his loss is aggravated, not only by his being deprived of his customers, but by the kind of customers he is deprived of who are his best, and whose custom is in many cases the capital of the Baker, on which he depends to pay for his weekly purchased stock.

When this Company was established bread was at  $17\frac{1}{2}$ d. per loaf; it is now at  $22\frac{1}{2}$ d. and therefore a larger capital is required by the Baker, and his risk increased in his trust of his poorer neighbour: how shall he meet this increase of capital but by the pay of the opulent and large customer? and if deprived of such, even in a moderate proportion, how shall he live?

The attention of the great and opulent in general, and even of the subscribers to the New Company, is reasonably requested to this

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this particular point, and they are in duty bound to weigh whether this plan ought to be persevered in, and whether men of rank and fortune ought, in justice, to enter into a competition with a description of tradesmen, who generally and almost universally speaking move in a very humble sphere, and have no other mode of procuring existence than by the labour of their hands, in a business to which they have been bred, and who are acquainted with no other; and whether, at a time like the present, when so much larger a capital is needful for the poor Baker, and when he finds it difficult to subsist, it is a proper, or a right, or a defensible thing, to deprive him of *any* customers, much more of the *very best*, who are his prop, his stay, his capital, his dependance, and support?

The Corn Merchants may laugh at the interference of great men in their business, and say, "We are aware of their operations, we know what monopoly did before to our ruin; we are able to take care that the interference of great men shall at least do us no harm, and we have hopes that we can turn it to our advantage;

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vantage; but the poor Millers and Bakers can only deplore any interference in their business, and say in bitterness of heart, "if this interference be continued, we shall be ruined!"

It was a feeling, a generous, a considerate, and a noble reply of a person of exalted and illustrious rank when solicited to become a customer to the New Company by a nobleman a subscriber, "I have no objection," said he, "either to eat brown bread myself, or to compel my servants to eat it; but if I quit my present Baker she will be ruined!—she is a Widow, and has a large family, and depends greatly upon my custom. They must live, and if they cannot live by her business, as they do at present, I shall be called upon, and I think justly, to do something towards their maintenance. I applaud Charity, and you are at liberty to give away as much as you please of your property, but I think it not only unjust but foolish in opulent men, to enter into a competition with poor individuals. If they sell lower than a living profit, the individual is ruined and comes on the parish; and that  
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“ is an evil greater than any good usually done  
 “ by these institutions; and if they fell as  
 “ high as individuals, where is the benefit but  
 “ to themselves? I have observed that ever  
 “ since great men and public bodies have  
 “ stirred so much in this business, matters  
 “ have gone from good to bad, and from bad  
 “ to worse. When this New Company was  
 “ established bread was at  $17\frac{1}{2}$ d. per quarter  
 “ loaf, and this Company was to reduce the  
 “ then thought enormous price; but it is now  
 “ advanced to  $22\frac{1}{2}$ d. so they have been de-  
 “ ceived. If they work for profit, what be-  
 “ nefit are they to any body but themselves?  
 “ if they work at a loss, what right have they  
 “ to ruin industrious hard-working families  
 “ and throw them on the parish? I will not  
 “ be a customer to such an institution; and I  
 “ think humanity, wisdom and justice should  
 “ rather induce them to give up the business  
 “ than to continue the plan.”

It is merely but justice to the poor Millers  
 and Bakers, respectfully to state these reasons  
 to the public, in their defence, as they suffer  
 materially at present, and are likely to suffer  
 more;

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more; and to assure the Public that in a time  
 such as the present, the custom of all their old  
 friends is absolutely needful for the support of  
 their families; and any diminution of their  
 already reduced trade is a serious grievance.  
 It is but fair to inform such Customers as  
 have left their old Millers and Bakers of the  
 injury thence arising, and earnestly to entreat  
 their kind consideration of their case, and  
 speedy return to their old shops, for if these  
 be deserted, many Bakers must be injured and  
 some must be ruined.

Such is the known humanity of the age,  
 that the Bakers may cheerfully appeal to the  
 Public on a subject so important to them as  
 the maintenance of their families; and they  
 may trust they are not mistaken in the opi-  
 nion they may entertain, that a plain repre-  
 sentation of their case may have a beneficial  
 influence for them, not only with individuals  
 unconnected with the New Company, but  
 even with many who through motives of hu-  
 manity are engaged in that design, and who  
 may not be aware of the serious mischief their  
 intended benevolence brings upon industrious  
 D families,

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families, whom it never could be their intention to oppress or injure.

The Millers and Bakers have a right to observe to the Public, that they more than any others are affected by the high price of corn, which so far from being beneficial, is to them a great detriment; and no person can wish more ardently than they that the loaf should be sold as cheap as it used to be, for the advance in the price of corn is no benefit to them, but so far an injury, inasmuch as it obliges them at present prices to employ four times the capital they formerly have done, and every individual is well acquainted that the profits of the Baker are weekly limited by law.

Lord Liverpool emphatically said in the House of Lords, " This scheme is patronized by subscribers of the highest rank and respectability, by noble Lords on both sides the House, some in Administration; by Members of the Commons, of whom forty-eight are subscribers; by the Governors of the East India Company; by the Heads of the West India Merchants, and by the Governor and Company of the Bank

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" of England." Is it possible for the Bakers to contend with a Company possessing such high Rank, such powerful Interest, such extensive Influence, so large a Capital and Credit, and who unite by Charter the Three Trades of Corn Merchant, Miller and Mealman, and Baker, and of course unite three profits in one? Common Sense says it is not possible; and to the Humanity and Justice of the Public, and of the Subscribers to this Institution, and in Pity to the Families of the poor Millers and Bakers, the Author for them makes this Appeal.

A CASE in Point—*with general Observations.*

THE Court of Lisbon, many years ago, prohibited the Importation of British Goods and Manufactures into Portugal. The prohibition was positive, decisive, and clear, and the infringement loaded with the severest penalties. The then British Ambassador demanded an audience of the Portuguese Monarch, and addressed him thus: " Sire, Nature has wisely distributed her various gifts in different parts of the universe, and upon the exchange of commodities Trade subsists. To

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your Majesty's dominions she has been prodigal of bounties. They produce diamonds, gold, spices, wines, oils, salt, &c.—to other countries she has not been so liberal; and the British Nation is obliged to supply in return for such goods as she can afford to buy from your Majesty's dominions the produce of the labours of her people in steel, iron, and brass, and the manufactures of her looms. Your Majesty, not contented with the riches of your own possessions, has determined that you will not suffer the sale of the labour of Britain in your dominions; but that your subjects shall turn manufacturers, and so keep your gold and silver yourself. I will tell your Majesty the consequences. So soon as your prohibition is known in England, 200,000 laborious men will be thrown out of employ—they must live—the King of England will then fit out forty or fifty sail of the line and five hundred transports; He will fill them with troops and send them to the Brazils, and take them from you, and thus your Majesty will deservedly suffer for attempting to invert the order of Nature, which is not done with impunity. I think your Majesty had better be contented

contented with the wealth you have at so easy a rate, and had better suffer those laborious men to continue their occupations than force them, by depriving them of bread, to go armed with the steel they manufacture to obtain forcibly the possession of that wealth, of which you are not content to make a fair use. Your Majesty had better preserve at so easy a rate as you do at present, not only the quiet possession of your wealth, but also the friendship of a people who will bravely defend you in case of attack, so long as your Majesty does not interfere to prevent them from earning their daily bread by the supply of your necessities."—— This had its desired effect, the prohibition was withdrawn. It behoves all men of opulence on their own account at this moment well to ponder that speech and apply it.

“ My labour,” says the poor man, “ is my existence; if I am deprived of that, and purposely deprived of it by the Rich and Mighty, what shall I then do?” Let the Rich and Mighty answer the question, and tell him what he shall do.—It behoves also all persons concerned in Trade and Manufactures to consider how they countenance such a con-

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concern.—Brewing is nearly allied to Baking, and soon we may see a Gigantic Company for Brewing, and so for all the trades which lead to opulence by the employment of small capital and persevering industry; which if this system prevail will have no chance; and where will the mischief stop?

The experience of three centuries has proved that a Monopoly, or privileged Charter in one Country, has always generated a counter privileged Company, or Monopoly, or protecting Duty in another, by which both parties generally suffer.

In society there are various ranks; the Rich, who do not labour, and who have no further trouble respecting property than to receive the fruits of other men's labour without any toil of their own; the Middling Ranks, who unite to a moderate portion of labour of body the various labours of the mind, and by their joint efforts subsist and frequently enrich themselves. The Poor, who labour with their hands for their daily bread.—While things go on in their natural course all is well, at least comparatively so; and to “let well alone,” is the wisest maxim ever adopted by any statesman, but

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a maxim of the wisdom of which it generally takes years to convince them. By the interference of Government in the Corn Trade in 1794, the quartern loaf advanced in two years from 6d. to 15d. On their leaving the trade, it fell from 15d. to 7½ d. The London Company found the quartern loaf at 17½ d. it is now at 22½ d.

The dread of Innovation has been a subject of great outcry and preparation on the part of the Rich, who have argued and armed strongly against every species of Change. The Poor have certainly as great a right to complain of Innovation, when it deprives them of their only and the whole of their possessions—their daily bread. If the Rich do not allow an Infringement of their Rights and Properties, let them be at least consistent; let them keep in their own sphere, and cease to practise that Innovation which they would themselves, more than any others, loudly and violently complain of and even resist, and let them cease to give ground or cause for retaliation.

Whoever seeks to invert the natural order of things, is certain to find that at last he has done harm, however good his intentions might

be;

be; for in the trading, as in the moral world, by the experience and attentive care of ages, the wisdom of man, which is his guide from the Almighty, establishes things in what may be called their natural course. Attempts to change this course cannot be made without great mischief, and generally speaking great danger, because the good which it is thence presumed may arise, is generally found to be much less than the evil which springs from the Change, which the repeal of the Brown Bread Act has proved. To attempt to change the course of things well and long established, is to attempt to change the order of Nature, which is the law of God.

When Lewis the 14th of France was invited and pressed to take a share in an *Accaparement*, which is a concern of the nature of this spoken of, he replied—"If I turn Tradesman, who will turn King? I am content with my own Trade, it is a good one; I will not interfere with Tradesmen, lest Tradesmen should think of interfering with Me."

*Sat verbum Sapienti.*

F I N I S.

Allen, Printer, 15, Paternoster-Row.