AN

APOLOGY

FOR THE

CORN LAWS;

OR,

HIGH WAGES AND CHEAP BREAD

INCOMPATIBLE.

BY

A COUNTRY CURATE.

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1826.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

AUGUSTUS FREDERICK,

DUKE OF SUSSEX,

EARL OF INVERNESS,

&c. &c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES,

(WITH HIS GRACIOUS PERMISSION),

ARE MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS MOST OBEDIENT AND DUTIFUL

SERVANT AND CHAPLAIN,

THE AUTHOR.

ERRATUM.

Page 73, line 4 from the bottom, *for*, attempts estimate, *read*, attempts to estimate.

AN

APOLOGY

FOR

THE CORN LAWS,

&c. &c.

SECTION I.

PERHAPS there is no phenomenon connected with political economy, more singular or important, than the increased price, compared with that of former years, of corn, and all other kinds of agricultural produce, in the United Kingdoms; and their stationary, or else recently depressed price, amongst our neighbours on the Continent. It evidently belongs to the science of political economy, to account for this extraordinary difference of price, in the articles above-mentioned, here and abroad. Whether the explanations commonly given, be satisfactory or not, may be a matter of doubt: they certainly cannot be so, unless they clearly and fully account for the fact.

Before proceeding farther, it may be as well to lay before the reader, or to recal to the attention of those who have already seen it, the Comparative Statement which lately appeared in the public prints, of the price of a quarter of wheat at various ports on the Continent of Europe, and the cotemporary price of the same quantity in England, according to the returns published in the Gazette. It is understood to be a sort of Government Report; and the accuracy of the prices stated abroad, to rest on the authority of our Consuls at the respective ports. As those Gentlemen appear to have been officially called upon to make their returns, we are entitled to conclude that their calculations have been carefully made, and may be fully depended upon.

The following is the statement itself, copied from the public prints.

Abstract of Return of Accounts from His Majesty's Consuls Abroad, relative to the Prices of Foreign Corn, during 1825.

Place, and Month.	Price of Foreign Wheat per Winchester Quarter, at Current Rate of Exchange.			Gazette Price of English, for same period.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Odessa, June	0 0	17 15	9 5	3	9	4
St. Petersburgh, July	1	6	7	3	7	11
Liebau, October	1	0	6	3	4	7
Gottenburg, September	1	12	0	3	3	10
Dantzig, ditto	1	0	6	3	1	5
Koningsburg, ditto	0	18	0	3	1	4
Memel, ditto	0	17	10	3	2	9
Copenhagen, ditto	0	16	4	3	4	6
Embden, ditto	0	19	10	3	1	5
Hamburg, ditto	0	17	0	3	1	5
Amsterdam, ditto	1	3	5	3	2	9
Rotterdam, ditto	0 1	19 8	3 11	3	2	9
Antwerp, ditto	1	9	5	3	2	9
Bordeaux, ditto	1	18	4	3	1	5
Charente, September	1	13	5	3	5	10
Havre de Grace, ditto	1	17	0	3	9	3
Marseilles, December	2	9	8	3	1	5
Corunna, ditto	1	19	8	3	4	6
Cadiz, ditto	2 4	13 3	0 1	3	4	6
Malaga, October	3	4	2	3	4	7
Alicant, December	3	5	11	3	4	6
Lisbon, ditto	2	15	4	3	1	5
Leghorn, ditto	1	13	7	3	4	6
Civita Vecchia, ditto	1	3	4	3	2	9
Ancona, ditto	0	19	10	3	1	5
Venice, ditto	1	1	11	3	2	9
Trieste, ditto	1	2	6	3	4	6
Fiume, ditto	0	18	8	3	1	5
Philadelphia, ditto	1	11	10	3	1	5
Washington, ditto	1	13	4	3	4	6
New York, September	1	4	7	3	9	4
Norfolk, June	1	11	7	3	7	8
Rhode Island, October	1	9	8	3	4	7
New Hampshire, May	2	5	0	3	9	8

This is a very singular and curious document. With the exception of Spain, it shews that, in England, wheat is dearer than in any other country. Portugal seems to come next; then France; then America; then the Low Countries; but in the North of Europe, wheat appears to sell at the lowest price of all. It would perhaps be difficult to explain satisfactorily, all the anomalies in the above return. If we consider which are the most favourable soils and climates for agricultural produce, we should expect to find it cheaper as we go South, and dearer as we go North; but the reverse, at present, is found to be the fact; which shews us that the price of corn must depend upon other things besides the soil and climate.

However, it would be a vain attempt to account for the remarkable differences in the price of wheat in all the different European countries, without more and better information, respecting their government, population, taxes, and rate of wages, than is easily accessible. Let us confine ourselves to our own country, and, as far as we can, endeavour to ascertain the causes which have made agricultural produce so much dearer with us than with our neighbours; and whether that circumstance is beneficial, or otherwise, to the general interests of the country.

It is a well-known fact, that in former times, England exported annually, a considerable quantity of grain of all kinds; whereas, at present, were

importation free, the home growers would be undersold in their own market, by almost all the foreign growers of wheat, over the whole world.

Now, it would seem that the price of grain must be regulated by the nature of the soil, and the climate—by greater or less skill in agriculture—by better, or inferior implements of husbandry, and by the standard of the rents, taxes, and price of labour. If we compare our present condition with what it was when we were able to export grain, we shall find that our climate is certainly no worse than it was; that our soil is much improved, and that we probably possess greater skill in agriculture than any other country, and, most certainly, far better, and more improved implements of husbandry.

On all these accounts, corn ought to have been cheaper than formerly; for it is certainly produced with much less manual labour; and is therefore virtually cheaper, though it be not so in its comparative money price.

Hence there remain three other causes, namely, increase in rents, taxes, and price of labour; to all, or some of which, the high price of agricultural produce must be owing. If rents, taxes, and the price of labour, had remained unchanged, then corn must have been cheaper now than formerly; because there is ample ground to believe, that the same quantity of corn is produced in England, at the present time, with less labour than formerly;

if not, all our improvements in agriculture, and in agricultural machinery, have been to very little purpose.

But it is certain that rents, taxes, and the price of labour, have not remained constant; therefore it is manifest, that the increase of some or all of these three things, have not only counteracted the effect which greater skill and improved husbandry would necessarily have had in lowering the price of agricultural produce, but have raised that price to a very high standard, far beyond the standard at which it formerly stood, or that which now prevails in the rest of the world. If we look over the Report given above, of the cotemporary prices of wheat, in England, and in the different countries in Europe, we shall see, that in many cases the price in England, is three times as great as in several other countries. From no country can we buy wheat that has to bear greater expences of carriage than from Poland, with the exception, perhaps, of America and the Mediterranean. Yet all the expences of bringing a quarter of wheat from Poland into our own warehouses, appear to be under twenty shillings; consequently, as the average price of the quarter of wheat with us, is upwards of sixty shillings, and the average price in Poland, less than twenty shillings, it is manifest, that if our ports were open for the importation of foreign corn, it might be sold at least twenty shillings a quarter lower than our present market-price. Now, the

quantity of grain, of all sorts, actually sold by all the farmers in the United Kingdoms, deducting from the gross produce, what is required for seed, and for the horses employed in husbandry, may be estimated as equivalent altogether to about 17,500,000 quarters of wheat; consequently the Corn Laws, by preventing the importation of foreign grain, evidently oblige the consumers to pay for all sorts of grain alone, the enormous sum of 17,500,000*l.* more than they probably would have to pay, if the Corn Trade were free.

Neither is this all. The price of wheat is found, by experience, to regulate the price of all other articles of provision, such as butchers'-meat, cheese, butter, poultry, &c. &c. Indeed, independent of experience, we might safely have concluded that the price of wheat would have that effect upon them; for all these things have a certain value, in proportion to that of wheat, as agreeable and nutritive articles of food. If, therefore, the price of wheat be permanently reduced thirty per cent. the price of all those other articles of food must be reduced in the same ratio.

Now, it is not improbable, that twice as much, at least, is paid for butchers'-meat of all sorts, butter, cheese, poultry, &c. &c. as is paid for grain of all sorts. The proportion is considerably more in the families of the wealthy and of the middling classes; but probably less in the families of the working classes, whose aggregate consumption is

by far the greatest. Hence it may very fairly be assumed, that at least half as much more again, is paid throughout the United Kingdoms, for all the other articles of agricultural produce, as is paid for grain of all sorts. This assumption, indeed, may be shewn to be considerably under the mark; for Mr. Colquhoun has estimated the whole agricultural produce of the kingdom at the sum of 216,817,624*l.* out of which the whole quantity of grain, of all sorts, produced, is estimated at 73,734,291*l.* or rather more than one-third. Consequently, if all sorts of grain were to be reduced in price, by the amount of 17,500,000*l.* all other sorts of agricultural produce, at a *very low calculation*, would have to be reduced, by the enormous sum of 17,500,000*l.* + 8,750,000*l.* or 26,250,000*l.*; so that the reduction in price of all descriptions of English agricultural produce, if grain were reduced thirty per cent. would amount altogether to 43,750,000*l.*; a sum within a few millions of the whole public revenue of these kingdoms, including the National Debt, Sinking Fund, and all the expences of government.

On the present occasion, in the course of the argument that is to follow, it will be assumed, that the continuance of the Corn Laws actually does occasion this immense difference in price, which by and by will have to be dealt with and distributed amongst the different classes which it concerns.

The most obvious reflection for any person, at first, to make upon this statement, is, that if by preventing the importation of foreign grain, every sort of agricultural produce is made twenty or thirty per cent. dearer than it otherwise would or might be, were the Corn Trade free, the destruction of what is called the home monopoly, would be a public benefit to all ranks of men, except those immediately interested in having the price of agricultural produce high, equal in amount to the difference that would be paid in price.

Indeed it may seem to many, and, in fact, loud and reiterated complaints sufficiently prove it does, that this immense difference in the price of the necessaries of life, is just the same thing as an enormous tax to the same amount, imposed upon the whole community, for the exclusive benefit of one of its parts; and that those who impose and support such an unjust and intolerable tax, do so, by abusing, for their own base and dishonest gains, the powers intrusted to them solely for the public benefit. For if the Corn Laws do not occasion any difference in the prices of all sorts of agricultural produce, from what those prices would be, if there were no Corn Laws, their continuance is worse than useless; but if they do occasion a difference, then are they chargeable with the whole amount of that difference, which it has been shewn may be estimated at upwards of forty-three millions sterling.

Now, this vast difference in price must necessarily be paid by the consumers. If we suppose that all the working classes, and all in trade and business, receiving wages and remuneration for their labour, *could receive precisely the same wages and remuneration, if the Corn Laws were done away with, that they do now;* then it is impossible to deny, that the Corn Laws impose a tax upon their hard-earned gains, which bears the same proportion to 43,750,000*l.* that their consumption does to that of the whole kingdom.

Suppose that the consumption of the collected mass of all, who receive wages and remuneration for their manual labour, amounts to three-fourths of the whole consumption of the kingdom; then, if they could receive the same wages without, as with the Corn Laws, it is clear those laws impose upon them a tax, to the amount of three-fourths of 43,750,000*l.*, that is, of 32,812,500*l.*

It appears by Mr. Colquhoun's calculations, that three-fourths of the whole population are productive labourers; and therefore, as hard-working people, when they can get it, eat at least as much as the idle and the unemployed, it is fair to assume that they consume in proportion to their numbers; that is to say, that their consumption of agricultural produce amounts to three-fourths of that of the whole kingdom. One part, barley converted into malt, they almost entirely consume; as a much greater quantity of malt liquor, and of British

spirits, is consumed by the labouring classes, in proportion to their numbers, than by the rich. If therefore it should appear, that the labouring classes could receive precisely the same wages without, as with the Corn Laws; and, consequently, that those laws actually impose upon them a tax to the amount of upwards of thirty-two millions sterling, it may safely be asserted, that their stoutest advocates must give them up, as absolutely indefensible. And those in whose hands is lodged the legislative power, may be well assured, in such a case, that should they attempt any longer to force their restrictions upon the people, the people's physical power would snap their cords asunder, and cast off their bonds, with as much ease as Samson did the withies with which the Philistines vainly attempted to bind him.

Probably the whole question, whether it be expedient to retain or to abolish our present system of Corn Laws, will depend upon the solution of the problem, "What would be the condition of the "labouring classes, as to wages, if foreign grain "was allowed to be imported, and wheat was "consequently sold in our markets, say at fifty-"four shillings instead of seventy-four shillings the "quarter; that is, at a difference of twenty shil-"lings in the quarter?"

When the Author of these pages, a few weeks

ago, during the intense interest lately excited in Parliament, and in the country generally, first began to turn his thoughts to the examination of the subject of the Corn Laws, he took it for granted, with probably many others, that the labouring classes would be able to receive precisely the same wages without the Corn Laws, as with them. He might have satisfied himself with asserting, that the Corn Laws imposed a tax upon the labouring classes of thirty-two millions; he might have descanted on the benefits, real or supposed, of trade perfectly free in every way; he might have urged the authority of so many men of genius and science, who had so powerfully inculcated the general principle of free trade;—but he thought, if he could do nothing more than put forth authority as argument, he would only be making himself a trumpeter in the wake of those great and distinguished individuals, to whose high reputation that argument of authority would owe all its force; and as this class of men, though very useful in their way, is quite numerous enough already, he was not ambitious of enrolling himself in their band. He felt that something more than theory and assertion was requisite, in any attempt to elucidate a question, upon which the fortune and happiness of so many thousands depended. He therefore endeavoured to make calculations as to the effects of the abolition of the Corn Laws

upon the working classes, from the best statistical data which were accessible to him, in his seclusion in the country.

His studies having been but very recently directed to subjects of this kind, his whole library furnished him with no other resources than the different articles on subjects connected with political economy, contained in the last Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, with a subsequent purchase of "Smith's Wealth of Nations." As to any previous ideas which he might have had on the subject of political economy, he had picked them up like waifs and strays, from the newspapers and reviews of the day.

Nevertheless, feeling a very lively interest in the subject, the result of his reflections soon taught him, that the whole question must hinge upon this circumstance, *whether the labouring classes could, at the same time, enjoy the blessing of cheaper bread, and their former rate of wages?* The result of the best calculations he could make, was, greatly to his surprise at the time, *that they could not.* It will be his business, in the course of these pages, to put those calculations into as intelligible a form as possible; and it will be for those who are kind enough to honour his labours with their attention, to decide, whether those calculations are founded in fact, or whether they are altogether delusive, and bottomed upon unsound principles.

There are doubtless many, who are ready to admit the principle, that grain of all kinds being the product of labour, and being in by far the greatest quantity consumed in this country by daily labourers, its price must of necessity be regulated by the rate of daily wages; so that it is utterly impossible for more than a very short time, that its purchase in any country so circumstanced, can be out of the power of the labourers of that country: for instance, that in whatsoever country agriculture is so far extended, that the quantity of wheat it produces, and does continually produce, is able to maintain all its population, as long as no part of that wheat is exported, it is not possible it can rise, except for a very short time, to such a price, as to put it out of the power of the labouring classes to purchase it with their wages. For the same quantity is annually reproduced, must be sold, and must be consumed, otherwise it will shortly perish of itself; therefore, setting aside for the present, a principle of great importance to be farther elucidated by and by, that the price of corn must always be regulated by the expence of its production, that is to say, as it will be attempted to be shewn shortly, *by the price of labour*—setting this aside for the present, it is obvious, that the price of grain must always, in a very short time, accommodate itself to the pecuniary means of the great mass of its purchasers and consumers, that is, of the labouring classes, because it is impossible for

them to give more for it than they have got to give; and if the sellers are not willing to take that, their commodity must go unsold, and in consequence, being of a perishable nature, must eventually be lost.

It is not meant to deny, that in a great manufacturing country, in which thousands of men may very suddenly be thrown out of all employment, and in which the rate of manufacturing wages is at times subject to excessive fluctuations—it is not meant to deny, but that in such a country, great occasional distress may, and must at times be felt. The fall of wages may only be temporary, and even if it be permanent, it must necessarily take some time before a fall of wages, in any one great branch of industry, can produce its natural and necessary effect in reducing the rate of wages in all other branches, and, among them, in the agricultural branch, and with that bring about diminution in the price of bread, through the consequent diminution in the expence of the production of all agricultural produce.

But *it is* meant to be asserted, that whenever a *permanent* reduction takes place in the price of manufacturing wages, that permanent reduction must of necessity be very shortly followed by a corresponding *permanent* reduction in the price of all sorts of agricultural produce.

If there are any persons who are disposed to withhold their assent from this doctrine, it can only be said to them at present, that it is the doctrine

of common sense, that it is proved by uniform experience, and that it is the received opinion of very competent and skilful men. This will not, however, it must be confessed, hold good, in a year or course of years of unusual scarcity; or where agriculture is in a constantly declining state; or where a great quantity of agricultural produce is exported to other countries.

Still it may be urged, that though in the case supposed, wheat cannot rise to such a price as to put it out of the power of the working classes to purchase it, yet it may rise to such a price as to diminish their means of obtaining other comforts. To this it can only be replied, that if the price of bread has been increasing in any country, but has not increased faster than the price of wages has increased, the labouring classes must have been in a condition continually improving; and would be put into a worse condition, if they had to revert back to their former low rate of wages, and cheaper price of bread. Suppose that, with a certain price of bread, a man could only gain a shilling a day; and that he spent sixpence of it in bread, and sixpence in his other necessaries and comforts. Suppose the price of bread to be doubled, but that he received two shillings a day instead of one: he would then, indeed, have to give a shilling for his daily bread, which formerly only cost him sixpence; but then he would have a shilling a day, instead of sixpence, to spend in his other necessaries and comforts; so that he would perhaps be quite certain not to be worse off than before, and very possibly he might be sixpence a day improved in his means of procuring enjoyments suitable to his situation in life.

If we go back to the earliest periods of our history, and come down to the present time, we shall find the money-price of corn, almost continually on the increase; we shall also find the price of labour likewise continually increasing in the same way; and what is of most importance, we shall find the condition of the lower classes continually improving.

We may judge of the sort of condition in which our forefathers lived, from the following extracts out of honest Holinshed, in the description of England, attached to his Chronicle, by William Harrison.

"There are old men, (says he), yet dwelling in the village "where I remain, which have noted three things to be mar-"vellously altered in England within their sound remem-"brance, and other three things, too, too much increased. "One is the multitude of chimnies lately erected, whereas in "their young days, there were not above two or three, if so "many, in most uplandish towns of the realm, (the religious "houses and manor-places of their lords always excepted, "and peradventure some great personages), but each one "made his fire against a *rere dosse*, in the hall, where he "dined and dressed his meat.—The second is the great, "(although not general) amendment of lodging; for (said "they) our fathers (yea, and we ourselves also) have lien "full oft upon straw pallets, on rough mats covered only

" with a sheet, under coverlets made of dagswain or hop-
" harlots, (I use their own terms), and a good round log
" under their heads, instead of a bolster or pillow. If it
" were so, that our fathers, or the good man of the house,
" had, within seven years of his marriage, purchased a
" mattress or flock bed, and thereto a sack of chaff to rest his
" head upon, he thought himself to be as well lodged as the
" lord of the town, that peradventure lay seldom in a bed
" of down or whole feathers, so well were they contented,
" and with such base kind of furniture; which also is not
" very much amended as yet in some parts of Bedfordshire,
" and else where, further off from our southern parts.
" Pillows (said they) were thought meet only for women
" in child-bed. As for servants, if they had any sheet about
" them, it was well; for seldom had they any under their
" bodies, to keep them from the pricking straws that ran off
" through the canvas of the pallet, and rased their hardened
" hides.—The third thing they tell of, is the exchange of
" vessel, as of treen platters, into pewter, and wooden
" spoons, into silver or tin. For so common were all sorts
" of treen stuff in old time, that a man should hardly find
" four pieces of pewter (of which one was peradventure a
" salt) in a good farmer's house; and yet, for all this fru-
" gality, (if it may so be justly called), they were scarce
" able to live and pay their rents at their days, without
" selling of a cow, or of an horse, or more, although they
" paid but four pounds at the uttermost, by the year."

Presently he goes on to say:

" And as they commend these, so (besides the decay of
" housekeeping, whereby the poor have been relieved) they
" speak also of three things, that are growen to be very
" grievous unto them, to wit, the inhancing of rents, the
" daily oppression of copy holders, whose lords seek to
" bring their poor tenants almost into plain servitude and
" misery, daily devising new means, and seeking up all the

" old, how to cut them shorter and shorter, doubling,
" trebling, and now and then seven times increasing, driving
" them also for every trifle to lose and forfeit their tenures,
" (by whom the greatest part of the realm doth stand and is
" maintained), to the end they may fleece them yet more,
" which is a lamentable hearing. The third thing they
" talk of, is of usury, a trade brought in by the Jews, now
" perfectly practised almost by every Christian, and so com-
" monly, that he is accounted but for a fool, that doth lend
" his money for nothing. In times past, it was *sors pro sorte,*
" that is, the principal only for the principal; but now,
" beside that which is the principal, properly called *usura,*
" we challenge *fœnus,* that is, commodity of soil, and fruits
" of the earth, if not the ground itself. In times past also,
" one in the hundred was much; from thence it rose unto
" two, called in Latin, *usura ex sextante;* three, to wit,
" *ex quadrante;* then to four, to wit, *ex triente;* then to
" five, which is *ex quincunce;* then to six, called *ex se-*
" *misse,* &c. as the account of the *assis* ariseth; and coming
" at the last to *usura ex asse,* it amounteth to twelve in the
" hundred; and therefore the Latins called it *centesima,* for,
" that in the hundred moneth, it doubleth the principal;
" but more of this else where. See Cicero against Verres,
" Demosthenes against Aphobus, and Athenæus, lib. 13 in
" fine; and then, when thou hast read them well, help, I
" pray thee, in lawful manner, to hang up such as take
" *centum pro cento,* for they are no better worthy, as I do
" judge in conscience. Forget not also such landlords as
" use to value their leases at a secret estimation given of the
" wealth and credit of the taker, whereby they seem (as it
" were) to eat them up, and deal with bondmen; so that
" if the lessee be thought to be worth an hundred pounds,
" he shall pay no less for his new term, or else another to
" enter with hard and doubtful covenants. I am sorry to
" report it, much more grieved to understand of the prac-
" tice; but most sorrowful of all, to understand, that men

" of great post and countenance are so far from suffering
" their farmers to have any gain at all, that they themselves
" become graziers, butchers, tanners, sheepmasters, wood-
" men, and *denique quid non,* thereby to enrich themselves,
" and bring all the wealth of the country into their own
" hands, leaving the commonalty weak, or as an idol with
" broken or feeble arms, which may in a time of peace have
" a plausible shew, but when necessity shall inforce, have
" an heavy and bitter sequel."

In another part of Harrison's very amusing description of the manners and customs of our forefathers, he says,

" The bread throughout the land is made of such grain as
" the soil yieldeth, nevertheless the gentility commonly
" provide themselves sufficiently of wheat, for their own
" tables, whilst their household and poor neighbours in
" some shires, are forced to content themselves with rye or
" barley, yea, and in time of dearth, many with bread made
" of beans, peason, or oats, or of altogether, and some acorns
" among, of which scourge the poor do soonest taste, sith
" they are least able to provide themselves of better. I will
" not say that this extremity is oft so well to be seen in
" time of plenty as of dearth; but if I should, I could easily
" bring my trial. For albeit that there be much more
" ground eared now almost in every place, than hath been
" of late years, yet such a price of corn continueth in each
" town and market without any just cause, (except it be
" that landlords do get licences to carry corn out of the land,
" only to keep up the prices for their own private gains, and
" ruin of the common wealth), that the artificer and poor
" labouring man is not able to reach unto it, but is driven to
" content himself with horse corn, I mean beans, peason,
" oats, tares, and lentils; and therefore it is a true proverb,
" and never so well verified as now, that hunger setteth his

" first foot into the horse manger. If the world last a while
" after this rate, wheat and rye will be no grain for poor
" men to feed on; and some caterpillars there are, that can
" say so much already."

Speaking of the different kinds of bread, he says,

" The next sort is named brown bread, of the colour of
" which we have two sorts, one baked up as it cometh from
" the mill, so that neither the bran nor the flour are any
" whit diminished: this Celsus called *autopirus panis,* lib. 2,
" and putteth it in the second place of nourishment. The
" other hath little or no flour left therein at all: howbeit he
" calleth it *panem cibarium,* and it is not only the worst
" and weakest of all the other sorts, but also appointed in
" old time for servants, slaves, and the inferior kind of
" people to feed upon. Hereunto, likewise, because it is
" dry and brickle in the working, (for it will hardly be made
" up handsomely into loaves), some add a portion of rye-
" meal in our time, whereby the rough dryness, or dry
" roughness, is somewhat qualified; and then it is named
" *miscelin,* that is, bread made of mingled corn. Albeit
" that divers do sow or mingle wheat and rye of set purpose
" at the mill, or before it come there, and sell the same at
" the markets under the aforesaid name. In champaign
" countries much rye and barley bread is eaten, but espe-
" cially where wheat is scant and geson."

There does not appear to be any thing said about the dress of the poorer class; however, the reader may take the following copious extract, respecting the dress in England, in good Queen Bess's time, which, if he does not think it too long, he will at least find very amusing.

" An Englishman endeavouring sometime to write of our
" attire, made sundry platforms for his purpose, supposing

" by some of them, to find out one stedfast ground to build
" the sum of his discourse. But in the end, like an orator
" long without exercise, when he saw what a difficult piece
" of work he had taken in hand, he gave over his travel,
" and only drew the picture of a naked man, unto whom he
" gave a pair of sheers in the one hand, and a piece of cloth
" in the other, to the end he should shape his apparel after
" such fashion as himself liked, sith he could find no kind
" of garment that could please him any while together,
" and this he called an Englishman. Certes this writer,
" (otherwise being a lewd popish hypocrite and ungracious
" priest), shewed himself herein, not to be altogether void
" of judgment: sith the phantastical folly of our nation,
" even from the courtier to the carter, is such, that no form
" of apparel liketh us longer, than the first garment is in the
" wearing, if it continue so long, and be not laid aside to
" receive some other trinket, newly devised by the fickle-
" headed tailors, who covet to have several tricks in cutting,
" thereby to draw fond customers to more expence of
" money. For my part, I can tell better how to inveigh
" against this enormity, than describe any certainty of our
" attire; since such is our mutability, that to day, there is
" none to the Spanish guise, to morrow the French toys are
" most fine and delectable; ere long no such apparel as that
" which is after the high Almaign fashion: by and by,
" the Turkish manner is best liked of, otherwise the Morisco
" gowns, the Barbarian sleeves, the Mandilien worn to
" Collie weston ward, and the short French breeches make
" such a comely vesture, that except it were a dog in a
" doublet, you shall not see any so disguised as are my
" countrymen of England.

" I will say nothing of our heads, which sometimes are
" polled, sometimes curled, and suffered to grow at length
" like women's locks; many times cut off above, or under
" the ears, round as by a wooden dish. Neither will I
" meddle with our variety of beards, of which some are

" shaven from the chin, like those of Turks; not a few
" cut short like the beard of Marques Otto; some made
" round like a rubbing brush, other with a *pique de vant*,
" (oh! fine fashion), or now and then suffered to grow
" long; the barbers being grown to be so cunning in this
" behalf as the tailors. And therefore, if a man have a
" lean and straight face, a Marques Otton's cut will make it
" broad and large: if it be platter like, a long slender beard
" will make it seem the narrower; if he be weasel-beaked,
" then much hair left on the cheeks will make the owner
" look big like a bowdled hen; and so grim as a goose, if
" Cornelis of Chelmeresford say true. Many old men do
" wear no beards at all. Some lusty courtiers also, and
" some gentlemen of courage, do wear either rings of gold,
" stones, or pearl, in their ears, whereby they imagine the
" workmanship of God not to be a little amended. But
" herein they rather disgrace than adorn their persons, as by
" their niceness of apparel, for which I say most nations do
" not unjustly deride us, as also for that we do seem to imitate
" all nations round about, as wherein we be like to the
" polypus or chameleon, and thereunto bestow most cost upon
" our a—ses, and much more than upon all the rest of our
" bodies, as women do likewise upon their heads and shoul-
" ders. In women also it is most to be lamented, that they
" do now far exceed the lightness of our men, (who never-
" theless are transformed from the cap even to the very
" shoe), and such staring attire, as in times past was sup-
" posed meet for none but light housewives only, is now
" become an habit for chaste and sober matrons. What
" should I say of their doublets with pendants on the
" breast, full of tags and cuts, and sleeves of sundry
" colours, their gally gascons to bear out their b—ms, and
" make their attire to sit plum round (as they term it) about
" their fardingals, and diversly coloured nether stocks of silk
" jerdsey, and such like, whereby their bodies are rather
" deformed than commended. I have met with some of these

" trulls in London, so disguised, that it hath passed my skill
" to discern whether they were men or women. Thus it is
" now come to pass, that women are become men, and men
" are transformed into monsters; and these good gifts, which
" Almighty God hath given unto us, to relieve our necessi-
" ties withal, (as a nation turning altogether the grace of
" God into wantonness, for

" Luxuriant animi rebus plerunque secundis),

not otherwise bestowed than in all excess, as if we wist
" not otherwise how to consume and waste them. I pray
" God, that in this behalf, our sin be not like unto that of
" Sodom and Gomorha, whose errors were pride, excess of
" diet, and abuse of God's benefits abundantly bestowed
" upon them, beside want of charity towards the poor, and
" certain other points, which the prophet shutteth up in
" silence. Certes the common wealth cannot be said to
" flourish, where these abuses reign, but is rather oppressed
" by the unreasonable exactions made upon rich farmers, and
" of poor tenants, wherewith to maintain the same. Neither
" was it ever merrier with England, than when an English-
" man was known abroad by his own cloth; and contented
" himself at home, with his fine carsie hosen, and a mean
" slop; his coat, gown, and cloak, of brown, blue, or puke,
" with some pretty furniture of velvet or fur, and a doublet
" of sad tawny, or black velvet or other comely silk, without
" such cuts and gawrish colours as are worn in these days,
" and never brought in, but by the consent of the French,
" who think themselves the gayest men when they have
" most diversities of jags and change of colours about them.
" Certes of all estates, our merchants do least alter their
" attire, and therefore are most to be commended; for albeit
" that which they wear be very fine and costly, yet in form
" and colour it representeth a great piece of the ancient
" gravity pertaining to citizens and burgesses: albeit the
" younger sort of their wives, both in attire and costly
" housekeeping, cannot tell, when and how to make an

" end; as being women indeed, in whom all kind of curio-
" sity is to be found and seen, and in far greater measure
" than in women of higher calling. I might here name a
" sort of hues divised for the nonce, wherewith to please
" fantastical heads, as goose t—d green, pease porridge
" tawny, popingay blue, lusty gallant, the devil in the
" head, (I should say the hedge), and such like; but I pass
" them over, thinking it sufficient to have said thus much
" of apparel generally, when nothing can particularly be
" spoken of any constancy thereof."

So much for honest Master William Harrison. If any one should think that these rude extracts are somewhat misplaced, in a dry and serious discussion on a very intricate question, he may perhaps be right. However, we may draw this conclusion from them, that in the merry days of good Queen Bess, and probably long before, there were quite as heavy complaints of the extortion of landlords, and their extravagant rents, and of the high price of the necessaries of life, as in the present days; and with much better reason, because, formerly, these were so high, compared with the rate of daily wages, that the poor were well off, if they could get rye or barley-bread, and were not reduced to that second sort of brown bread described above, which "*hath little or no flour left therein at all;*" and whereunto, likewise, "*because it is dry and brickle in the working, (for it will hardly be made up handsomely into loaves), some add a portion of rye meal in our time, whereby the rough dryness, or dry roughness*

thereof, is somewhat qualified." Let us remember too, "*that the gentility commonly provide themselves sufficiently of wheat for their own tables, whilst their household and poor neighbours, in some shires, are forced to content themselves with rye or barley, yea, and in time of dearth, many with bread made either of beans, peason, or oats, or of altogether, and some acorns among, of which scourge the poorest do soonest taste, sith they are least able to provide themselves of better.* I will not say that this extremity is oft so well to be seen in times of plenty as of dearth; *but if I should, I could easily bring my trial. For albeit that there be much more ground eared now almost in every place than hath been of late years, yet such a price of corn continueth in each town and market without any just cause, (except it be that landlords do get licences to carry corn out of the land, only to keep up the prices for their own private gains and ruin of the common wealth), that the artificer and poor labouring man is not able to reach unto it, but is driven to content himself with horse corn, I mean beans, peason, oats, tares, and lentils; and therefore it is a true proverb, and never so well verified as now, that hunger setteth his first foot in the horse manger. If the world last a while after this rate, wheat and rye will be no grain for poor men to feed on, and some caterpillars there are that can say so much already.*"—We may safely leave this passage without further comment, for the

digestion of the "*laudatores temporis acti.*" Perhaps it may prove as hard to them, as a piece of the second sort of brown bread, "which hath little or no flour left therein at all," or of the bread made of "beans, peason, and oats, with a few acorns among." If we were to take a journey into Poland, or some of the countries where corn is the cheapest, we should stand a fair chance, according to all accounts, of meeting with something very like the bread here described. It has long been banished out of "merry England." It is to be trusted its banishment may be perpetual. Hence it appears, the low money-price of bread is by no means, alone, a criterion of the comfortable condition of the poor. Nay, the lower it is, the worse the poor seem to live; for almost universally, the countries which are the greatest exporters of corn, are, in comparison with their neighbours, the poorest countries.

We have already seen reason to conclude, that the high money-price of corn, which has now prevailed in the United Kingdoms for more than thirty years last past, must be owing to some or all of the following causes: increase in the rate of rents, taxes, and daily wages.

We are told by the political economists of the present day, that rent does not, and cannot enter into the price of raw produce. If this be true, therefore, the present prices cannot be owing to the high rents now paid for land: but whether it

be true or not, a little reflection may perhaps satisfy us, that high rents are not the cause, but the consequence of high prices. For if high rents were the cause of the high price of corn, there could be no limit to which that price might not rise. At all events, rents would never fall; whereas, on the contrary, we find uniformly, that they rise and fall with the price of agricultural produce; indeed so much so, and so thoroughly convinced of the fact have some landlords been, that very large estates at this present time are let under a corn rent; that is, the annual rent is made to vary according to the price of a bushel of wheat, at certain markets on certain days, or else on the average price of the year.

There cannot, therefore, be a stronger proof that high rents are not the cause, but the necessary and unavoidable consequence of high price. Consequently it is clear, that the rise of the price of the necessaries of life does not depend, or rather, is not caused by the high rents of the lands on which they are produced.

Neither is the price of corn increased by taxation, for this very good reason, because there are no taxes upon it. Now there are very heavy taxes upon malt, and consequently the price of malt is very considerably increased by taxation; but it cannot be pretended, that the price of the barley, of which the malt is made, is increased by this taxation; so far from it, it is held by the agricul-

tural interest, and apparently with very good reason, that the taxation on malt, by diminishing the consumption, actually lowers the price of barley; and accordingly the price of barley has been found to rise in the market, as the tax upon malt has been diminished.

In France, and in many other countries in Europe, perhaps from the influence, the sect of political economists called the French economists, have had with the respective governments, a heavy direct tax, amounting to one-fifth of the rent*, is laid upon all land. This must either be paid by the consumer, and consequently make agricultural produce so much dearer; or else it must be a deduction out of the rent, and therefore the landlords must receive only four-fifths of what they would otherwise receive, were there no tax.

Probably it does diminish the rent; otherwise it

* It would seem that the rent of land in France is nearly as high, or perhaps quite as high, as in England. At least the Author was informed by a very intelligent merchant of Dieppe, a short time ago, that farms in France were usually from one to two hundred acres; were let for either three, six, or nine years, (three years including their course of crops), at a rent of about forty francs, or thirty-two shillings an acre. At least that this was the case in his neighbourhood, where certainly the land is very good: but it would not be worth more, if so much, for farming purposes in England, than the same sum per acre. It would seem that the French acre (if that was meant, which it possibly was) contains one and a quarter English.

must increase the price of grain, which would therefore be cheaper by the whole amount of the tax, if that tax were removed.

Now, as we have no such government tax in England, and at present, perhaps it may be safely asserted, no direct government tax whatsoever upon agriculture, it is absurd to pretend that the high price of corn is occasioned by taxation. There is even reason to believe, on the contrary, as in the case of barley, that government taxation lowers its price, and therefore that "taxation cannot increase by what it feeds on."

Besides, we may perhaps find reason to think, that the high aggregate amount produced by taxation in any country, like the high aggregate amount of rents throughout the country, is *not the cause*, but *only the consequence* of the high price of agricultural produce; and in fact, that as long as the same taxes continue, both rents and taxes must rise and fall in amount, with the rise and fall of agricultural produce; that is, as will be attempted in the course of these pages to be more fully developed, with the rise and fall of the rate of daily wages. Hence then it would seem, that the causes of the rise of the price of agricultural produce, are to be sought for in the causes which have occasioned the rise in the price of daily wages: therefore to these our attention must be directed.

Now, probably all political economists will admit, that the price of labour enters very considerably

into the price of agricultural produce. It is difficult to see how it can be denied that it does so, by those who admit that every thing is produced by labour and by labour only; consequently the money-price of the produce must depend in some way, or in mathematical language, be some function of the price paid for the labour required to produce it. Yet this obvious cause seems strangely to have been overlooked: and it has become the fashion in the present day, to ascribe the high price of corn to the *cultivation* of *poor lands*, and the remedy to to be found for it, nothing else than *throwing those poor lands out of cultivation*, and deriving from foreign importation, the same quantity of grain which they produce.

This general persuasion seems to have owed its origin, solely, to a theory respecting rent, in the Author's opinion not only false, but highly pernicious. It becomes therefore necessary to state what that theory is, and to examine what good grounds it has, to demand an admission of its truth. This, joined with an enquiry what rent is, shall be attempted in the following Section. The effect of tithe and poor-rates upon the price of corn, will come to be considered in another part of this dissertation: but with respect to tithe being a cause of the high price of corn, it is singular, that after having been paid in this country for probably a thousand years, this pernicious effect should only just have been discovered, as obviously

it can have no more effect now in raising the money-price, than it had a thousand or three hundred years ago, or when we were a country largely exporting grain.

SECTION II.

Before we proceed to examine any theories, let us consult common sense, and satisfy ourselves, *what rent is*, about which so much is said, and sometimes so little understood. A great outcry has been raised, by inconsiderate persons, against rents, as if extravagant or unreasonable rents could ever be maintained; or as if it were possible to produce all the corn we consume, without paying any rent for the land on which it is grown. Suppose the farmers were, in every case, the owners of the soil they cultivate, and that there was no such a thing as tenants, and, consequently, rents; would corn be at all cheaper than it is now? Assuredly not. The land of any country must belong to the whole community generally, or it must be appropriated to individuals; and if so, it signifies little, who those individuals are, though, perhaps, that appropriation may be best, which gives land to those who discharge important public duties, for the benefit of the whole community, in consequence of the estates they hold. But this may be so, or it may not. If it is for the public benefit, that the

lands of any country should be appropriated to individuals, it may be presumed, with the exception of those who discharge important public duties, that it makes no difference who those individuals are. Now, if the lands be cultivated, they must either be so by the owner, or by some one else. It may be observed, that there never will be any appropriation in any thing which has no value. There never has been any appropriation of the air we breathe, or the light of the sun, or of the waters of a running stream, except, rarely, in the latter case; and that too, in an imperfect manner; so that any one might take as much for his own use as he pleased. Now, in all countries that have emerged, if they ever were in it, out of the state of naked savages, there has been an appropriation of the soil, and the appropriation has been the more complete, the greater the advances which have been made in civilization. Hence it is a law of civilized life, co-ordinate and co-extensive with civilization itself, that, from some very general cause or other, land has value; or, in other words, that it is worth a good deal of labour to procure its appropriation to one's self; in some countries, more, and in some countries, less. Various individuals have been fortunate enough to obtain an appropriation of some of it for themselves; and others again have been compelled to go without their share. Now, in the course of these different appropriations, it has frequently happened, and will happen again,

that a land-owner has got more land than he can himself cultivate; or that it is not convenient for him to cultivate it at all. A part of his land, therefore, or the whole of it, must either go uncultivated, or must be cultivated by some one else. If it be uncultivated, the value which occasioned its appropriation is lost; and it is of no benefit to its holder. Hence, in this case, the owner, out of a regard to his own interest, will either sell his lands, or will give his permission to another to cultivate them in his place. But then, what is he to have in return for his permission? He will have what is called rent; and hence will arise an order of men called tenants, paying an annual value to the owner of the soil, for permission to cultivate it.

We see then, when we look to the origin of rent, we may not unfairly consider it to be an annual value paid to the owner of the soil, by the cultivator, for permission to cultivate it. If it be asked, how much is that value? it is answered, it is always just as much as the owner of the soil can get; not always as much as he chooses to ask, but only as much as he can get. If a man has a horse, which he is at liberty either to keep or to sell, he is entitled to ask for it, from any one who wishes to become its purchaser, as much as he pleases; and unless he can get what is commonly hence called a fancy price, he will not be disposed to part with his horse at all. But suppose he is obliged to part with his horse, because it is highly inconvenient for him to

keep it any longer; he must then be content to sell it, not for as much as he chooses to ask, but for as much as his horse will command in the fair.

Now, the land-owner who is in search of a tenant, is commonly in the situation of the man who is compelled to send his horse to be sold at the fair. He cannot cultivate his lands himself; and therefore he is compelled, either to forego the advantage he derives from these lands being appropriated to himself, or else to give permission to another to cultivate them in his place, for as great an annual consideration, or otherwise, as he can get for that permission, under a usual condition, that the tenant shall cultivate the lands in such a manner, as will neither injure them, nor depreciate their value.

But then the question may still recur, how much can he get for that permission? It is replied, that he can and will get very little less, but rarely more, than *the excess of the profit and remuneration* the tenant can make upon that land, from his own time and labour, and the capital he will have to employ in its cultivation, beyond the ordinary profit and remuneration which the tenant could derive from the same capital and labour employed by him, in any other way, or in any other trade.

If he can make no more from cultivating the land, than he could do if he devoted his capital and industry to any trade that might be free to him, he can obviously afford to give no rent or consideration at all, for the use of the soil; because, what-

ever he gave, would be a dead loss to him; and he would very soon discover, that it was just so much for his interest to abandon his farming business as soon as he could, and to betake himself to what would prove to him a more lucrative employment. If, on the other hand, the tenant can obtain a greater profit and remuneration, by devoting his time and capital to the cultivation of the farm he holds, than he could do in trade, then it is manifest he will very justly and properly be called upon to pay the difference, or the excess, to the owner of the soil, for his permission. Indeed it is the remarkable fact, that there perhaps always is an excess of profit and remuneration in the cultivation of the soil, in every country, over the usual profits and remuneration of trade, which occasions land to have any value, and to afford any rent for its use. It is not now attempted to account for the fact; that may not be so easy perhaps; but the history of all civilized nations, sufficiently establishes its universality. The rent may vary on different lands, and does so, because the profits and remuneration derived from their culture, vary from various causes. It is the cultivation, or the spontaneous productions of the lands, which give them their value; for lands which cannot be cultivated, and which produce nothing, if any such there be, are worth nothing at all. Hence, generally, it may be stated, without fear of contradiction, indeed it is so evident as perhaps to amount

to a truism, that rent, in all cases, is the excess of profit and remuneration which a tenant can make on his holding, beyond the ordinary profits and remuneration of trade; that is, beyond what the tenant could make in any other way. It is not meant, that a tenant may not, some years, make no profit at all; but that the principle is true, one year with another, or on the average of years.

"Rent (says the writer of the article, 'Political Economy,' in the Supplement of the Encyclopædia Britannica) is properly that portion of the produce of the earth which is paid by the farmer to the landlord, for the use of the natural and inherent powers of the soil."—"Rent (says Adam Smith), considered as the price paid for the use of land, is naturally the highest which the tenant can afford to pay, in the actual circumstances of the land."—The former is not so much a definition, as a description of rent; it merely tells us, that rent is a *portion* of the produce; which is very true, and very important; but it does not tell us, what that portion is, or whether the same, or any portion of their produce, is paid by all lands alike. Dr. Smith tells us, that rent is a price paid for the use of land, and is as much as the tenant can afford to give; but he gives us no means of finding out how much the tenant can give. The writer in the Encyclopædia goes on to say, "If buildings have been erected on a farm, or if it has been enclosed, drained, or any way improved—(*Query*. Was there

ever a farm let to a tenant, that had no buildings on it, and had never been enclosed, drained, or any way improved?)—the sum which a farmer will pay to the landlord for its use, will be composed, not only of what is properly rent, but also of a remuneration for the use of the capital laid out on its improvement. In common language, (it is added), these sums are always confounded together, under the name of rent; but, in an enquiry of this nature, it is necessary to consider them as perfectly distinct."—This necessity may be very much doubted; because it is impossible to separate these two in practice, and because, if we wish to be understood, and not lead others into error, we must take words in their usual acceptation, and not in a sense which is not admitted to belong to them.

However, thus far there can be little real objection to what he has stated; though, whether a farm be more or less improved, or have more or fewer buildings upon it, the rent of the farm is always understood to be that sum the tenant agrees to pay for its use. But to proceed with the theory. All persons are pretty nearly agreed what rent is; but the puzzle appears to be, what is the difference of rents, between different acres of land? The fashionable theory says, the difference between the rents of two acres of land, is the difference of their produce. The land-owners would be very glad to find that it was so; at least, the fortunate owners of the lands of the higher quality. It is supposed, that

the lowest quality of land that is cultivated in every country, pays no rent at all; and that the actual rent of all the other lands, superior in quality, is the difference between their produce, and the produce of this lowest quality.

Thus, suppose different qualities of land represented by the Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, in succession, No. 1, being the highest quality; the other qualities standing in the order of the natural numbers, and No. 7 being the lowest quality cultivated. Suppose, a given quantity of land of the first quality, or No. 1, produces 100 quarters of wheat; the second quality, or No. 2, 90 quarters, and so on; so that the same given quantity of land of the lowest quality cultivated, or No. 7, produces only 40 quarters, and pays no rent. Then it is contended, that the rents of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, are, 60, 50, 40, 30, 20, 10 quarters in succession, or the difference between their produce, and the produce of the lowest quality that happens to be cultivated, and pays no rent; or, otherwise, if the rent of the given quantity of No. 6, be 10 quarters, then the rent of No. 1, is 60 quarters. According to this theory, therefore, as long as there was only one quality of land in cultivation, there could be no such a thing as rent—it would be a thing quite impossible.

But as soon as No. 2 came into cultivation, then the supposed given quantity of No. 1, would immediately command a rent of 10 quarters. As soon

as it was necessary to cultivate No. 3, in order to supply an increasing demand, then No. 2 would begin to command a rent of 10 quarters, and the rent of No. 1, would be raised to 20 quarters. As soon as No. 4 was brought into cultivation, No. 3 would begin to command a rent of 10 quarters, and the rents of No. 1, and No. 2, would be raised, respectively, to 30 and 20 quarters. And so on.

Thus then, if we want to know what is the standard of rents in any country, we must ask, according to this theory, What is the lowest number they cultivate? Have they got down to No. 7 yet? or, Have they only yet got to No. 6, 5, 4, 3, or 2? and according to the answer, we should immediately know, whether the country was worked or starved to death, by the oppression of inordinate rents.

If this theory be true, it seems then, that the more agriculture and civilization advance, the harder and harder the people have to work, in order to gain their daily bread; and at every step, have to drag after them a lengthened chain, every day becoming more and more enslaved to the lords of the soil, and every day having to pay to them an increased tribute of toil and labour.

Whilst only Nos. 1 and 2 are under cultivation, the poor working-people are living in clover; but woe be to the unhappy wretches that are living in a country so unfortunate, except for the owners of the soil, as to have brought Nos. 6 or 7 into culti-

vation! Hence, in compassion to their wretched state, it is high time to throw these accursed poor lands out of cultivation, which are the cause of so much misery and starvation, and to pass an Act of Parliament, to prevent their being ever ploughed in future, or to have them sown with salt.

Ask the newspaper-writers and the political economists, what is the cause of the misery, a part of our population is, at present, unhappily labouring under; and they will all tell you, it is owing to the poor lands; and that there will never again be peace or happiness in the country, till these are thrown out of cultivation, and the Corn Laws are done away with, which alone forced them into cultivation. Supposing for a moment, that this theory is true; and that as poorer and poorer lands are brought into cultivation, the portion of the produce paid to the landlords of the more fertile fields, becomes greater and greater; let us consider how large a portion of the produce of the soil ought to find its way into the pockets of the landlords, and compare that portion with what actually does find its way there.

The greatest quantity of wheat that can be produced from any soil in Britain, and therefore we may suppose from the very best, is 50 bushels an acre; this, therefore, is the first quality, or No. 1. There is no such a thing in England, as land producing wheat, without paying any rent for it. The writer in the Encyclopædia Britannica, (last

Supplement, article, England), says: "The quantity of corn raised per acre, is of course very various, according to the soil: $2\frac{1}{2}$ quarters for wheat, 4 for barley, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ for oats, may be stated as a fair average return; though any calculation from such data, must be very vague, as, on some spots, the produce of wheat amounts to 6 quarters; on others, to only $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarters per acre."

Six quarters is 48 bushels, $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarters is 12 bushels; therefore, as all land producing corn, pays rent, (unless the authors of the Supplement of the Encyclopædia Britannica can produce land under corn-cultivation, which never pays, and never has paid any rent at all), it may be fairly assumed, for the sake of round numbers, that the highest quality of land cultivated in England, produces 50 bushels per acre; and that if there were any land cultivated, that only just paid its expences, without affording any rent to the landlord, that land would only produce, in the present state of things, 10 bushels; because we find, that land producing 12 bushels, actually pays rent. Hence then, according to the theory, there are, or might be, five qualities of land cultivated in England, yielding, respectively, 50, 40, 30, 20, and 10 bushels per acre; for we find, that about 50 bushels per acre, is the highest produce any where, and that land is actually cultivated, paying rent, and producing as low as 12 bushels per acre. Now, the qualities are not *per saltum*, from 50 to 40, and from 40 to 30, and so on;

but we must suppose that they proceed gradually, and that there are as many degrees between 50 and 40, as between 40 and 30, or 30 and 20. But in this state of things, according to the theory, the rent of No. 1, is 40 bushels; the rent of No. 2, 30 bushels; the rent of No. 3, 20 bushels; the rent of No. 4, 10 bushels; and the rent of No. 5, nothing. Hence, the average rent upon these five acres, of the five different qualities of land cultivated, equidistant from each other, must absolutely, and of necessity, represent, if the theory be true, the average rent of the kingdom. The five rents amount to 40 + 30 + 20 + 10 + 0 bushels of wheat, that is, to 100 bushels of wheat; therefore, the average rent of corn-land in the United Kingdoms, at the present times, must be 20 bushels of wheat per acre. In the same way, the average produce upon these five acres of the five different qualities of land cultivated, equidistant from each other, must absolutely, and of necessity, represent the average quantity of wheat produced in England per acre. Now the five different produces amount to 50 + 40 + 30 + 20 + 10 bushels of wheat, or to 150 bushels of wheat; therefore, the average produce of wheat per acre, through the country, must be 30 bushels of wheat; but the average rent was proved to be 20 bushels; or, if this theory be true, the average rent throughout England, or throughout the United Kingdoms, for it is the same

thing, must be *two-thirds of the whole produce;* a palpable *reductio ad absurdum.*

For what is the fact? Let the writers of the Supplement of the Encyclopædia Britannica speak for themselves, in the following quotation, extracted from the article England, p. 116:

"Connected with these calculations, (says the writer), "is the value of the total annual produce of land in England. "This is necessarily subject to fluctuation; the high price of "a particular season, leading in the next to an extended "tillage, and *vice versâ.* Taking wheat at the medium of "80*s.*, and other corn at the prices at which importation "begins to be allowed, we shall find an average produce of "somewhat more than 60 millions sterling in corn; to which, "adding a similar value in pasturage, and a farther allowance "for hops, fruits, and vegetables, we have a total of from "130 to 140 millions. Such seems to be the collected value "of the annual produce of the land of England and Wales, "and of the labour and capital bestowed upon it. That this "estimate is not materially wrong, appears from a reference "to the Government Returns of Rents, (under the Property "Tax), which, in 1810, amounted to nearly 30 millions; and "*it is common to consider the rent from a fourth to a fifth "of the gross produce.* In Scotland, the rent bears a higher "proportion to the produce, being, in general, not less than "*one-third.* (Evidence in Corn Committee Report, 1814). "—This is owing, certainly not to greater capital, and *still "less to superior soil,* but to an exemption from tithe and "poor's-rates; also to the use of long leases. A further differ-"ence of rent in favour of Scotland, is found, on examination, "to be but apparent, and is explained by the larger size "of the Scotch acre."

What are we to say then to a theory, from which the rent of the kingdom ought to be two-thirds of the gross produce of the soil, when it appears that it is, and is admitted to be, by those who hold that theory, only one-fourth, or one-fifth? And it may be added, that the rent of pasture-land is always a much larger portion than that of land under corn-cultivation, because the pasture being almost the spontaneous production of the soil, is attended with little or no labour or expence; consequently, when the general average is taken, it must necessarily increase the apparent portion of their produce, paid by the corn-lands as rent. Are we not then entitled to say of this theory, that it is false, and little better than idle, contemptible nonsense?

But this same theory has had very great influence; has rendered a considerable part of the kingdom highly dissatisfied and discontented with the present state of agriculture, and loudly to demand from the Legislature, to contract the agriculture of the kingdom, by throwing out of cultivation the lands of an inferior quality, so as to deliver the people from the oppression of exorbitant rents, which have no foundation, except in the fertile imaginations of the theorists.

Is it therefore harsh to say, that this theory is not only not true, but also pernicious? Let every one judge for himself. A theory represents the rental of the United Kingdoms, as two-thirds of the produce; whereas, it is really found to be

only one-fourth, or one-fifth; and, under the most advantageous circumstances, only one-third at most. Yet, on the strength of that theory, the Nation is called upon to take one of the most extravagant, and wildest steps, that ever was proposed to rational men; to throw a considerable part of their lands out of cultivation, and to destroy a considerable part of their farm-buildings, farming-horses, and implements of husbandry.

"A quarter of wheat (says the writer of the article 'Political Economy,' in the Sup. Encyclo. Brit.) may be raised "in the Vale of Gloucestershire, or in the Carse of Gowrie, "at perhaps *a fourth or a fifth* part of the expence necessary to raise it on the worst soils in cultivation. A bushel "of wheat (says the same writer, article 'Corn Laws,' at "least with the same signature, S. S. page 356) might be "obtained from the rich soil of the Carse of Gowrie, at a "half or a third of the expence necessary to produce it in "less favourable situations, and might therefore be sold for "a half or a third of the price of the other. But if the demand is such as requires the cultivation of inferior lands, "the price of the produce of the richer lands must be elevated to such a height, as will admit of the ordinary profits of stock being realized on the poorest; if it were not "raised to this height, the cultivation of the inferior lands "would be abandoned, and the necessary supplies of food "would be no longer obtained."

Here, if by less favoured situations, the poorest soils are meant, we have by the same writer, a quarter of wheat asserted to be raised at a fourth or a fifth part of the expence necessary to raise it on the worst soils, and a bushel of wheat, to be

raised at half or a third the same expence, each at the same place, namely, the Carse of Gowrie. Indeed this assertion is quite consistent with the theory, which would be absurd, unless its supporters were prepared to make it.

But it is denied, that a quarter or a bushel of wheat can, at *the same rate of wages*, be raised on the Carse of Gowrie, or any other carse, for either a half, third, fourth, or fifth the expence on any other lands whatsoever, which are under cultivation, unless indeed these carses be of such a peculiar nature, that they never have been *manured*, and never *require* to be so, and may continue to be constantly cropped, without ever receiving any manure. If they are in this condition, the assertion may be very true; but if, like all other lands, *they require as much manure to be put on per acre, as produce has been taken off per acre*, then the position may be very safely denied.

The Encyclopedist, apparently quoting from Mr. Malthus, gives us the following extract:

"I have no hesitation then in affirming, that the reason, "why the real price of corn is higher, and continually rising "in countries which are already rich, and still advancing in "prosperity and population, is to be found in the necessity "of resorting constantly to poorer lands, and to machines, "which require a greater expenditure to work them, and "which consequently occasion each fresh addition to the "raw produce of the country to be purchased at a greater "cost; in short, it is be found in the important truth, that "*corn is sold at the price necessary to yield the actual*

"*supply; and that, as the production of this supply becomes*
"*more and more difficult, the price rises in proportion.*"

One quotation more from the Encyclopedist, p. 270, (art. Corn Laws).

"Now, as *rent is nothing but the excess*, or the value of
"the excess of the produce obtained from the best, above
"that obtained from the very worst soils; it is plain that it
"does not enter into the cost of production, and can have
"no influence whatever on prices. Still better to elucidate
"this fundamental principle, let us suppose that an indivi-
"dual has two loaves on his table, one raised on very fertile
"land, the other on the worst land in cultivation: in the
"latter there will be no rent, and it will be wholly divided
"between wages and profit. We have already shewn that
"it is the cost of producing this loaf, which will regulate
"the price of all other loaves; and although it will be true,
"that the rent which the loaf raised on the best land will
"afford, will be equal to all the difference between the
"expence of growing the corn of which it is made, and the
"corn raised on the worst lands of which the standard loaf
"is made; yet it is only in consequence of this difference,
"that any rent whatever is paid."

Here the theory is stated roundly and broadly, and so confidently, that it is assumed to be a *fundamental principle.* Now this theory, and all its consequences, would be perfectly true, if one little circumstance, which unfortunately has been taken for granted, were true likewise. The theory asserts, that the difference of rent upon any two acres of land, is always equal to the difference of their produce; that if one, for instance, produced forty bushels of wheat, and the other only twenty, the

difference of their rents would be equal to twenty bushels of wheat. This could not be denied, *if the expences upon every acre of land were the same.* Are the theorists in a condition to prove this? If not, upon what basis have they grounded their theory? And how comes it, that they have put their theory forth as a fundamental principle adopted and set forth in books of science, without due enquiry and consideration upon this material point? If the expences attending the cultivation of every acre, whether good or bad, till all the produce is sold and converted into money, were the same, then it is manifest, that the land which pays no rent, produces just enough to pay the labour, seed, and the farmer's profit and remuneration: for if it produced less than was sufficient for these, it would never be cultivated at all. Hence, if all land producing more than ten bushels per acre pays rent, it is manifest, that ten bushels per acre is sufficient to pay the farmer and the labourer, and that all above ten bushels, whether, on any land, the surplus be ten, twenty, thirty, or forty bushels, must necessarily be the rent; because it would be the excess of profit and remuneration derived from the land, beyond the ordinary profit and remuneration of trade.

Probably these theorists were too philosophical in their views, to condescend to pay attention to such vulgar things as tithes, poor-rates, and other agricultural taxes: otherwise they might have

known, that their amount did not depend upon *the bulk of the superficies cultivated,* but upon *the bulk of the produce;* and therefore that, as far as they are concerned, the charges upon all lands are very far from being the same, but happen to be just five times as much upon land producing fifty bushels, as they are upon land producing only ten. Yet these things, tithes, poor-rates, and other agricultural taxes, make a very prominent feature in a farmer's accounts; and any results meant to be practical, in which these are left out of all consideration, must be very wide of the mark, and lead the farmer, if he allowed himself to be guided by them, into very serious scrapes. But this is not all: there are many other very heavy and serious expences in farming, which are not according to the superficies, or so much per acre, whether the soil be good or bad, but according *to the bulk of the crop.* What shall we say to the manure required per acre, and all the labour of incorporating it with the soil? What shall we say to the reaping, putting into shocks, carrying off the produce, and stacking it? What shall we say to the threshing it, and carrying it to market? All the expences attending these laborious operations, are not according to the number of acres the farmer may cultivate, but according to *the bulk of the crop.*

Now lands, such as are found in America, and many other newly-peopled countries, have many of them, such a mass of vegetable matter accumu-

lated upon their surface, by the decay of plants spontaneously produced for ages, that they may be cropped for several years together, without the very expensive and laborious process of manuring the land. And this is probably the principal cause why America, with a high rate of wages, has been able to sell her agricultural produce comparatively so cheap. But in the course of a very few years this is all exhausted, and then the lands must either be manured, or they will cease to afford a profitable return. Hence it very soon becomes necessary to put as large a quantity of manure, or nearly so, upon the land, as produce has been taken off; or the manuring must always be in proportion to the bulk of the crop; otherwise the lands would yield less and less grain every succeeding year. If the country annually sends its produce to the towns, it returns to the country again in the shape of manure, to be again converted into human sustenance by Nature's admirable chemistry. Therefore, to prevent the land from deteriorating in condition, and to keep it up to its full powers of production, it must always be manured in proportion to the bulk of the crop.

So far then from the expences attending the cultivation of all lands being the same, for the same extent of surface, we find, that a very large portion of them are according *to the bulk of the crop.* If every expence of cultivation varied exactly according to the bulk of the crop, then every bushel

of grain would exactly pay the same quantity, as rent, on whatever sort of land it was grown, whether an acre of such land produced 50, 40, 30, 20, or 10 bushels of grain; and the effect would be this, that an acre of land, that produced 50 bushels, would be worth five acres of land that produced only 10 bushels per acre, with the additional convenience, however, of having all the good qualities possessed by the five acres, compressed into the compass of one acre. And similarly, an acre that produced 40 bushels, would be worth two acres that produced only 20 bushels per acre, with a similar advantage of convenience. But it cannot be denied, that a part of the labours of agriculture, though probably a small part in comparison with the whole, is in proportion, not of the bulk of the crop, but of the superficies: of this nature, is the labour of repairing the fences, and the ploughing; but in the latter case, the stiffer the soil, the more labour is required in ploughing. Now, the largest crops of wheat are always grown on the strongest soils. The lighter soils would not be able to carry so heavy a burden, and the crop would run the hazard of being laid, and spoil, if the injudicious attempt of forcing too heavy a crop on light land were made. Nevertheless there is poor land, of both a heavy and a light soil; that is, some poor land requires more labour to plough it, than other poor land does; so that no general calculation can be made. The

same may be said of the seed, and consequently the sowing. The Author being no farmer, nor agriculturist, and knowing no more about farming, than a man living in the country cannot fail of doing, who only keeps his eyes and his ears open, cannot state any general rule, as to the proportion of seed sown on good or bad land: it is his belief, that more seed is commonly sown upon good land, than upon inferior soils; but he is not prepared to say, it is always in proportion to the bulk of the crop. He has understood that the quantity of seed sown, even upon lands of the same quality, varies considerably in different parts of the country; one practice being in favour of more seed, another of less. But in addition to the circumstance of fertility, rents will vary from other causes, because the excess of the farmer's profit, over the usual profit and remuneration of trade, will vary from them. These are, exemption from tithes, a low standard of poor-rates, and other charges on land; nearness or distance from the market where the produce of the farm is to be sold, or from lime and other manures, the use of which greatly increases the productiveness of the soil; good or bad roads, or the neighbourhood of a canal.

All these things affect the rent, because they affect the outgoings on the farm, and the quantum of labour necessary for the production and sale of what is grown upon it. Hence it not unfrequently happens, that lands, naturally of a low degree of

fertility, but advantageously situated in these respects, yield as great a profit to the cultivator, and of course as great a rent to the landlord, as lands of a much higher degree of natural fertility, but labouring under a disadvantageous situation. Therefore, unless we attach a much more complex idea to the term, fertility, than is commonly conveyed by that word, it will not always be true, that rents are higher or lower according to the fertility of the lands on which they are paid. In estimating how much the tenant can afford to give, there are, indeed, so many things to be taken into consideration, that it is very difficult to lay down any rule less general than this, that rent in every case, is the excess of profit and remuneration obtained by the tenant from his farm, above the ordinary profit and remuneration of trade. It is thought, that the profit and remuneration of the farmer are commonly not equal to those of a man in trade, possessing the same capital. It may be so in some slight degree. The occupation of a farmer either being really, or being considered to be, more agreeable than that of a man in trade; the farmer may, perhaps, on this account, be content to take something less profit and remuneration, than he might reasonably hope for, as a trader; but then there must clearly be a limit, which practice and experience will sufficiently ascertain, beyond which the profit and remuneration of the farmer cannot be depressed. If any circumstances

should happen to depress them for a time, it would have the effect of transferring farming capital to trade, till increased competition on the one side, and diminished competition on the other, had restored the proper equilibrium.

It is the circumstance of farmers making different profits on different lands, which occasions the difference of rents. Were it possible that the profit on every acre of land were the same, which is tantamount to what the theorists mean by all the land cultivated being of the same degree of fertility, it would by no means follow, as they assert, that there would be no such thing as rents: there might, or there might not, according as there was any excess, or otherwise, of profit and remuneration on capital employed in agriculture, over the same capital employed in trade. It is clear, that there never could be much less profit and remuneration from agriculture than from trade, otherwise the land would never be cultivated, and the people would starve. There might be an excess of profit, in one state of society, in this case, in favour of agriculture; and in another state of society, there might be none.

But as it may be confidently said to be impossible, that there ever can be the same quantum of profit upon every acre of land cultivated in a country, because it is not possible for all to have a situation equally eligible, and it would be a strange chance, for the natural advantages of the soil just

to happen, in every case, to balance, and no more, the fortuitous advantages of situation; it is needless to trouble ourselves with the consideration of a case, that never has, and it may confidently be said, never can occur. Hence, upon the whole, sufficient has perhaps been said to shew, that the rent of different acres of land is by no means equal to the excess, or the value of the excess of their produce, over the produce of an acre of land in the same country that can pay no rent; because the expences of cultivation, and those attending the occupancy, are by no means the same for every acre of land, but vary nearly according to the bulk of the crop. If every expence in every case varied exactly as the bulk of the crop, from the time of the land being ploughed till the produce was sold in the market, then, as was observed before, every bushel of wheat, let it be grown where it would, would pay the same portion of it to the owner of the soil; and the rents of different lands would be in the exact proportion of their produce: their value would be in the like proportion.

But it cannot be denied, that even where the local advantages are the same, a *portion of the labour of agriculture* will be according to *the superficies*, or so much per acre. Suppose that this quantity of labour amounts to seven bushels; and suppose, after this is paid, the remaining part of the produce always pays a third to the landlord, that is, after having deducted that part of the labour,

which may be considered as constant for all lands, so that all the remaining expences are strictly in proportion to the bulk of the crop; let us then compare, on this supposition, the rents on two acres of land, one of which produces 50 bushels, and the other only 10. Deducting 7 bushels from 50, there remain 43, the third of which is $14\frac{1}{3}$; deducting 7 from 10, the remainder is 3, a third of which is 1 bushel; that is, the rents are $14\frac{1}{3}$ bushels, and 1 bushel, respectively; and their difference is $13\frac{1}{3}$ bushels. But according to the fashionable theory, their difference of rent ought to be 40 bushels. Now, corn-lands that produce 50 bushels, lie fallow every third year commonly; therefore they have two crops every three years. We may suppose the second crop to be equal in value to the first, because, though a bushel of barley, or oats, or beans, which may happen to be the second crop, be less in price than a bushel of wheat, still the produce consists of a greater number of bushels, the average quantity per acre being, as before quoted, $2\frac{1}{2}$ quarters for wheat, 4 for barley, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ for oats.

Hence, an acre of land producing 50 bushels every three years, will be able to pay $28\frac{2}{3}$ bushels as rent, which, at 10*s.* a bushel, would amount to 14*l.* 7*s.* and therefore would pay about 4*l.* 16*s.* annual rent. On the other theory, the rent paid in three years, would amount to 80 bushels, which, at 10*s.* a bushel, makes 40*l.*, and the annual rent

would be 13*l.* 7*s.* Now, so far from an acre of land, under corn cultivation, having ever paid so high a rent as 13*l.* 7*s.* per acre, it may with good reason be very much doubted, whether at that price of wheat, an acre of the best land in the kingdom, under corn cultivation, ever paid so much as even 4*l.* 13*s.* annual rent. A rent of 5*l.* per acre, or even more, when the land has been very good, has been paid for pasturage land, near large towns, or even villages: 3*l.* per acre of annual rent, would be reckoned a high rent for any land under tillage in most times. The rent for land of average quality for farming purposes and corn cultivation, is commonly from 20*s.* to 30*s.* an acre; but probably when from 4*l.* 16*s.* we subtracted what was paid for tithe and poor-rate, and other charges acting as a diminution of rent, we should find that our calculation would very nearly accord with the results of experience, and reduce the rent upon the best land in cultivation to about 3*l.* per acre; and in the same way for the other cases. So far, therefore, from the cultivation of the poorer soils increasing the rents of the best lands to an enormous amount, it is an extremely dubious and doubtful point, whether their cultivation tends to increase those rents at all. If they do, it can only be in a very slight degree. Nay, one of their effects, by increasing the quantity produced, obviously tends to lower rents, by lowering the price per bushel. Take two bushels of wheat, grown upon

lands of different degrees of fertility: then as one part of the expence is constant, and not according to the bulk of the crop, it is manifest, that these two bushels cannot contribute equal portions to the landlord; because, in preparation, one bushel has certainly been produced with a little more labour than the other. Whatever this difference may be, more or less, it is so much the more spent in agricultural labour in the one case, than in the other. Now, in the case of the better soil, this difference, instead of being spent in so much more agricultural labour, goes into the pocket of the landlord. How is it then spent? Why, it is spent upon the labour of manufacturers and handicrafts. But how large is this difference? Perhaps the average rent of the kingdom, including the tithe and poor-rate, may be one-fourth of the gross produce: possibly this difference paid by lands of a quality below the average rate, may amount to so much as one-tenth of the whole rental. The estimation is very vague, but perhaps it is more than enough; consequently this difference would amount to one-fortieth part of the gross produce. Hence, then, this mighty question about the poor lands, and this outcry against their cultivation, seems merely to amount to this, whether one-fortieth part of what all the grain in the kingdom costs, or about a million and a half, shall be spent in maintaining so much additional agricultural labour, or so much additional handicraft and manu-

facturing labour? Every quarter of corn maintains its man, be it grown where it may; and though it yield no rent, the capital and labour employed to raise it, must yield the ordinary profits and remuneration of trade. Supposing this capital were employed in manufacturing something to exchange against a quarter of wheat, instead of being actually employed in producing it from land yielding no rent, the profit and remuneration would be just the same in the one case as in the other; so that it is no easy matter to see, where the Nation would gain by the exchange. But questions of this kind are very difficult and intricate; people are apt to consider them only partially, and not view them in all their bearings, and the conclusions drawn accordingly, to be incorrect. However, we are confessedly not yet advanced far enough properly to discuss it, which would be imperfectly anticipating what is to follow.

It is extremely difficult, perhaps we have not sufficient data, to ascertain, whether a larger portion of the produce goes to the owner of the soil now, than formerly, taking into consideration the present improved state of agriculture, and of course the immensely increased quantity of produce. The following passage is extracted from Henry's History of England, vol. iv. p. 105:

"The Saxon princes and great men, who, in the division "of the conquered lands, obtained the largest shares, are "said to have subdivided their estates into two parts, which

"were called the inlands and the outlands. The inlands, "were those which lay most contiguous to the mansion-"house of their owner, which he kept in his own imme-"diate possession, and cultivated by his slaves, under the "direction of a bailiff, for the purpose of raising provisions "for his family. The outlands, were those which lay at a "greater distance from the mansion-house, and were let to "the ceorls, or farmers of those times, at a certain rent, "which was very moderate, and generally paid in kind. "The owners of land were not at liberty to exact as high a "rent from their ceorls, or tenants, as they could obtain, "but the rates of these rents were ascertained by law, "according to the number of hides, or plough-lands, of "which a farm consisted. The reason of this seems to have "been, that the first ceorls, or farmers, among the Anglo-"Saxons, were freemen and soldiers, and had contributed to "the conquest of the country by their arms, and were there-"fore entitled to be treated with indulgence, and protected "by law, from the oppression of their superiors. By the laws "of Ina, King of the West Saxons, who flourished in the "end of the seventh, and beginning of the eighth century, "a farm consisting of ten hides, or plough-lands, was to pay "the following rent: viz. ten casks of honey, three hun-"dred loaves of bread, twelve casks of strong ale, thirty "casks of small ale, two oxen, ten wethers, one cask of "butter, five salmon, twenty pounds of forage, and one "hundred eels. There seems to be some mistake in the "quantity of forage, which is too trifling to be mentioned, "and the whole rent is very low, in proportion to the quan-"tity of land; (the hide is considered by some to have "been 60 acres, by some 80, and by some 100); which "may be considered as an evidence, both of the free and "comfortable condition of the ceorls, and of the imperfect "state of agriculture among the Saxons. In some places "these rents were paid in wheat, rye, oats, malt, flour,

" hogs, sheep, &c., according to the nature of the farm, or
" the custom of the country. There is, however, sufficient
" evidence, that many rents for lands were not altogether
" unknown in England in this period. The greatest part of
" the crown-lands in every county, were farmed in this
" manner, by ceorls, who paid a certain quantity of provi-
" sions of different kinds, for the support of the King's house-
" hold, according to the nature and extent of the lands which
" they possessed. 'We have been informed, (says the author
" 'of the Black Book, in the Exchequer), that in ancient
" 'times, our Kings received neither gold nor silver from
" 'their tenants, but only provisions for the daily use of
" 'their household; and the officers who were appointed to
" 'manage the King's lands, knew very well, what kinds
" 'and what quantities of provisions every tenant was
" 'obliged to pay. This custom continued even after the
" 'Conquest, during the whole reign of William the First;
" 'and I myself have conversed with several old people,
" 'who had seen the royal tenants paying their rents, in
" 'several kinds of provisions, at the King's court.'—In
" some other countries of Europe, in this period, particularly
" in Italy, the rents of land consisted in a certain portion
" (most commonly the fourth or fifth part) of the grains
" which these lands produced. But in England, the rents
" of land were much lower, on account of the more imper-
" fect state of agriculture. If the lowness of rents in Eng-
" land, in this period, is a proof of the imperfection of agri-
" culture, the lowness of their prices when they were sold,
" is still a stronger evidence of the same fact, as well as of
" the great scarcity of money."—" In a word, (says Dr.
" Henry, p. 109), we have sufficient evidence, that Eng-
" land, which, in the Roman times, was one of the great
" granaries of Europe, and afforded prodigious quantities of
" corn for exportation, was so ill cultivated by the Anglo-
" Saxons, that, in the most favourable seasons, it yielded only

" a scanty provision for its own inhabitants, and in unfavour-
" able seasons, was a scene of the most deplorable distress
" and scarcity."

Hence, though from the disturbance of the times, in the Anglo-Saxon period, rents in England were a smaller part of the produce, than afterwards; yet, in the cotemporary period, in Italy, and other countries, where agriculture was most improved, rents were commonly one-fourth, or one-fifth of the produce; which happens to be precisely the portion paid to the landlord in England at the present times. Away therefore with the idle non-sense, of land-owners having contrived to draw to themselves an unreasonable portion of the produce of the soil. For we find the same portion paid to them now, as was paid in other countries more than a thousand years ago.

"That the Conquest of England by the Normans, contri-
" buted (says Dr. Henry, vol. vi. p. 173) to the improve-
" ment of this art (agriculture) in Britain, is undeniable.
" For by that event, many thousands of husbandmen, from
" the fertile and well-cultivated plains of Flanders, France,
" and Normandy, settled on this island, obtained estates or
" farms, and employed the same methods in the cultivation
" of them, that they had used in their native countries.
" Some of the Norman Barons were great improvers of their
" lands, and are celebrated in history for their skill in agri-
" culture. 'Richard de Rulos, Lord of Brunne and Deeping,
" '(says Ingulphus), was much addicted to agriculture, and
" 'delighted in breeding horses and cattle. Besides inclosing
" 'and draining a great extent of country, he embanked the
" 'river Wielland (which used every year to overflow the

" 'neighbouring fields) in a most substantial manner, build-
" 'ing many houses and cottages upon the bank, which
" 'increased so much, that in a little time they formed a
" 'large town, called Deeping, from its low situation. Here
" 'he planted orchards, cultivated commons, converted deep
" 'lakes, and impassable quagmires, into fertile fields, rich
" 'meadows, and pastures; and, in a word, rendered the
" 'whole country about it, a garden of delights.'—From the
" above description it appears, that this nobleman (who was
" Chamberlain to William the Conqueror) was not only fond
" of agriculture, but also, that he conducted his improve-
" ments with skill and success."

Again, p. 180, he says,

"But notwithstanding all the improvements that were
" made in agriculture, and that England was reputed the
" most fertile country in Europe, it cannot be denied, that
" there were some very severe famines felt in it, in the
" course of this period, (from 1066 to 1216). An attentive
" examination, therefore, of the circumstances of these
" famines, will serve still further to convince us, that agri-
" culture was much improved, and a more constant supply
" of the necessaries of life provided by the Normans, after
" they had obtained a firm establishment. For of the five
" great famines that raged in this period, four happened
" within a few years after the Conquest, and were partly
" produced by the dreadful devastations of war; and the
" only destructive famine that fell out in the 12th century,
" (A. D. 1125), was occasioned by prodigious rains and
" floods in harvest; against the fatal effects of which, no
" skill or industry of the husbandman can guard."

Pursuing his sketch of the progress of agriculture, from 1216 to 1399, Dr. Henry says,

"It is not to be imagined, that very many and great im-
" provements were made in agriculture in the period we are

" now examining, as the circumstances of the country, and
" manners of its inhabitants, were unfavourable to such im-
" provements. The country was almost constantly involved
" in war, which diverted the attention of the people, and
" particularly of the nobility, from the improvement of their
" lands by agriculture. A taste for this art, was even
" esteemed dishonourable in a person of high rank; and
" Edward the Second was bitterly reproached, as well as
" much despised, for his fondness for agriculture, and neglect
" of military exercises. The great barons and prelates, who
" were the chief proprietors of the soil, kept prodigious
" quantities of land in their own immediate possession,
" which they cultivated partly by their slaves and villains, and
" partly by their tenants, who were obliged to neglect their
" own farms, and labour for their lords, whenever they were
" called. Now, as these slaves and tenants had little or no in-
" terest in the success of their labours, it is not to be supposed
" that they were very anxious about performing them in the
" best manner. We may form some idea of the quantity of
" land which some great prelates kept in their own posses-
" sion, by the following account of the stock upon the lands
" of the bishopric of Winchester, delivered to Bishop Wyke-
" ham, A. D. 1367, by the executors of his predecessor: viz.
" 127 draught horses, 1566 head of black cattle, 3876 wethers,
" 4777 ewes, 3541 lambs, besides the sum of 1662*l.* 10*s.*,
" equivalent to 20,000*l.* of our money, at present, which
" they paid for the deficiency of the stock. The frequent
" and very destructive famines which prevailed in Britain in
" this period, have been considered as presumptive proofs of
" the imperfect state of agriculture. Of these, I shall mention
" only two, which seem to have been the most severe. There
" was so great a famine A. D. 1258, that no fewer than
" fifteen thousand persons (as we are told by a writer who
" lived at St. Albans at that time) died in London of hunger,
" besides many thousands who perished for want of food, in
" other places. But that famine which began A. D. 1314,

" and continued to rage for three years, both in England " and Scotland, must have been still more destructive; for " in the course of that dearth, a quarter of wheat, it is said, " was sold for forty shillings, equivalent to thirty pounds of " our money at present, (that is, in Dr. Henry's time); " though in the former famine, A. D. 1258, it had never " exceeded sixteen shillings. On this occasion, the Parlia- " ment of England interposed, and fixed the price of all sorts " of provisions by law; but it was soon found, that this law " prevented the bringing provisions to market, and it was " therefore repealed. The King, in a proclamation which " he published at this time, prohibiting the making of malt, " and brewing of ale, says, 'that if this were not prevented " 'immediately, not only the poor, but people of the middle " 'rank, would inevitably perish for want of food.'—In a " word, we learn from the concurring testimony of several " historians who lived in those times, or soon after, that " prodigious multitudes of people died of hunger, or of dis- " eases contracted by the use of unwholesome food; and " that many were tempted to perpetrate acts of the most " unnatural cruelty, to prolong their wretched lives." It " may however be observed, that the historians who give " an account of these deplorable famines, ascribe them to " unfavourable seasons, and not to bad husbandry; and it is " also true, that there may be such seasons as will baffle all " the efforts of the most industrious and skilful husbandman. " It must likewise be acknowledged, that at some times in " this period, grain of all kinds was very plentiful, and sold " at a very low rate. A quarter of wheat A. D. 1288, was " sold, in some parts of England, for twenty pence; in " others, for sixteen pence; and in others, for a shilling."

Coming to his next period, from 1399 to 1485, Dr. Henry has the following passage to a similar purport:

" The frequent dearths which happened in this period, is " another evidence of the imperfect state of agriculture." In " the present age, when grain is double its ordinary price, " it is accounted a great dearth, and is very severely felt " by the great body of the people. But in those times, " grain was frequently triple or quadruple its former price, " which must have produced a grievous famine. The most " common price of a quarter of wheat in this period, seems " to have been about 4*s.* or 4*s.* 6*d.*, at the rate of 40*s.* or " 45*s.* of our money at present, (1780). But we are informed " by a cotemporary historian, that in 1437 and 1438, the price " of a quarter of wheat, in many places, was no less than " 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, (equivalent to 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* at present), and the " price of all other kinds of grain in the same proportion to " their ordinary prices. In this extremity, the common " people endeavoured to preserve their wretched lives by " drying the roots of herbs, and converting them into a kind " of bread. It must be confessed that, in the course of this " period, grain of all kinds was sometimes exceedingly " cheap. Wheat was sold A. D. 1455, in some places, at 1*s.* " the quarter. But this was not so much owing to any im- " provements in husbandry, as to an extraordinary importa- " tion of corn from the Continent, in order to procure a " supply of English wool. This excessive importation, " which threatened the ruin of the English farmers, excited " the most violent complaints, and gave occasion to a Corn " Law, A. D. 1463. By that law it was enacted, that no " grain of any kind should be imported, when wheat was " below 6*s.* 8*d.*, rye under 4*s.*, and barley under 3*s.* per " quarter, which were high prices, and called for a supply " from abroad. But the great decrease in the value of land, " is the strongest proof of the decline of agriculture in this " period. There are some examples of land sold at twenty- " five years purchase, in the reign of Edward the Third, " which it is probable was not much above the common

"price. But there is the fullest evidence, that land had "fallen in its value to ten years' purchase, in the reign of "Edward the Fourth. For that Prince promised, by pro-"clamation, a reward of 1000*l.* in money, or an estate of "100*l.* a year, to any who should apprehend the Duke "of Clarence, or the Earl of Warwick. It is even probable, "that land was sometimes sold considerably lower. Sir "John Fortescue, advising Edward the Fourth to reward "his servants with money rather than with land, says, 'It "is supposed that to sum of them is givyn 100*l.* worth land "yerely; that would have hold him content with 200*l.* in "money, if they might have had it in hand.'—So deplorable "are the effects of long and frequent wars, especially of "intestine wars, in a country not overstocked with in-"habitants."

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to trace out when the proportion of the produce paid to the owner of the soil increased, and when it diminished. All that we want to know, is, that it is not now excessive; and the fact, that in Italy and other countries, in the ninth century, a fourth or a fifth part of the produce was commonly paid to the owner of the soil, which is the same portion as is now paid, is a sufficient proof, that the people are not, in these times, oppressed by excessive rents; and that those rents are no higher than in other countries, probably in all ages, where agriculture has been in a prosperous condition. It is of great importance, to consider the portion of the produce that goes to the landlord. This is the true criterion, whether rents are high or low; and there can be

none other. This is, by many, too often forgotten; the money-price of rents, now and formerly, are compared together, and absurd and inconsiderate conclusions sometimes drawn in consequence.

No alteration in price would produce any alteration in the portion of the produce paid to the landlord. As long as the same lands are cultivated, and in the same way, that portion will assuredly be the same. Its magnitude does not depend upon the will of the landlord, but upon many things of various kinds, which it is very difficult fully to investigate. And though a part of our lands were thrown out of cultivation, it is not probable that this would occasion the slightest perceptible change in the portion of the produce paid to the landlord, from the remaining lands that were cultivated. The theory lately examined, evidently goes upon the supposition, that it would make a very considerable one; but we have found the conclusions drawn from that theory, to be so very remote from what experience demonstrates, that no dependence whatsoever can be placed upon it.

Moreover, the theory supposes, that if our cultivation were diminished at all, it would be the poorest lands that would be thrown out of corn-cultivation: they would be so, if they were cultivated at the same expence per acre as the richer soils; but this has been shewn not to be the case. Nay, in many cases, if our cultivation were dimi-

nished, we should find that some of the best lands would be thrown out of cultivation; because they could, in less time, and more profitably, be converted into pasture-lands, than the poorer soils; for it is not the worst, but commonly the best lands of the country, that are in pasturage in England.

The tendency of all these considerations, leads us therefore to this conclusion; that whether the price of corn only was lowered, or whether both the price of corn was lowered, and the quantity produced diminished, the portion of the whole produce paid to the landlords, would, on the average, be precisely the same as now; namely, one-fourth, or one-fifth; and until the contrary can be satisfactorily shewn, we are entitled to take that fact for granted. The result to be drawn from it, therefore, is this; that as the whole amount of rents paid throughout the kingdom would, upon any change, either of the price of corn, or the extent of its cultivation, be still the same part of the produce, that amount in money would vary, as the price of corn, and the quantity grown, jointly. For instance: suppose the rent of all the corn-lands in the United Kingdoms, at the present times, amounted to 12,000,000*l.*; that the same quantity of corn was grown as now, but, from some cause, the price was reduced one-third; then the rents would only amount to 8,000,000*l.*; in the place of 12. Suppose the price reduced one-third,

as before, and one-sixth part less grown, then the rents would amount to about 6,700,000*l.*, or to five-sixths of 8,000,000*l.*

In any thing which has been said above, it is not meant to deny that some lands possess, in a greater degree than others, the valuable chemical properties of better retaining heat and moisture, and also of better retaining the manure, or giving a greater produce from the same quantity of manure. Hence, these lands are able to carry and to ripen a much larger crop. But heat and moisture may be in excess either way, and a thinner crop has the advantage of more sun and air, than when the crop stands closer upon the ground. Within certain limits, this last consideration is very important. In general, the soil is only a medium, through which their food is conveyed to plants; but it may be a good or a bad medium; or it may be a good medium for some plants, and a bad one for others. It falls within the province of human skill and industry, very much to change the native qualities of the soil, and to adapt it for that sort of crop which it is proposed to grow upon it. This is done in various ways; on the one hand, by draining, or by taking away superfluous moisture; on the other, by irrigating, or by introducing more moisture than the land would naturally have.

Again, the land may be too loose or too stiff for plants which it is wished to produce in great abundance: this is corrected in the one case by

putting on the surface, marl or clay, and compounding it with the soil; in the other, by putting on lime or sand. Thus the qualities of soil may, by human art, be very variously modified; and by judicious improvements, lands, which were before almost barren for all agricultural purposes, be converted into very valuable soils. This has been the case in England, within the last thirty or forty years, to an amazing extent. No doubt it has been attended with great expence, but with an expence which has nothing whatever to do with the price of corn. For we must distinguish between a landlord's improvements and a tenant's cultivation. The tenant's duty is to give up the lands in as good a condition as he received them. If he is required to improve them, his rent must be accordingly, or he must be protected by a lease. If, on the other hand, the landlord improves the soil during the tenant's occupancy, he generally requires and receives an increase of rent, sufficient to repay and to reward his outlay; an increase of rent, not temporary, but permanent; yet an increase of rent only in proportion to the greater quantity the land has been rendered capable of producing. Hence the improvement of the soil presents an almost inexhaustible field for what may be called an accumulation of capital; an accumulation always productive. It is like stretching out the sides of the island, and increasing its valuable superficies. It enables it to employ and

to support a much greater population, it increases its wealth, its power, and revenue. Every improvement of the soil is a saving of capital; the Nation is so much richer for ever, than it would have been, if the same quantity of labour had been employed in the production of perishable commodities. If the immense improvements which have recently been made in the lands of England, had not taken place, the money they have cost, would probably all have been consumed in perishable commodities. The improvement has been the effect of national parsimony, of the accumulating propensities of individuals; a parsimony which has the happy effect of obviating the ruinous consequences that would have been produced upon the revenue and industry of the country, by the enormous expenditure of the late war. Indeed, when we look at the amazing extent to which every part and corner of the country has been supplied with water-carriage by canals; when we look at the immense value of all our machinery, and, not least, the vast extent of soil reclaimed almost from a state of nature, and converted from barrenness to fertility; when we consider all this, and reflect upon the great armies and fleets which have been maintained, at an expence, the amount of which, the head turns giddy when it attempts estimate; we cannot help feeling overcome with admiration, at the energy of a people who were carrying on successfully, all these mighty projects at the same time; to have

effected any single one of which, might well have been a cause of exultation. These mighty works have been the effect of national industry and parsimony; and no wonder a revulsion has been felt, when that national industry has at length found the trade and commerce of the whole world too narrow for its exertions, and with better cause than Alexander, has had to weep, that it has not had other worlds to conquer.

Let us beware how we attempt to extend our foreign at the expence of our home market; let us not for the sake of a momentary, and perhaps only an imaginary gain, sacrifice our agriculture to our commerce, and desert our fields, in order to increase the number of our looms. Every nation ought to be independent of all others for the supply of its daily bread, if it possesses within itself ample means of being so. The proper sphere of commerce is in a mutual exchange of the luxuries, the conveniences, and the elegancies of life. The more extended these are, the greater, in most cases, is the sum of our enjoyments; but we buy them dear, whenever, for their sake, we render precarious the supply of the necessaries of life, and make ourselves dependent for them upon the good pleasure of those, who at some time may find it their interest to distress us, by arbitrarily withholding them.

It is true, that the people of England pay a higher price for their bread than any other nation in Europe; but it is equally true, that they receive

for their labour, wages in proportion: and however anxious they may feel to eat cheap bread, let them be very sure that they would not be compelled, in order to obtain it, to make greater sacrifices of wages than what that cheaper bread would compensate. In many parts of the North of Europe, wheat is under 20*s.* a quarter, but the rate of wages is only 5*d.* a day. In England it is upwards of 60*s.* a quarter, but the rate of wages is 20*d.* or 2*s.* a day. Now, suppose one-half the daily wages spent in bread: in the North of Europe, the labourer has $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ a day left for all his other necessaries and comforts: in England, he has 10*d.* Let every man choose for himself, whether he would prefer corn at 20*s.* the quarter, and have $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ a day to spend in other things; or corn at upwards of 60*s.* a quarter, and have 10*d.* a day to spend in other things. But this brings us to consider the probable cause, why wages are so much higher in England than in other countries, and the effect this has upon the price of corn, in the following Section.

SECTION III.

There is a very remarkable and important difference between agriculture and manufactures, in the degree in which the operations of each are susceptible of being abridged by the division of labour, and by the use of machinery. In the latter, division of labour may be carried to an indefinite

extent. Every operation admits of this important principle; and hence, in the progress of manufactures from a rude to a highly improved condition, the diminution of labour, by its well regulated division, is almost incalculable. It is not so, however, with agriculture. All the various parts of a manufacturer's labour may commonly be carried on with equal advantage, on every day, and during every season of the year; and it is usually sufficient for a labourer employed in manufactures, to be expert in one operation. But the labours of agriculture are constantly varying, and changing from one thing to another: the farmer must make hay while the sun shines, and cut down and gather in his crops when they are ripe; and his labourers must be expert in a great many different operations, and be continually going from one to the other; so that division of labour is almost totally excluded. Again, the labours of the manufacturer being stationary, are capable of being most wonderfully abridged by ingenious machinery moved by different elements, and he has the choice of place, where his machinery can be employed to the greatest advantage, and at the cheapest rate. But the labours of the husbandman, instead of being confined within the compass of a few square yards, are extended over a very large surface: very few of his operations are stationary, and consequently they admit of the aid of machinery in a very limited degree.

Hence as the arts and sciences advance, we

perceive that articles of manufacture may be, and are produced at a continually decreasing expence of manual labour, whilst agricultural produce can derive from its very nature, but little aid from the utmost ingenuity of man, in diminishing the labour necessary to obtain it, so constant has been the effect of that law pronounced by the Almighty, that in the sweat of his face man should eat his bread.

The last fifty years have witnessed the most wonderful improvements in the machinery adapted to manufactures, whereas the advantages derived to agriculture from new inventions of this kind, have been but trifling.

Now these improved machines, so wonderfully abridging the cost of production in all manufactured articles, were nearly all the offspring of British ingenuity; and their use has, from various causes, been as yet very much confined to this country. Our wonderfully improved machinery, our coals, canals, and roads, and our free institutions, have all contributed their aid, in enabling us not only to undersell all other nations, but also to pay a much higher price to our labourers for their work. Perhaps the most forcible illustration of this that can be adduced, is the very singular fact, that cotton, the production of India, can be brought to this country, where labour (with the exception of some new countries) is the dearest in the world, manufactured and carried back to India,

where labour is the cheapest in the world, and there drive the native manufacturer of the same article out of his own market.

Hence it would appear, that our manufacturing advantages are so great, that notwithstanding the price of daily labour is, perhaps, eight times or more, greater than in India, and notwithstanding the heavy expence of two long and hazardous voyages, we can actually undersell the native Indians, in their own market, and that too, in articles which formerly were had exclusively from them. Now, if the native Indians possessed the same advantages for manufacturing that we do, this would be absolutely impossible. And in the same way, if all the other nations, who are our customers, possessed all our advantages, we could no longer send our productions to them, unless the price of our labour at home was considerably less than theirs, so as to enable our goods to bear the expences of carriage, the merchants' profits, and the duties imposed on them in foreign parts. For what is the price of our manufactured goods in foreign markets? It is as much as they will command: that is, it is something less than that, for which our foreign customers could make the same articles themselves, or get them elsewhere. The price which our goods command abroad, after deducting the expences of carriage, &c., and the duties to be paid on them, regulates their price at home. Let us consider, what effect this price

will have in increasing, or otherwise, the wages of manufacturing labour.

Suppose a machine has been invented, reducing the previous cost of production of any article one-fourth part, the immediate consequence will be, that the inventor will make enormous profits; but as he cannot long enjoy the exclusive use of his invention, competition will soon reduce those profits to the rate of the ordinary profits of trade. How will these profits be reduced? They may be so in two ways. 1st, By increasing the price of labour; and 2dly, By lowering the price of the article made. If the article in question continues to maintain its price abroad, it must also maintain its price at home; and therefore as competition must, and will soon reduce the profits arising from the new invention, to the level of the ordinary profits of trade, it can only do so by increasing the rate of wages. Labourers skilled in this manufacture will be in great request, and consequently their wages will rise higher and higher; so that ultimately, as long as the price of the manufactured article can be maintained, the labouring class will soon derive a very large share of the benefit arising from the newly-invented machinery. Now, within the last fifty years, the manual labour in producing the same quantity of manufactured goods, has been diminished in a hundred different ways; and in consequence, the wages of manu-

facturing labourers have been enormously increased. It may be stated as a fact, that not many years ago, so high were the wages that our manufacturing population could earn, and for a course of years did earn, that many of them, by working three days a week, could spend the others in idleness, and too often in excess: and we must take into calculation, that in manufactories, women and children can meet with work suitable for them, in a far greater degree than in the labours of agriculture; so that in every point of view, by the extension of manufactures, the earnings of a whole family have been very greatly increased. But what is the effect of this on the price of agricultural produce? Why, as there cannot be two rates of wages in the same country, the wages of agricultural labourers necessarily rose in the same proportion as those of the manufacturers; so that the ratio which always subsists between them, soon re-established itself, after it had been once disturbed. Yet it will appear presently, that the price of corn, and of all other agricultural produce, on the average of years, varies very nearly as the price of agricultural labour. Consequently the price of labour connected with agriculture being increased, on account of the price of manufacturing labour being increased, the price of all agricultural produce was increased in the same ratio. If the wages of agricultural labour could have been

continued unchanged, then the price of all agricultural produce would also have continued unchanged.

If the manufacturing labourer had spent all his earnings in agricultural produce, he would have been no better off than before. But a part of his earnings, say one half, for the sake of argument, are spent in other things, as in foreign luxuries, tea, sugar, coffee, &c. &c. Suppose his labour raised from one shilling to two shillings a day; then, instead of spending sixpence a day in agricultural produce, and sixpence a day in foreign luxuries, he spends twice that sum in each. He can command no more agricultural produce than before, it is true, but then he commands a double quantity of foreign produce, that is, of foreign labour. Hence he is a great gainer, but not so great a one as he would have been, had not the benefits arising from the inventions of ingenuity been extended to all classes; and had not the land-owner and agricultural labourer have come in for their share.

We see then, that the advantages which we possess over perhaps every other nation in the world, in making, and bringing to foreign markets, a great variety of valuable articles, has greatly increased the price of manufacturing labour in this country. As to corn, and all other articles of agricultural produce, we have obtained little or no increased facility in producing them, than we had

before. If the labour of producing a given quantity of corn had been as much diminished as the labour of producing a given quantity of manufactured articles has been, so far from having need of Corn Laws for the protection of our agricultural interests, we should have been able to have carried our surplus grain into the same foreign markets to which we carry our surplus manufactures. But this has not been the case. Hence, since there cannot be two rates of wages in the same country, there was only one alternative, after foreign agricultural produce, at the end of the last war, became admissible into our ports; namely, by excluding that foreign produce, to insure to our farmers such a price for theirs, as would repay them the increased price of production which was occasioned by the increased rate of wages, or else to restore the rate of wages to their former state.

If the manufacturing population are willing to have their wages reduced so low, that on the common ratio, the whole wages of a labourer in agriculture are only sixpence a day, then they may have the satisfaction, if they think it such, of buying corn of English growth, as low as it is now sold in Denmark or Poland, at twenty shillings the quarter, or less. But if they are unwilling that their wages should be reduced, (which, indeed, would be most unwise, and most injurious to the public interest), they must consent that their agricultural brethren should receive high wages as

well as themselves; and in consequence, that bread and other things should be proportionably higher than in former times.

Had there been no Corn Laws, agricultural produce in the United Kingdoms must have been sold, with the addition of the expences of transport, very nearly as low as it now is in Poland and the North of Europe, at least so low, that English agricultural produce should not have been driven out of the market by foreign competition. But had our agricultural produce thus fallen in price, the wages of agricultural labour must necessarily have fallen in the same proportion; and if so, then, since there cannot be two rates of wages in the same country, manufacturing wages must have fallen in the same proportion also; for whatever be the proportion between wages in towns and in the country, the former, on the average, being always higher than the latter, that proportion, if it ever be disturbed, will very soon right itself, through the effect of free competition acting like a principle of self-adjustment.

Let us suppose, what probably many think will soon take place, that the Corn Laws are abrogated, and our ports open to foreign agricultural produce; then our agricultural produce, in order to keep its market, must be sold for 30 per cent. less than its present price. To enable the farmers to do so, they must necessarily pay 30 per cent. less rent, and 30 per cent. less agricultural wages; conse-

quently the wages of all kinds connected with agriculture, must be reduced 30 per cent.; and if so, then the wages of all kinds of manufacturing labour, from what we have already seen, must likewise be reduced 30 per cent., through the effect of competition; and therefore we must sell our goods, or at least that part of them made up of our labour and profit, to our foreign customers, for 30 per cent. less than they are now willing to give; a very good thing for them, but a very absurd and foolish thing for us, to stultify ourselves at that rate.

But it may happen that, from foreigners availing themselves of our ingenuity and our example, manufactured articles like ours, may come to be produced abroad much cheaper than now; that is, with much less manual labour and consequent expence; then it would necessarily follow, that our manufactures could no longer command their present price abroad, and would fall considerably in value there. If so, manufacturing wages would fall in the same degree; and if manufacturing wages fell, agricultural wages would soon fall too; and if these last fall, then agricultural produce must also decline in price; so that, eventually, it may be as cheap here as on the Continent. Such a thing as this may certainly happen to us. It would be attended with just the same consequences as the repeal of the Corn Bill; it would be a virtual repeal of that Bill; but so far from its being a blessing to us, it

would be the greatest national loss that could possibly befall us. Our labour is now worth, in the general market of the world, say 2*s.* a day. Suppose it was reduced to 6*d.* a day, as in the North of Europe, and that we wanted to buy 10,000*l.* worth of cotton, we should have to give 400,000 days' labour for it; whereas, at present, we have only to give 100,000 days' labour for the same quantity; consequently, we could only command one-fourth part of the cotton we now do; and also one-fourth part of all other foreign produce, in the same way.

But then it is said, unless the Corn Laws are repealed, we cannot compete with our foreign rivals. This, from what we have already seen, would only be "falling out of the frying-pan into the fire." It is very true, that we always sell our goods for the highest price we can get for them; the consequence is, that our foreign rivals must, in all cases, and in all times, be treading close upon our heels; and, therefore, unless we were so unwise as to sell our goods for less than our customers are willing to give, we must, under all circumstances, have the phantom of successful foreign competition hovering over us, and alarming us, perhaps, with groundless fears. Except we ruin ourselves by over-production, and overstocking our market, foreign competition is the only thing that puts a limit to the price of our goods; and, consequently, foreign competition must always

make itself be sensibly felt by us. We have no power to prevent other nations from being as ingenious and industrious as we are; they may approximate more and more closely to us, in the ease and cheapness of their manufacturing operations; the more they do so, the less will be the difference between our prices of labour and theirs, and the less, in consequence, the difference between the price of our and their agricultural produce. It will be a long time before we are equalled, if ever. Before they can do so, there must be great accumulations of capital, good roads, and complete systems of internal navigation constructed, enormous outlay in expensive machinery and buildings, and a free goverment, commanding the perfect confidence of the people, and giving perfect security to the person and to property. In all these points, we have got the start a long way before all other nations in the world; and, probably, if we keep up our exertions, they can never overtake us. In addition to which, to how many nations are denied the advantages we derive from our insular situation, our coals, and other valuable mineral productions, used in the arts and in manufactories?

To sum up briefly what has been advanced above, it is meant to be asserted, that one effect of our great success as a manufacturing and commercial people, has been, very considerably to increase the price of manufacturing labour; consequently, to increase the price of all other descriptions of labour,

in nearly the same degree; and therefore to increase the price of agricultural labour, and, as a necessary consequence of this, the price of all agricultural produce in the same proportion. Now, foreign competition would have prevented this latter effect from having been produced in the degree it has been, had our ports been open for the reception of foreign agricultural produce. They have been shut against its admission. By that means, and by that means only, the price of agricultural labour has been kept up to its proper level; without which, the price of manufacturing labour must have been brought down by the competition of others, not so well paid for their work; and, consequently, our goods must have been sold for a less price than they have hitherto commanded abroad; unless, indeed, it could have been so contrived, that there could have been two rates of wages in the same country, and the peasants had been tied down to the soil in a state of villanage, so as never to have put themselves, or their offspring, in a state of competition with their more fortunate and better-remunerated brethren, in manufacturing towns or districts.

Do away with the Corn Laws, and the whole fabric falls to the ground; continue them, and your goods will continue to fetch their utmost price abroad, and your labourers of all kinds, to receive the highest possible wages for their labour. By this means, the price of labour being kept up

higher than it is in other countries, all agricultural produce which is obtained by labour, must also be higher, and cannot be otherwise; still the manufacturing labourer gains a great deal more by his high wages, secured to him through the operation of the Corn Laws, than he loses by being obliged, on the other hand, in consequence of his high wages, to pay a greater price for the bread he eats, than his forefathers did before him. Should any thing happen permanently to reduce the wages of a manufacturing labourer, the price of bread, and all articles of his necessary support, will accommodate themselves to the change; but all articles of foreign importation will not be affected in price, and, of course, his power of purchasing them will be very much curtailed.

But to shew more clearly the effect of a rise in the rate of the wages of labour, upon the price of grain, and upon rents, and the farmer's profit, let us endeavour to separate the money paid for all sorts of grain in the United Kingdoms, into its different parts of rent, farmer's profit, tithes, and taxes, and the sum-total paid for all sorts of labour connected with agriculture, as of day-labourers, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, saddlers, &c. &c., taking wheat at the price of 74*s.* the quarter. It appears from Mr. Colquhoun's estimate, that the quantity of grain of all kinds, consumed in the United Kingdoms, amounts to 35,000,000 of quarters. Deducting for horses employed in husbandry,

and reducing every species of grain to wheat, it will then be found, that all the farmers in the United Kingdoms, taken together, sell, in grain of all kinds, a quantity equivalent to 17,500,000 quarters of wheat; which, at 74*s.* the quarter, will produce the sum of 64,750,000*l.* This sum is made up of rent, of what is paid to the farmer for his own remuneration, profit on capital employed by him, and wear and tear, of poor-rates, and tithe, and agricultural taxes, and of wages of all sorts of labour connected with agriculture.

Now, a great deal of land in England (nearly one-third) is tithe-free; the tenth is not always paid, but, in many districts, only the eleventh. Scotland is free from tithes; and the tithes are not very well paid in Ireland; therefore, it will be a very fair assumption, to rate the tithes (the whole of what is paid to the Laity as well as the Clergy) at 4,000,000*l.* The whole rental of England and Scotland, when wheat is 74*s.* a quarter, is known to be under 30,000,000*l.*, and that of Ireland is estimated at about 15,000,000*l.*, making, in the whole, 45,000,000*l.* The following is the estimate of Mr. Comber, of the acreage in England, as employed in corn, pasturage, &c.; and it may be assumed to represent the proportion so employed, throughout the United Kingdoms.

	Acres.
Wheat	3,300,000
Barley and rye	1,000,000
Clover, rye-grass, &c.	1,200,000
Oats and beans	3,000,000
Roots and cabbage, cultivated by the plough	1,200,000
Fallow	2,300,000
Hop-grounds	34,000
Nursery-grounds	9,000
Pleasure-grounds	16,000
Land depastured by cattle	17,000,000
Hedge-rows, copses, and woods	1,600,000
Ways, water, &c.	1,300,000
Commons and waste lands	5,094,000
	37,094,000

After deducting the waste and uncultivated parts, it would hence appear, that about one-third of the land in England is under corn-cultivation. Now, the best and richest lands are commonly in pasturage; and the rent of grass-land, is commonly considerably more than that of corn-land. Therefore, it will be a reasonable and fair calculation, to estimate the rent of all the corn-lands of the United Kingdoms, at 2-7ths of the gross rental, or 2-7ths of 45,000,000*l.* This will give about 13,000,000*l.* The sum allowed to the farmer, for profit on capital employed, for remuneration, and wear and tear, is generally estimated as equalling the rent; therefore, that sum is 13,000,000*l.* Estimate 2-7ths of the poor-rates paid by the land, road-assessments,

and agricultural taxes, at 2,500,000*l.*, and our account will stand thus:

Whole sum received for all kinds of grain	£64,750,000
Rent	£13,000,000
Farmer's profit, &c.	13,000,000
Tithe	4,000,000
Poor-rates, &c.	2,500,000
	£32,500,000
Paid for all sorts of wages connected with agriculture	32,250,000
	£64,750,000

Hence, we see that the sum paid for labour of all kinds, connected with corn-cultivation, amounts to about one-half of the whole sum paid for all the grain in the kingdom; or, in other words, out of every bushel, one-half goes to pay the wages of the labour necessary for producing it. Therefore, if the price of this labour be doubled, all the other parts which make up the price of corn, remaining the same, the price of corn must be increased one-half; if it be increased one-third, the price of corn must be increased one-sixth; that is, on the supposition that all other things remain the same, and so on. But when the price of labour increases, all other things cannot remain the same. For a proportionably increased capital will then be requisite, to carry on the farmer's cultivation; and therefore the amount of his profit and remuneration must be increased in nearly the same ratio. Now, it may

be taken for granted, that the rent of any land is always a certain part of its produce; that part being certainly somewhat greater on good land than on bad; but on the same land, whilst in the same condition, when every thing is at its proper level, it may be taken for granted, that the portion paid to the owner of the soil, whether the 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, or 7th part, is always the same, whatever be the price at which grain sells. There may be times, when the price of corn being lower than it ought to be, from the price paid for labour, farming is a very ruinous business; but that state of things cannot last long; and it may be assumed as a fixed principle, that, whatever be the price of corn, the same portion of the produce of every individual field, continues to be paid to the landlord as rent; that is, supposing an estate to yield a thousand bushels of wheat as rent; as long as that estate continues cultivated in the same manner, it will always yield a thousand bushels as rent; as soon as, after the price of corn has been disturbed, the price of labour has risen or fallen to its proper level. Tithe, equally with rent, is a certain part of the produce of the soil. Hence, if by the price of labour being increased or diminished, the price of corn be increased or diminished, the sums paid for rent and tithe must be increased in exactly the same proportion.

Poor-rates are not so immediately seen to be equally affected by the price of labour; but when

we consider that the sums raised by the poor-rates, are nearly all expended on food, or on other articles produced by labour, we shall feel no difficulty in concluding, that whenever the price of corn is increased, the sums paid by the farmer, for rent, tithe, and poor-rate, must be increased in the same proportion. Putting together the sums paid for labour, and the farmer's profit, we find that they make about 5-7ths of the whole price of corn; consequently rent, tithe, and poor-rates, make the remaining 2-7ths. Let us represent the price of a certain quantity of corn by unity; then the sum paid out of it for labour, and to the farmer, will be represented by 5-7ths, and the sum paid for rent, tithe, poor-rates, &c. by 2-7ths. If the price of labour be doubled, the amount for labour, and farmer's remuneration, &c. becomes 10-7ths; and consequently, if rent, tithe, and poor-rates, &c. remained the same, the new price of the same quantity of corn which was before represented by 1, will now be represented by $\frac{10}{7} + \frac{2}{7}$ or by $\frac{12}{7}$. But we have seen that rent, tithe, and poor-rates will not remain the same, but will be increased in the proportion of the new to the old price of corn. Assuming therefore 12-7ths, as our first approximate value of the quantity of corn in question, we have this proportion:

Old rent, tithe, &c. : new rent, tithe, &c. : : old price of corn : new price, or $\frac{2}{7}$: new rent, tithe, &c. : : 1 : $\frac{12}{7}$; or new rent, tithe, &c. = $\frac{24}{49}$: there-

fore the second approximate value of the supposed quantity of corn, becomes $= \frac{10}{7} + \frac{24}{49} = \frac{94}{49}$. Using this again, to get a nearer approximation, we have old rent, &c. : new rent, &c. : : 1 : $\frac{94}{49}$, or $\frac{2}{7}$: new rent, &c. : : 1 : $\frac{94}{49}$; therefore the new rent, &c. $= \frac{94}{49} \times \frac{2}{7} = \frac{188}{343}$; and so on we might continue the approximation, approaching continually nearer and nearer to its limit, which would be 4-7ths; or if the price of labour be doubled, the sums paid for rent, tithe, poor-rates, &c. would be nearly doubled also, and consequently the price of corn would be very nearly doubled likewise; or, in other words, rent, tithe, poor-rates, &c. and the price of corn, vary very nearly as the price of labour.

Let us try to express the variation more generally. Let unity, as before, represent a certain quantity of corn; then the portion due to labour and the farmer, is 5-7ths, and that due to rent, &c. 2-7ths: let the price of labour be increased or decreased $\frac{1}{n}$th part, where n may be a whole number or a fraction: then the amount due to labour, and the farmer's profit, becomes $\frac{5}{7} \pm \frac{5}{7n}$, the sign being positive or negative, according as the price of labour increases or diminishes. Consequently, if rent, tithe, poor-rate, &c. remained the same, the new price of corn would become $\frac{2}{7} + \frac{5}{7} \pm \frac{5}{7n}$, or $1 \pm \frac{5}{7n}$; but rent, tithe, and poor-rate, &c. being always a stated part of the produce, must increase as the price of that produce increases;

consequently 2-7ths will no longer represent their amount as before; neither, therefore, will $1 \pm \frac{5}{7n}$ represent the new price of corn; but it will be something more, on an increase of the price of wages, and something less on their decrease. Let us however, as before, take $1 \pm \frac{5}{7n}$ as an approximate value of the new price of corn; then we have this proportion:

Old rent, &c. : new rent, &c. : : old price of corn : new price, or $\frac{2}{7}$: new rent, &c. : : 1 : $1 \pm \frac{5}{7n}$; therefore the new rent $= \frac{2}{7}\left(1 \pm \frac{5}{7n}\right)$ nearly. Hence a nearer than the former approximate price of corn, will be $= \frac{2}{7}\left(1 \pm \frac{5}{7n}\right) + \frac{5}{7} \pm \frac{5}{7n} = 1 \pm \frac{45}{49n}$. Using this nearer approximation again, we have old rent, &c. : new rent, &c. : : 1 : $1 \pm \frac{45}{49n}$, or $\frac{2}{7}$: new rent, &c. : : 1 : $1 \pm \frac{45}{49n}$; therefore the new rent, &c. $= \frac{2}{7}\left(1 + \frac{45}{49n}\right)$. And a nearer and tolerably accurate approximation, gives the new price of corn, $\frac{2}{7}\left(1 \pm \frac{45}{49n}\right) + \frac{5}{7} \pm \frac{5}{7n} = 1 \pm \frac{335}{343n}$. As the approximation is repeated, the fractions $\frac{45}{49}$, and $\frac{335}{343}$, will approach nearer and nearer to unity, which is their ultimate ratio, or the new price of corn ultimately becomes $1 \pm \frac{1}{n}$, and the amount for rent, &c. &c. $\frac{2}{7}\left(1 \pm \frac{1}{n}\right)$, or the price of corn and rents, &c. increase or decrease as the price of labour; and *vice versâ*, the price of labour must increase or decrease as the price of corn, in order to allow the due profit to the farmer, and the due rent to the landlord, without both which being paid, it is not possible that

corn can be grown in any country for any length of time.

For corn cannot be grown, unless the farmer be paid for the capital he employs, and for his own time and labour bestowed upon his farm; and Nature has made those differences in the situations and qualities of land, that one acre of one quality and situation, will always yield a greater profit, and therefore a greater rent, than another acre of a different quality and situation. Hence there must always be profit and remuneration paid to farmers, and there must always be rent paid to the owners of the soil; its magnitude entirely depending on the quantity produced, or else on the excess of profit made by the farmer, beyond the ordinary profits and remunerations of other trades.

Hence, unless there be exorbitant farming profits, or exorbitant rents, corn never can really be at an exorbitant and unreasonable price, a price disproportionate to the wages of labour. There are certainly no exorbitant farming profits in this country; as most assuredly, the average profits of farming are as low, if not much lower, than those of any other business whatever. It is true, that the money price of rents has within the last fifty years very considerably increased; but it is not true, that a larger portion of the whole agricultural produce of the kingdom, than formerly, is absorbed by rents, or a larger portion than is paid in other long established countries, where agriculture is in a flou-

rishing condition. From the improvements which have been made in the soil itself, and from extended cultivation, the whole agricultural produce of the kingdom has been very greatly increased, consequently what falls to the land-owner's share, being probably always the same part out of the whole, must have been, and in fact has been, increased in the same proportion: added to which, the money value of the same quantity, as before, has increased in exactly the same proportion that the money value of labour has been increased. If, by throwing a part of the lands of England out of cultivation, the whole aggregate agricultural produce of the kingdom be diminished, the aggregate of what the landlords receive, must be diminished in exactly the same proportion. If, in addition to that, the price of labour fall, or be reduced by virtue of a legislative enactment, then the money value of even this smaller portion due to the landlords, must be reduced in exactly the same ratio.

Hence we perceive, that if the extent of cultivation in the United Kingdoms be contracted, the aggregate rents of the kingdom will be diminished in the same degree, or the landlords will receive a proportionably less number of bushels of wheat, and if the price of labour decline, the money price of each bushel will decline in the same degree; so that by the united operation of diminished cultivation and falling wages, rents may be reduced as low as you please; but they would then just be as

exorbitant as now, that is to say, the same part or portion out of the whole produced, would most probably continue to be taken as rent. It is not the sum that is paid in money, but it is the portion that is taken out of the whole produce, that makes rents exorbitant, or otherwise. This portion, be it remembered, is in England a fourth or fifth part, and in Scotland a third.

It is a very easy thing for theorists to talk of throwing lands out of cultivation: it is play to them, but death to the victims of their theories. But, supposing the thing done, what is to become of the unhappy persons who are thus thrown out of all employment? The farmers are ruined; their stock and machinery, in which all their capital is embarked, are rendered thereby worthless, because useless; all their labourers are thrown out of employment, and have nothing to do. Probably the theorists would answer, that private interest must be sacrificed to public benefit, and that the agricultural labourers, deprived of their employment, would find work in producing the additional quantity of manufactures that would be requisite to exchange for that portion of our consumption of grain now imported from abroad. But it would be no easy matter for the hand of the husbandman, rendered hard and horny by the labours of the field, to accommodate itself to the nice and delicate operations of machinery. Besides, how does it appear that it would be a

national benefit, to destroy one sort of machinery to an immense value, merely to make another sort of a different nature; to destroy a portion of our agricultural machinery, merely to increase our manufacturing machinery; to render ourselves dependent for our daily bread, on the whims and caprices of foreign nations, when we are able to be quite independent of the world for the necessaries of life? But then it may be replied, we should have all the necessaries of life cheaper, and consequently in greater abundance. The latter position is denied. How does it appear that we should have them in greater abundance? If the labourer could receive precisely the same wages as before, doubtless, if agricultural produce became cheaper, he could have it in greater abundance. But it is denied, that the same wages can be paid for labour, and corn be cheaper at the same time: and let it be attempted to elucidate this important position.

It is an extravagant supposition, to suppose the cultivation of grain abandoned in England, and all we use imported from abroad; but for the sake of argument, let that supposition be made, and let it be required to assign the effect on the wages of daily labour, corn being sold at 54*s.* a quarter, instead of 74*s.* 1st, On the supposition that we import all our grain of every kind from abroad; 2dly, That, as now, we supply ourselves entirely, but at the price of 54*s.* instead of 74*s.*; and, 3dly,

On the supposition, that we import one-tenth from abroad, and grow the rest ourselves. To abandon agriculture, and import all our grain from abroad, is an extravagant supposition; for let it be considered, that the agricultural population is probably one half of the whole population of the kingdom. How are their habits and modes of life to be changed? How would it be possible to collect them, scattered over the whole surface of the country, into large towns, and to convert them from husbandmen into manufacturing labourers? Besides, how incalculable the national loss, in the many hundred millions invested in farms, farm-buildings, and agricultural machinery, all rendered unproductive and worthless; and where could the capital be found, that would be wanting for the construction of the new manufactories, and the new machinery?

Our consumption of grain, we have seen, or rather the quantity sold by all our farmers, is equivalent to about 17,500,000 quarters of wheat. Now, it is very true, that the whole world could not at present supply us a surplus quantity equal to this. For no country can, or will, grow more than it consumes, or has a market for, besides a certain surplus remaining to answer any deficiency of the next harvest, or any casual demand that may arise. But if more at any time be required, more both can and may be grown, due time and notice being allowed; for it still remains to be shewn,

that the whole earth has arrived at the limit, or any thing like the limit of its productive powers.

Probably, if wanted, there is surface enough to grow twice the quantity, or more, all over the world, than is now produced, after leaving ample space to supply all other wants. Hence, merely considering the thing in a theoretical point of view, it seems impossible to deny, that if there was a constant and certain demand for 17,500,000 quarters of wheat annually, agriculture, by that demand, might be so extended in a few years, throughout the whole of the North of Europe, Poland, Germany, and France, through all the extensive and fertile coasts of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and throughout the whole of the vast Continent of North America, as to supply even a still greater quantity, if necessary. Therefore it cannot be doubted, that in a little time the United Kingdoms might be able to import from all the different quarters of the globe, a constant supply of as much as 17,500,000 quarters of wheat, or more if wanted; and considering the present prices at which corn can be imported, that immense supply might be had at about 54*s.* the quarter, landed into our warehouses, all expences of freight, &c. being included. The following is Mr. Jacob's estimate respecting the price of the best kind of Polish wheat imported into England, as extracted from the public prints.

	s.	d.
Original expence to the grower	28	0
Conveyance to the boat	0	6
Freight to Dantzic	5	0
Loss from pilfering, and wet by rain	3	0
Expences at Dantzic, in warehousing, &c.	2	0
Profit on commission at Dantzic	1	6
Freight to London	8	0
	48	0

Hence, instead of its costing us 64,750,000*l.* for all the grain we consume, 17,500,000 quarters of wheat, at 54*s.*, would only cost us 47,250,000*l.* Both sums may be said to be made up of profit and labour of some kind or other; the question simply being, whether the Nation shall consume its bread at an expence of 64,750,000*l.* of agricultural profit and labour, or at an expence of 47,250,000*l.* of manufacturing profit and labour. For if we buy 47,250,000*l.* worth of grain from abroad, our only means of paying for it is by our own manufacturing profit and labour. It makes little or no difference, whether this quantity of grain is brought in our own or in foreign ships, except that shipping is a favourite and popular English employment. For if we use our own shipping-labour and profit in bringing the grain to our ports, our manufacturing-labour and profit must be so much less: whereas, if we use foreign shipping, our manufacturing-labour and profit must be so much greater; so that

the quantum of our joint profit and labour necessary for the purchase and freight into our warehouses of 17,500,000*l.* quarters of wheat, can be neither more nor less than 47,250,000*l.*

Hence, therefore, agriculture being abandoned in England, and nothing but foreign grain being consumed, our foreign trade would be greater than it now is, by 47,250,000*l.* per annum, and no more; because no other vent would be opened for our goods, that we do not now possess, than this exchange of manufactured articles to the amount of 47,250,000*l.* for a quantity of grain of different kinds, tantamount to 17,500,000 quarters of wheat. Consequently we should gain profit and labour of one kind to the amount of 47,250,000*l.*; but we should lose all the profit and labour of growing corn, which, on the supposition of wheat being at 74*s.* the quarter, amount to 64,750,000*l.*; we should also lose in the money price of profit and labour, 30 per cent. in the price of all other agricultural produce whatsoever, in order to bring down that produce to the price at which it must be sold when wheat is at 54*s.* the quarter, instead of 74*s.* This, we have already seen, would amount to 26,250,000*l.*: hence our whole loss in the diminution of our profit and labour, would amount to 91,000,000*l.*, and our whole gain in the foreign market being 47,250,000*l.*, the whole diminution of annual income, in what is realized by profit and labour, would, on the balance, amount to nearly

44,000,000*l.* which is the amount of the diminution of 30 per cent. on all agricultural produce. Hence the national income would be diminished by the annual amount of 44,000,000*l.*; and taking the whole annual income of the country, both of rich and poor, at 360,000,000*l.*, there would be necessarily an average reduction of income to the amount of about 15 per cent.

Now, if we look at every thing that is bought, its price is made up of profit, and the wages of labour. Hence, if there be 15 per cent. in money spent less one year than another, the whole sum paid for that year's profit, and the whole sum paid for that year's wages of labour, must necessarily be 15 per cent. less than before. Consequently it follows, that since our annual income would be reduced 15 per cent. by our ceasing to grow grain of any kind at home, and importing all we use from abroad, *the wages of labour must also be reduced 15 per cent.*; and if our wages of labour are depreciated 15 per cent., we shall then have to give 115 days' labour for a certain quantity of foreign produce, for which previously we only gave 100 days' labour. Hence we find, that the labourer, on this change, would have to submit to a diminution of his wages, to the amount of 15 per cent.: he would buy agricultural produce 30 per cent. cheaper; but then foreign produce would remain at the same price; that is, to him it would be virtually 15 per cent. dearer. Consequently, upon the whole, he

would be no gainer. The same would be true, in the case of all persons subsisting on the profits of trade; for those profits, like the labourer's wages, would be reduced 15 per cent. They would therefore have 15 per cent. taken off from their gross income; and by buying agricultural produce 30 per cent. cheaper, and foreign produce at the same price, that is, virtually to them, 15 per cent. dearer, they would be no more benefited than the labourer. The Clergy would be absolutely ruined, and the Landowners would not be much better off than the Clergy; but the money-lender and the public creditor, as long as they could get the interest of their respective debts paid, would be much better off, because their income would remain unchanged; they would buy agricultural produce 30 per cent. cheaper, and they would give no more than formerly for foreign produce. Hence we find, even supposing it practicable to abandon agriculture in England, and to exchange the articles which we can produce the cheapest against corn, which other nations can produce cheaper than we can, the great interests of the country would not be benefited; because the consequent diminution of the national income, would occasion a diminution to the manufacturer, the trader, and the labourer, of about 15 per cent. in their respective annual income, which would balance the advantage they would derive by buying their agricultural produce 30 per cent. cheaper than before.

But such a thing is impracticable. Many hundred millions would be absolutely lost to the country, of property rendered worthless, in farm-buildings, farming-stock, &c. &c.; and even if the agricultural labourers could be easily converted into manufacturing labourers, where would the capital be found, necessary for the production of 47,250,000*l.* worth of additional manufactures? To produce this quantity, a capital of several hundred millions vested in machinery and stock, would be requisite; and where is so great a capital to be found? Even if it could be found, or borrowed from our neighbours, interest would have to be paid for its use, amounting probably to 15,000,000*l.* per annum; the whole of which would be an additional loss to the country, whatever the annual amount of interest might prove to be. Besides, can we suppose that our neighbours, jealous of our power and greatness, would not take advantage of the false position in which we had placed ourselves, by rendering ourselves dependent upon them for our daily food? No; when we had delivered ourselves up to them, bound hand and foot, when we could no longer do without their corn, and they could do without the embellishments of life, which are all that we have to give them in exchange; are we not to suppose that they would feel the natural superiority of their condition, and attempt to starve us into their own terms?

Ancient Rome subsisted, under the Emperors,

almost entirely on imported grain. Even with the command of the whole world, with all nations tributary to them, and prostrate at their feet, the Romans often found the supply either inadequate to their wants, or by some cause withheld; and the most serious consequences frequently ensued therefrom. How much more should not we do so, possessing, as we do, so much less influence and power in the world than they did?

Hence we find that, of necessity, the great bulk of our consumption must be derived from our own soil; we cannot with safety depend upon any body but ourselves, for the absolute necessaries of life. The garrison must not only be manned, but it must be provisioned; otherwise, the greater its physical force, the sooner it must surrender. As, therefore, it appears that no advantage would be derived from our importing the whole of our corn from abroad, so as to cost us 30 per cent. less than what we pay for that of our own growth; and even if there was, that our national safety and existence would be compromised thereby; let it next be ascertained what the effect would be, if we still continued to grow all our own corn as now, but that, in consequence of the abolition of the Corn Laws, wheat was sold at 54*s.* a quarter, instead of 74*s.* When wheat was at 74*s.* a quarter, the account of what was paid for the quantity of grain produced and sold in the United Kingdoms, and the division of the proceeds into rent, tithe, farmer's

profit, and wages of all sorts of labour connected with husbandry, stood thus:

17,500,000 quarters of wheat, at 74*s.*	£64,750,000
Rent	£13,000,000
Farmer's profit, wear and tear, &c.	13,000,000
Tithe	4,000,000
Poor-rates, &c.	2,500,000
	£32,500,000
Wages of labour of all kinds	32,250,000
	£64,750,000

But when wheat sells for 54*s.* a quarter, instead of 74*s.*, 17,500,000 quarters of wheat will only produce 47,250,000*l.*; therefore there will be a deficiency of 17,500,000*l.* Upon whose shoulders is that deficiency to be placed? Not upon the owners of the soil alone, for the natural qualities of the soil will still continue to give them an undoubted right and title to the same number of bushels of wheat, that is, to the same portion of the produce, as before. Tithes will also be the same portion of the produce as before. Therefore, as the money-price of produce has only been reduced 30 per cent., rent and tithe together can only be reduced 30 per cent. Now, rent and tithe amounted, previously, to 17,000,000*l.*, and 30 per cent. on this sum, is 5,100,000*l.*; consequently, rent and tithe would be reduced by the amount of 5,100,000*l.* But there would still remain 12,400,000*l.* of dimi-

nution to be accounted for; and this can only be borne by the poor-rates, the farmer's profit and remuneration, and the wages of labour.

When agricultural produce was so much cheaper, it may be presumed that the sums raised for the maintenance of the poor, being principally expended in food, would be proportionably diminished thereby. Hence we may assume, that the poor-rates would be diminished 30 per cent. Now, if the rate of the profits of trade on a given capital, remained unchanged, (and there is no reason to suppose that that rate would be affected), the sum paid to the farmer for his profit and remuneration, could only be diminished by the capital requisite for conducting his business being diminished; and the capital requisite for carrying on his business could only be diminished, by all his farming expences being diminished. Now, he receives 30 per cent. less for his whole produce than he did before. His rent, tithe, and poor-rate, can only be reduced 30 per cent.; but to enable him to go on, as these only amount to 2-7ths of his produce, his wages of labour of all kinds must also be reduced 30 per cent.; consequently, the wages of all labour which the farmer has to pay, to meet the new order of things, must absolutely, and of necessity, be reduced 30 per cent., to enable agriculture to go on. When this last item is reduced, the process will be complete; for the farmer's capital, necessary to carry on his business, will then be reduced 30 per

cent.; and when this is done, 30 per cent. reduction on the poor-rates, farmer's profit and remuneration, &c., and the wages of labour, will amount to 12,400,000*l.*; which, with the 5,100,000*l.* of reduction in rents and tithes, will just make up the sum of 17,500,000*l.* the reduction in the amount for which all sorts of grain in the United Kingdoms are sold, when wheat falls from 74*s.* to 54*s.* a quarter. The price of corn is continually varying in the market; it being sometimes higher, sometimes lower. But when a variation of the price of corn has been mentioned in these pages, a permanent, and not a casual reduction in that price, has been meant.

Hence we find, that if the price of wheat in the United Kingdoms be reduced 30 per cent. permanently, the price of all sorts of labour connected with agriculture, must also be reduced permanently 30 per cent., and proportionably for any greater or less variation: for unless this takes place, all farmers must become bankrupts, and the production of corn cease. But if agricultural labour of all kinds be reduced in proportion to the price of corn, then must labour of all other descriptions too, be reduced in the same degree, by the effect of competition. In addition to which, the diminution of national income, consequent upon a reduction of the money-value of agricultural produce, would produce that effect of itself, as we have already seen; though, possibly, not in the same degree.

For it must be remembered, that we have for our manufactured goods, a home market, as well as a foreign market. With the exception of what is spent in agricultural produce, all that is paid for rent, tithe, farmer's profit, and the wages of labour, is spent in our manufacturers' home market. If those sums be diminished, the home market must suffer accordingly; so much less must be spent in it, and, of course, the whole sums which the manufacturing interests derive therefrom, in the shape of profits, and wages of labour, must be diminished in the same proportion. Hence, the manufacturing and agricultural interests are, happily for the peace and safety of the community, so intimately combined, that they must stand or fall together.

Let it next be required, what the effect on wages would be, if wheat were sold at 54*s.* the quarter, instead of 74*s.*; but that, instead of growing all that we consume, as now, one-tenth part were imported from abroad. One consequence must be, that since we now cultivate as much land as furnishes us with all the corn we want, a quantity of land, producing one-tenth of our consumption, must be thrown out of occupation; and all the money expended on that land, in farm-buildings, enclosures, &c. &c., and all the capital invested in the farming stock, and implements used upon it, be rendered worthless. But notwithstanding this loss, if the theory, which was examined in a former part of this dissertation, were true; if, the more

cultivation were extended, the greater was the tribute which the labouring classes paid of their toil and sweat, to the lords of the soil; it might be very good policy, and very just, to ease the people from the oppression of a galling and intolerable yoke.

There seems, however, sufficient reason to believe, that that theory is perfectly visionary, and that the landlords take no greater portion of the produce of the soil now, than formerly, or than in any other country which has been settled and occupied for centuries. There seems sufficient reason to believe, should a part of the lands of England, now under corn-cultivation, be thrown out of corn-cultivation, that both good land as well as bad land would be thrown out of cultivation, and that the same proportion of the produce would still, as before, be paid as rent; that is to say, that if the extent of cultivation was reduced one-tenth, the aggregate number of bushels of corn paid to the owners of the soil as rent, would also be reduced one-tenth, and no more. If all lands paid exactly the same portion out of each bushel they produce, for rent, it is manifest, that when one-tenth less bushels were grown, the amount of rents would be one-tenth less. But good lands pay something more out of each bushel, than lands inferior to them in value; consequently, if the good lands were thrown out of tillage, rents must, in their whole aggregate, be reduced more than one-tenth; and if the inferior

soils were thrown out of tillage, rents would be reduced less than one-tenth. Therefore, upon the whole, it will be safest, and, most probably, nearest the truth, to assume, that if, instead of growing all our own corn, as now, we imported one-tenth part of our consumption from abroad, rents would be reduced one-tenth; tithe would certainly be reduced one-tenth; the burden of poor-rates would remain the same; and consequently it would, in this case, be requisite to make some allowance to the agricultural interest, tantamount to one-tenth part of the poor-rates which they now have to pay.

But to resume our argument. Instead of 17,500,000 quarters of wheat, of our own growth, being sold by our farmers, on the present supposition, one-tenth less, or 15,750,000 quarters only, would be sold by them at the price of 54*s.* the quarter; and one-tenth part, or 1,750,000 quarters, would be imported from abroad. Now, when we sold 17,500,000 quarters of wheat, of our own growth, at 54*s.* the quarter, the whole sum produced was 47,250,000*l.*; but when we have only 15,750,000 quarters to sell, of our own growth, they will produce only 42,525,000*l.*, or agricultural profit and labour will be diminished by 4,725,000*l.*, and manufacturing profit and labour will gain 4,725,000*l.*; and for the sake of making this transfer, the Nation will lose as much capital, as amounts to the value of the agricultural machinery and stock now rendered worthless; or otherwise,

as much capital as would be necessary for the machinery and stock requisite to produce 4,725,000*l.* worth of manufactured goods; therefore we find that, having as many farms already built, and as much land brought into corn-cultivation as is necessary to produce all the grain that we consume, if wheat must be reduced in price 30 per cent., so far from its being advantageous, to cease growing it all ourselves, and to import a portion from abroad, such a change would be attended with an absolute loss and destruction of national capital, to a very large amount. However, on the supposition of our still producing from our own soil, nine-tenths of our consumption, at the price of 54*s.* a quarter, instead of 74*s.*, the rent and tithe on the corn-lands being also reduced one-tenth, it may be shewn, by the same train of reasoning as before, that the agricultural labour requisite to produce this quantity, must necessarily, as before, be reduced 30 per cent., to enable the farmer, by any possibility, to sell his grain at the reduced rate.

Consequently, it appears, under every view of the subject that can be taken, and the more the subject is examined, perhaps the more forcibly it will appear, that there cannot be any permanent change in the price of grain, without its producing a corresponding change in the money paid as wages for the labour by which that grain is produced. And it is contended, that if the price of agricultural labour falls, the price of all other kinds of labour

must soon fall also, in the same proportion, as well from the effect produced by the free competition of labour, as by the effect produced from the necessary diminution in the amount of national income. Hence it is contended, that manufacturers and manufacturing labourers unwisely complain of the restrictions imposed by the Corn Laws; because the amount of their profits, and of their wages of labour, must necessarily be diminished in the same ratio that the price of corn is diminished; so that by no means would they be thereby put into a better situation than before, but into a worse; because, though they would be able to command as much home produce, they would not be able to command as much foreign produce as formerly.

The Corn Laws tend not only to keep up the price of agricultural produce and agricultural labour, but also to keep up the price of manufacturing produce and manufacturing labour, and to enable both to obtain their full value abroad. But if it could be satisfactorily shewn, that the Corn Laws could be abolished, without the national income being thereby diminished, and without the price of labour being lowered in the same degree that corn was made cheaper, then it must be confessed, that the Corn Laws must be given up as indefensible. Yet, if this cannot be shewn, it is contended, on the other hand, that the Corn Laws were dictated by a wise policy. The Corn Laws may repeal themselves, through our labour falling in value

abroad, and consequently at home; but this would be a great national calamity, and destructive of our power and wealth. In order to illustrate this more fully, let us consider, in the following Section, the effect this would produce upon our revenue, and on the value of property.

SECTION IV.

It is often a ground of complaint, and a reason assigned why agricultural produce is so much dearer with us than in other countries, that we are burdened with such a heavy amount of taxation. Doubtless, taxation is a great evil, inasmuch as it tends to diminish income, to diminish the profits of industry, and to diminish the hard-earned wages of patient labour. But when taxation is ascribed as a cause of the high price of agricultural produce, most probably a consequence is mistaken for a cause. If taxation were a cause of the high price of the necessaries of life, they would vary, as taxation, and might be increased or decreased indefinitely. Yet, in truth, it is only the high price of agricultural produce, indicating a high price of labour, and a high amount of national income, that allows of a great amount of taxes being collected.

There is no civilized country without taxes, to defray the necessary expences of the government, and of the defence and protection of the people;

and they are generally contrived to be as high as the people can bear. High taxation is a very common complaint; but it may not be ill-founded notwithstanding. The public revenue of all countries, appears to be derived from two sources: direct taxes, and taxes on consumption. Of the first kind, are all taxes on income, or of the nature of our assessed taxes, or our stamps. To this, the rich alone commonly contribute. Of the second kind, are all taxes levied on articles of consumption, as Custom-house and Excise duties. To this, both rich and poor contribute; but it is generally and wisely contrived, that the articles consumed by the rich, shall be higher taxed, in proportion to their value, than those consumed by the poor.

Probably there never was a country without taxes, of some kind or other, upon articles of consumption. But, in estimating the rates of taxation of two countries, we are not to be guided by the amount levied, but by the means which the people have to pay. Both rich and poor contribute to the amount raised by taxes on articles of consumption. The rich, in proportion, pay more than the poor; but the latter are so much more numerous than the former, that probably the aggregate of their contributions in this way to the public treasury, exceeds that of the former. But it is the proportion of the annual income of the rich, and the proportion of the wages of labour, which taxation takes away, that can alone guide our conclu-

sion, whether one country is higher taxed than another. If a sixth part of each of these is taken by the governments of England and France respectively, then both countries are oppressed to the same degree with taxation, though the actual amount collected in England be greater than the amount collected in France. If, on the other hand, taxation takes away a fifth part of the annual income of the rich, and of the wages of labour, in England, and only a sixth part in France, then is England more loaded with taxation than France, and *vice versâ*. If in one country, the daily wages of the working classes, and the annual income of the rich, be double what they are in another, the rich country will be able with the same ease to bear twice the amount of taxation of the poor one, (supposing their population equal), even though the money-price of every thing else be double. Every thing would then be on the same level, and ten sovereigns could be collected by the exciseman in the rich country, with the same ease as he could collect five sovereigns in the poor one.

Now, it would seem that there is ample reason to believe, that any change in the present Corn Laws, through the effect of which grain would be sold cheaper than it now is, as, for instance, for 54*s.* the quarter, in the place of 74*s.*, would both diminish the amount of the national income, and the daily wages of the labouring classes. Any change in the price of corn, must affect the price of

all other agricultural produce whatsoever: if corn be reduced 30 per cent., all other agricultural produce must be reduced in the same ratio; experience fully bears out this theoretical conclusion. But at the present times, or at least when wheat is at 74*s.* the quarter, the whole agricultural produce of the kingdom is estimated by Mr. Colquhoun at upwards of 200,000,000*l.* in value. Consequently, if, by virtue of a legislative enactment, corn, and therefore all agricultural produce, be reduced 30 per cent., the national income on this account must be reduced 60,000,000*l.*, that is, 30 per cent. on 200,000,000*l.* In addition to which, manufacturing labour, and consequently the amount in money of manufacturing profits, would also be reduced 30 per cent.; therefore, upon the whole, it may be truly said, that the whole amount of national income would be reduced 30 per cent. Now, our present system of taxation is calculated to take away into the government treasury, say, one-eighth part of the national income; therefore if the same taxes continue, and the national income be reduced 30 per cent., the amount in money which those taxes can produce, must also be diminished 30 per cent.; and, consequently, if the same revenue still continues to be raised, new taxes, to the amount of about one-third of what is now collected, must be imposed. But we already assuredly pay as large a portion of our income as can be taken away, without being attended with

ruinous consequences on the productive powers and industry of the country.

A permanently-increased taxation, to the amount of one-third more than is now paid, could not be borne. All taxes diminish income, diminish profits, and diminish the wages of labour; because they increase in a two-fold degree the price of the articles on which they are imposed, and because they increase the expences of living. Taxes increase, in a two-fold degree, the price of the articles on which they are imposed. For whatever duty is laid upon any article, it evidently increases the price of that article by its amount. This duty is, in the first instance, paid by the wholesale dealer; consequently it must not only be repaid to him by the consumer, but with such an addition as will also pay him the ordinary profits of trade, on the capital employed, in the first instance, in paying the duty. Now, as taxes diminish profits, the consequence will be, that if they become excessive in any country, they will drive capital out of that country into others, where it can be employed with more advantage, and thus they will cut up by the roots, the sources of the industry and wealth of that country. To endeavour to procure by taxation, too large a portion of the income of the subject, and the wages of labour, would be very like killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. Hence it may be confidently stated, that if our national income be reduced 30 per cent., taxa-

tion must produce 30 per cent. less than before. The same taxes may continue, but they will be 30 per cent. less productive, and additional taxes to make up the deficiency, cannot be imposed without producing national ruin. If, therefore, the revenue be reduced 30 per cent., the expences of government must be reduced 30 per cent.: government expences may be divided into two very nearly equal parts—the interest of the debt contracted for the defence and very existence of the nation, and the aggregate amount of the salaries of office, the pay of the Army and Navy, and government stores, either the production of our own, or of foreign industry.

Now this second part, with the exception of foreign produce, which would most probably remain at precisely the same price, might very properly be reduced 30 per cent. Because the produce of our own industry, the wages of labour being 30 per cent. cheaper, would also become 30 per cent. cheaper; and as every other sort of income and wages was reduced 30 per cent., it would be very just that the salaries of office, and the pay of the Army and Navy, should also be reduced 30 per cent. Whether it would be equally just, may be questionable perhaps; but it would in this case certainly be equally necessary and imperative, to reduce the interest of the national debt also 30 per cent. No nation can be bound to impossibilities. As long as the interest on the national debt can be

paid; the Government is bound to pay it, by every principle of justice and propriety. Whether the money raised by the debt contracted, was all properly and wisely spent, may certainly be questionable. Some persons may think one way upon this point, and some may think another; but it seems impossible to deny, that the national debt, in its greatest part, was contracted in support of our very national existence; and that by the exertions we were thereby enabled to make, we not only delivered ourselves from foreign subjugation, but were mainly instrumental also, in delivering the whole of Europe from an overwhelming and irresistible military despotism. After having been skilfully cured of a mortal disease, are we then ungratefully to refuse to pay the doctor's bill? Which is worst, to be dead and buried, or to have to pay a rather high doctor's bill? Hence, unquestionably, our engagement to the public creditor ought to be held sacred. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied, that we might be so situated, as to render it impossible to keep our public faith. Then, indeed, our engagements must be modified by the principle of self-preservation. Yet, assuredly, at the present time, and as long as the national income can be kept up to its present standard, we are able to keep our engagements. Let us not, therefore, deluded by false theories, put ourselves into a situation that would no longer admit of our doing so, until we are actually thrust

into that situation by the force of circumstances over which we have no controul.

If the Author may be pardoned in expressing the opinion of an humble and obscure individual, he is by no means disposed to despair of the present lowering aspect of affairs at home. Our manufacturing interests evidently seem to have suffered from over-production, from having glutted all their foreign markets, from having produced a supply far beyond the annual demand. Time, and time only, can remedy the evil. When this excess has been consumed, and not till then, a new supply will be wanted, and a new demand will be created. But it would be a bad, and most injudicious remedy, to increase our manufacturing establishments, which have already proved themselves too great for the supply of the whole world, in the articles they produce, at the expence of our agricultural interests.

Should the wages of manufacturing labourers become permanently reduced, they cannot long suffer from an excessive price of agricultural produce; because the wages of agricultural labourers, and with them the price of grain, would very soon fall in the same proportion. The manufacturing population form a large portion of the consumers of the farmer's produce. They cannot pay more for that, than they have got to give; and if the farmer is not content to take it, his produce must go unsold and perish.

In the general diminution of income, and price of labour consequent upon the depreciation of agricultural produce 30 per cent., there would not only be great difficulty, if not impossibility, in maintaining public engagements, but in maintaining private ones also. The value of land might be so much depreciated, as not to be worth the sum for which it was mortgaged, though previously mortgaged below its value. Houses, ships, and machinery, and furniture of every kind, would be depreciated in value, in the same degree as labour was depreciated, because these things could now be newly constructed for so much less than before. Suppose a man holding property of various kinds, the product of labour, to the value of 100,000*l.*, and that his debts amounted to 70,000*l.* He would justly consider himself worth 30,000*l.* But as soon as the change took place, he would find himself not worth one farthing; and had his debts been greater than 70,000*l.*, he would find himself insolvent. And so on, with other similar cases.

The truth is, that the wages of labour have been falling, and have fallen considerably, since the termination of the last war; and it is worthy of remark, that the price of grain has also fallen accordingly. Our immense expenditure, and our vast armaments during the war, necessarily occasioned a greatly increased price of labour. Had we not been entailing by the war, a heavy debt upon posterity, and a very heavy and continually

increasing annual charge upon ourselves, this state of things might justly have been considered highly prosperous, and the longer it lasted, the better. But it could not last for ever. When the war ceased, an immense diminution took place in our home expenditure, and consequently in our aggregate national income. This was mitigated, but was not counterbalanced by the increase of our foreign trade, consequent upon peace; and hence, a depreciation in the wages of labour, and a depreciation in the value of property, took place, and has been fatal to thousands. It has been fashionable to ascribe that depreciation to our former paper system, and subsequent return to cash payments; but perhaps not with very good reason; because the depreciation took place previous to our return to payments in gold, which it ought not to have done, and could not have done, had the depreciation been owing to that cause. Gold is an article of commerce, and political circumstances may as easily affect its price, as the price of any other article of commerce. It may be in plenty at one time, and very scarce at another, and consequently may at one time be at comparatively a very low, and at another, at comparatively a very high price. But before cash payments were resumed, gold had already come down to its ordinary Mint price; whereas, before it can be shewn that our paper system has depreciated the value of money, and disturbed previously-existing contracts, it ought

at least to be shewn, that the price and value of gold never varies.

Suppose, at a certain price of gold, a man borrows a thousand guineas. If gold is not invariable, it may vary in price. Suppose it to have so varied, and to have become half as dear again, and that, in this state, the lender demands his thousand guineas. If they were paid, he would receive from the borrower, what would be tantamount to fifteen hundred guineas at the time when the debt was contracted. Now, by making a certain sort of paper a legal tender, it might so happen, that the lender demanding his debt, instead of receiving what would have been of the value of fifteen hundred guineas when he lent his money, would only receive precisely the same value, that is, the value of a thousand guineas which he had previously lent: so that, in fact, making paper money a legal tender, may have been little short of an equitable adjustment of contract debts. But all such adjustments, and all tampering with what is the legal tender, are very bad and dangerous, and introduce very questionable principles. They can only be excused by very extraordinary circumstances, compelling a departure from the legal standard.

It is thought by some, that the high price of corn is owing to our paper circulation, which, it is pretended, has depreciated the value of money; so that, in fact, a greater value is not paid in England than on the Continent, but only a greater

nominal value. If our paper circulation were a forced government paper, like that now, or formerly, in many parts of America, and in other countries; if it were at a heavy discount, then it might be most true, that our prices were fictitious: but when we find that all our paper is exchangeable for gold or Bank-notes, and that a five-pound Bank of England note abroad, will command as much as five golden sovereigns; it is very difficult to see or to believe that our paper is depreciated, and our prices fictitious. There must be a certain sum to carry on the circulation, and to make the payments, and negotiate the internal transactions of the country. If this sum is all in the shape of the precious metals, so much of the capital of the country as they amount to, is rendered unproductive. It forms a part of the machinery of civilized life; an expensive indeed, but a necessary part. Now if something, as a promissory-note, can be substituted in the place of the gold, or in the place of a part of it, then may this gold be sent out of the kingdom to purchase raw materials, to be afterwards worked up by British skill and industry; by which means, a part of the capital of the country, instead of being idle, is rendered productive. Thus, suppose the amount of money in circulation were thirty millions, all gold: suppose twenty millions of paper substituted in the place of twenty millions of gold, so that the circulation becomes ten millions of gold and twenty of paper: then this twenty mil-

lions, instead of being idle and unproductive, might be employed in buying twenty millions of raw material, more than there would otherwise have been capital in the country to buy. Now, when this raw material comes to be worked up and sold, it will be increased in value perhaps* 200 per cent.; that is, 200 per cent. of British labour and profit will have been expended upon it; whence the national income will be increased by the sum of forty millions more than it otherwise would have been increased, if the gold had remained unproductive in the country, and a proportionably less quantity of raw material had been bought, to be worked up by British skill and capital.

Hence, by the substitution of paper instead of gold, a part of the national income is made productive, which would otherwise not be so. But then, if paper be substituted in the place of gold, it ought to represent a real existing value: the person who accepts the payment of it in the place of gold, ought to have an assurance that he could not, and would not be a loser by doing so. If the Government of the country allows an individual to trench upon the royal prerogative, in the issue of a

* It appears, that in our principal manufactured articles, the cost of the raw material makes up one-third; the cost of the manual labour employed, another third; and the profit of the manufacturer and retail dealer, and other charges, the remaining third. So that in 300*l.* worth of goods, the raw material costs 100*l.*, and the labour and profit 200*l.*

circulating medium, it is bound to see that the public suffers not by his failing to do that which he promises to do on demand, namely, to pay a real value for his bond to the public. In all chartered banks and companies which are permitted to issue notes, the Government appears to have done so, in a very great measure, by having required a subscribed capital to be raised, and by having taken that capital into its own hands, allowing interest on the same. Should the Bank, or chartered company, stop payment, there is then a sufficient fund, sure and safe, to satisfy the demands of the holders of its notes. Each note may be considered to represent a real value, free from the possibility of accident.

The law seems to have been defective, in not requiring a similar security and assurance from the private banker. The private banker extends his circulation on the strength of his credit. But if he has no property, except that which he receives in exchange for his paper, he has no real credit, and ought not to be suffered to derive an income from that which he has not, at the public expence and risque. Suppose he loses the property he receives in exchange for his notes, by his own misconduct or misfortunes, or by the misconduct or misfortunes of others, as has frequently happened; then there is nothing, or not sufficient, to pay to the public the value of those notes which the banker has been permitted to circulate in the place of the current

coin of the realm. And so it must always be, unless the Government require from those permitted to issue promissory-notes, such pledges or assurances, as, in case of the banker's failure, will protect the public from loss.

The Government never suffers any persons to hold in their hands the public monies, as receivers of taxes, or in any other way, without sufficient pledges and assurances that the Treasury can sustain no loss. Let a similar plan be adopted with private bankers circulating small notes, before stamps are issued to them; or let property be absolutely deposited in the hands of the Government, equal in value to the notes for which the stamps are issued. Let this property, in case of the banker's failure, be all, by law, appropriated to pay the circulating notes, and then we should no longer hear of the public losses and distresses, by the failure of bankers: the circulating medium would never receive, and never have cause to fear any shock or loss. The property might be deposited in the hands of Government, and the depositors still enjoy the annual income resulting from it. For instance, public stock might be deposited, by its being transferred into the name of a Government Commissioner, or Accountant, in trust for the banker; the banker still receiving the annual interest, but only losing the power of selling his stock as long as he remained a banker, or till he replaced his stock by some other equivalent secu-

rity. Mortgage-deeds, the title-deeds of estates held in fee, might be deposited with the Government, and the title to all other kinds of property, the depositor still enjoying the annual income proceeding from such property, but losing the power of disposing of it, as long as he continued to issue promissory-notes: so that the public would always hold a security for the due payment of those notes, and that there might never be the possibility of their becoming worth less than their expressed value.

A plan of this kind seems to have been hinted at more than once in the House of Commons, and would seem to be necessary, to give our paper system that firmness which is wanted for its own security. Something of this kind would render it perfect, as a circulating medium, combining a great public gain with public security. The increased annual income derived from the circulation of the country, being carried on by paper instead of gold, is immediately divided among the bankers, the traders and manufacturers accommodated by them, and the labourers who obtain employment, which they would otherwise not have the means of getting. But the Nation at large partakes in the prosperity of these: one member of the commonwealth cannot be benefited, without all being indirectly benefited also.

There would be no hardship upon bankers being called upon to give the public secure pledges for

the payment of their notes. A banker requires no capital, but only the credit of having capital. He does not lend his capital, but his notes, and a portion of the capital his customers deposit with him for security. A trader's operations would be paralysed by having his capital tied up. Not so a banker's. If a banker has no property but what he receives in exchange for his notes, he is not entitled to be a banker: he is living at the expence and risk of the public. If he has property, he loses nothing by giving up a portion of it, equal in value to the amount of his notes in circulation, as a pledge to the public for the due performance of his public engagements, he still continuing to enjoy the annual revenue as before arising from it, and only losing the power of disposing of it as long as he continues a banker.

Thus, suppose a man wished to become a banker, and required stamps for notes, to the amount of ten thousand pounds. Let him transfer into the name of a Government Accountant, in trust for himself, stock to that amount at the price of the day, or let him deposit a mortgage-deed to that amount, or the title-deed of an estate, held by him in fee to that amount; or let him give any description of undeniable bond or security whatsoever, and the stamps be granted to him. If more stamps be required, let them be granted to the amount for which previous stamps have been cancelled; if more still be required, let them be granted on corresponding additional pledges being given. In the same way, if the banker diminished the amount of his notes issued, he would have the power, on producing his cancelled notes, or proper affidavits of them, to redeem a corresponding part of his pledges from public pawn. Should he become a bankrupt, then his public pledges should be immediately converted into cash, solely to pay his notes in circulation; and in case of there being a deficiency, that deficiency to be made good before any other claim on his estate could be satisfied. This principle being adopted, the failure of an English banker would perhaps become as rare a thing as the failure of a Scotch one, or, at all events, the public could be no losers, and there would never be such a thing as a run upon a country banker, because every body would know that there was sufficient security for the payment of every note issued in the kingdom.

The Author now has nearly made a clean breast, and has nearly exhausted all he has at present got to say for the public good, except making a few observations on the effects produced by tithe and poor-laws on the price of corn, which shall be done in the following Section.

SECTION V.

A VERY important question arises respecting tithes and poor-rates, whether they are paid by the farmer, or, in other words, are a deduction out of the rent, and therefore paid by the landlords, or whether they make corn dearer by their whole amount, than it otherwise would be, and consequently are paid by the consumers? It seems to be the opinion of political economists of the present day, that tithes and poor-rates are paid by the consumers, and are not a diminution of the rent. Whether that opinion be well or ill-founded, we shall have an opportunity of examining by and by; but, at present, let us take it for granted that they are paid by the consumers.

In most countries in Europe, there appears to be a direct government tax levied upon the growers of all agricultural produce. In France, that tax amounts to one-fifth of the rent, in addition to a tax levied at the gate of every town, on the introduction of agricultural produce into it. In England, there seems at present to be no direct government tax upon agriculture. Hence, therefore, admitting them to be such for the present, tithes and poor-rates are the only taxes levied on agriculture in this country, the former levied nearly exclusively upon the lands in *corn cultivation*, and the other upon all houses, and upon all lands, according to the profit which they yield.

The poor, who cannot obtain work, the sick and the maimed, unable to work, even though they could obtain employment, must be relieved and supported in all countries; and as long as no more is spent upon them than is necessary and proper, it would seem to be wiser to make all contribute their portion, to what is undoubtedly a public burden, than to throw the whole weight of it upon the more charitable and benevolent part of society, leaving the uncharitable and the less humane to go free. The poor-rates have been abused in several agricultural districts in this country, by the farmers having contrived, for their own benefit, to pay their labourers partly from their own pockets, and partly from the poor-rates, instead of paying wholly out of their own pockets, what is the fair and standard value of a husbandman's daily wages throughout the kingdom. Thus the poor-rates having been made, in many instances, the medium of paying a part of the wages of labour, have been increased in their nominal amount far beyond what they otherwise would have been. This abuse has not taken place in large towns, but in country parishes, and may perhaps, in some measure, account for the fact of the standard of poor-rates being frequently higher in agricultural districts than in large towns.

In all countries of the world, there are, and ever have been, Ministers of Religion. These must be supported, either by individuals, or by the public,

unless some income, not derived either from individuals, or the public at large, has been set apart, and assigned for their maintenance. It has, in most countries, been thought best, that the Ministers of Religion should be paid by the public. In France, the Clergy now receive their stipends from the government, and consequently are paid out of the proceeds of taxes levied upon the people, their former estates and provision of tithes having been lost in the Revolution.

In North America, the Ministers of Religion are also paid by the government, from the proceeds of a tax levied upon every family for that especial purpose, there having been no other public provision set apart for that purpose. Consequently, admitting, for the present, tithes to be a tax upon the public, as a tax must be laid upon the people for the support of the Ministers of Religion, it matters little to the Nation, taken by itself, upon what particular article this tax is laid, as long as it is not unequal and oppressive; as long as it is placed on the right shoulders, and as long as the Clergy are not overpaid, nor over-numerous.

The only valid objection against raising the provision necessary for the support of the Clergy, by the means of tithes, is this; that, admitting tithes to be a tax, and, consequently, to render corn so much dearer than it otherwise would be, it is a tax paid by rich and poor, not according to their ability and wealth, but according to their

consumption; and that, consequently, the poor contribute to this part of the public burdens beyond their fair proportion. However, be this as it may, all taxes on articles consumed by both poor and rich, would be liable to the same objection. But, in considering tithe in the shape of a tax, it must not be forgotten, that a considerable portion of the tithes are received by persons called Lay Impropriators, who, be it remembered, discharge no public duties in return, except, perhaps, keeping in repair a small part of the parish-church, or paying a small stipend to the Vicar, or Perpetual Curate. Added to which, the greater part of the Church Livings belonging to the English Establishment, are in the patronage of private Laymen, having the power of selling their patronage, or the next presentations to their livings. It is not meant to say, that the next presentations to all livings belonging to private Patrons, are sold. There are, doubtless, many Patrons who look to nothing else but the excellence and good conduct of the Clerks whom they present to their vacant livings. But in by far the majority of cases, the next presentations are either sold for very considerable sums of money, or else are bestowed upon the relations or younger sons of the Patrons, in the place of that provision which would otherwise have to be made for them. Hence, a living belonging to a Lay Patron, may be considered to be an estate let on lives for ever,

but subject to a very considerable fine, on the renewal of every life.

It is by no means meant to assert, that there is any impropriety in Lay Patrons selling their next presentations, or their advowsons—far from it. But the Church is often charged with being sordid and avaricious. People who are either ignorant or inconsiderate, are apt to put down all that is paid for tithes, to the account of the Church. Let them in fairness deduct what the Lay Impropriator and the Lay Patron receive, the one, for his part of the tithes, the other, for the next presentations, or the advowsons of his livings. Every advowson has its value generally estimated at about ten years' purchase, after deducting the stipend that must be paid to a Curate, and the outgoings, such as the parochial levies. More is frequently paid. Hence, a clerical purchaser, if he is kept out of the incumbency several years, frequently finds himself no better off than he would have been if he had continued a Curate, and allowed the purchase-money of his advowson to have accumulated for the same length of time, and had then begun to live upon the common annual interest of the principal sum, and its accumulations. In point of emolument, most Dissenting Ministers are better off than the Curates of the Established Church, and pretty nearly as well off as the greatest part of its Ministers. Nay, it may be very fairly said of those who

have adopted the ecclesiastical profession from choice, and not from the hopes which the interest or patronage of powerful friends held out to them, that their choice has not been a wise one, in a pecuniary point of view, and in the prospects which that choice promised them, of being able to maintain and provide for a family. But, probably, all who have done so, are quite satisfied and content, fully convinced, that there is no practicable change for the better, and "living and dying in hopes of better things to come."

In the profession of the Church, like most other professions, the number who succeed to great wealth and dignity, is necessarily small, and the number who fail of deriving for themselves and families, a maintenance suitable to their education and station in life, very considerable. Most have something else to depend upon, besides professional emolument. The Ecclesiastical profession also, in many cases, leaves its Ministers much leisure time upon their hands, and, frequently, the talent and ability they may possess, are adequately remunerated, when a proper attention to their sacred duties will admit of their devoting their leisure to the education of youth, or to the literature of the country. Thus much, it seemed not improper to suggest to the consideration and reflection of those who are in the habit of dealing out rather hard measure to the Church.

It may be apprehended, that the interests of the

Lay Impropriators and Lay Patrons, who have the liberty of selling their advowsons and next presentations, are more deeply concerned in the continuance of the tithe-system, than the interests of the Church, or of Religion, which are, or ought to be, the same thing. All that the Clergy are entitled to, and, as a body, receive, is a decent support. It matters not to them from what source it is derived, provided it does not embroil them with their parishioners, and thereby destroy their utility. All that can really be considered as a matter of general regret, is, that the provision made for the Clergy, has not been every where more equably distributed; that some livings are perhaps much too large for the station in society which a Parish Priest ought to hold, and others, also, by much too small. Had all the patronage of livings been public property, it would have been practicable to have equalized them; but so large a portion belongs to private individuals, that any equalization is utterly impracticable, without disturbing and overturning that security of acknowledged possession upon which society is founded, and from which all private property derives its value. A very large portion of the provision for the Clergy, is derived exclusively from the corn-lands of the country. Should this be thought injurious, and that it would be better diffused over all the produce of the soil, so as to come with less intensity upon corn and other lands cultivated with manual labour, nothing

can be more practicable, (which at the same time would be beneficial to both payers and receivers, by thereby avoiding the annual expence of valuation or collection, and the occasional expence of litigation on disputed claims), than to divide what is now paid by the corn-lands exclusively, or nearly so, over all the lands in the same parish, both corn and pasture, according to their value and fertility, in the manner, and upon the principle of a corn-rent. This has already been done in several instances, in this kingdom, by private Acts of Parliament, and appears to have been practised to a considerable extent in Ireland, by virtue of a Bill introduced into the Legislature by Lord Liverpool, facilitating such an arrangement in that kingdom, by avoiding the necessity of a special Act of Parliament, as at present in England, for every particular case.

However, if the tithe and poor-rates paid by corn-lands, are admitted to be taxes, and, in consequence, to make every bushel of corn grown in the kingdom, dearer than it otherwise would have been, by the whole amount of those taxes which have been paid upon that bushel, it may be said, that corn of English growth is entitled to a protection, by the imposition of a duty equal to that amount per bushel, to be imposed upon every bushel of foreign grain, before that foreign grain is admitted to compete with it in our own markets. For it might well be thought a hard case, to lay the

public burdens upon our own produce, and allow that of foreign countries to go free; besides, the foreign grower would have an evident advantage in our markets, and, by under-selling our own farmers, ruin the agriculture of the country. All nations have the burdens to bear of maintaining their Clergy, and supporting their impotent poor; but if these burdens operate as taxes with us and with them, it does not follow that they have chosen, like us, to lay them upon corn, and thereby to render it so much dearer. They may have laid these burdens upon other things; and therefore, *ceteris paribus*, they would be enabled, in the same market, to undersell those who laid them upon the growth of corn. Hence, on this ground, our farmers might justly require a tax to be laid upon foreign corn, equal to the excess of taxation which that article has to bear with us, beyond what it has to bear with them. But then we must consider, that they have taxes to pay, on the growth of corn, from which our farmers are free; and this ought to be taken as a set-off against so much of the amount of our tithes and poor-rates; in addition to which, and what is of vastly more consequence, foreign corn brought into our market has to bear the very heavy expence of freight and carriage, from which expence ours is free. It appears by Mr. Jacob's calculations, that the expence of bringing a quarter of wheat from Poland, into any of our ports, amounts to twenty shillings a quarter.

Brought from America, perhaps it would be as much, or more; brought from France or Germany, less. Hence, it would be probably a very low calculation, to estimate, that every quarter of foreign wheat sold in this country, would be saddled with an expence of freight and carriage to the amount of twelve shillings a quarter, on the average. Now, estimating the sum paid for tithe at four millions, and the portion of the poor-rates, &c., paid by the corn-lands of the country, at two millions, this would make the average charge on every quarter, for tithe and poor-rate, seven shillings. Consequently, corn of our own growth, from being upon the spot, possesses an advantage over foreign corn brought into our market, very considerably greater than the disadvantage it is supposed to lie under, on the comparison, from being subject to tithe and poor-rate; and therefore, on this plea only, it is clear, our farmers and land-owners are entitled to no protection. It is a bad argument to urge, because, if the disadvantages are to be considered in one way, the advantages ought to be considered also in the other; and it is beyond dispute, that the latter are greater than the former.

But, after all, are tithe and poor-rates really taxes? Do they increase the price of corn to the consumer? As they are very large sums, and are to be paid by the farmer, it would be absurd to ask this question, unless he had also another very large sum to pay, namely, rent, whether he had tithe

and poor-rate to pay, or not. There can be no question, that if there was no such thing as rent to be paid, corn would be so much cheaper; and there can be no question, if there was no such thing as rent, any such charges on land, as tithe and poor-rates, would make corn dearer, by as much the bushel, as those charges amounted to, and that, consequently, such charges must eventually fall upon the consumers of grain. But as rent is paid to the owners of the soil in every country, and has been paid in all ages, it may fairly be considered as an unalterable law of civilized life, that rent must be paid for the use of land; or, in other words, that in all countries, a certain portion of the produce must be paid to the owners of the soil. This being the case, it cannot be denied to be possible, that such charges as tithe and poor-rates, may make that portion less than it otherwise would be, so that they should in part, or wholly, be paid out of the rent, and consequently only in part, or not at all, be paid by the consumers; in which case, they would either not be taxes upon the people at all, or else only be taxes to a small part of their amount.

The opinion of Dr. Adam Smith was, that tithes were a deduction from the rent: but the doctrine of the wiser men of the present day, is, that tithes are entirely paid by the consumers. After having given Dr. Smith's opinion, the writer in the Supplement of the Encyclopædia Britannica, (article

taxation), speaking of tithes, says: "That this is the general opinion, (*i. e.* Adam Smith's), cannot be doubted; but notwithstanding the high authority by which it is supported, it is most certainly without foundation." This is pretty strong language: let us consider whether the argument is equally strong by which it is supported. It is in the following words:

"We have shewn, in treating of taxes on rent, that in "every country, that portion of the required supply of raw "produce which is raised by the agency of the capital last "applied to the soil, and which governs the price of all the "rest, never yields any rent, but merely the common and "average rate of profit to the landlord or the occupier. "Now this principle is decisive as to the effect of tithes and "other taxes on raw produce. If tithes were only levied "from the superior soils, they would not, after inferior soils "had been cultivated, occasion any rise of price, but would "fall entirely on the landlord. But this is not the case with "tithes. They affect *every quality of land indiscriminately*, "and being exacted equally from the produce raised in the "least favourable, as from that which is raised in the most "favourable circumstances, occasion only an increase of "prices. Suppose no tithes are levied, and that the wheat "raised on the poorest lands, or with the capital last "applied to the soil, and which determines the price of "the whole crop, yields a sufficient profit to the cultivator, "and no more when it sells for 70*s.* a quarter, the price "must be raised to 77*s.* a quarter before the same profit can "be obtained, after tithes are imposed. In this case, the "tithes cannot possibly occasion any diminution of rent; "for this produce pays no rent: so that, if it were not com-

"pensated to the cultivators by an increase of prices, they "would withdraw their capital from cultivation, and the "necessary supplies would no longer be obtained."

Hence it is obvious, the strength of this argument rests entirely on the truth of the theory which has been already examined; that the worst lands in corn-cultivation pay no rent, and that the rent per acre of any other land, is equal to the difference between its produce and the produce of an acre of this lowest quality.

If this were true, it would be most certain that tithe is paid by the consumers, and is not a deduction out of the rent. For tithe being paid by all lands indiscriminately, would consequently be paid by those lands which yield no rent, but the produce of which only just pays the expence of cultivation, and the ordinary profits and remunerations of trade, to the farmer. Hence the tithe could not be a deduction from the rent of those lands, because they pay no rent. Neither could they be paid by the cultivators, because that would diminish their profits and remunerations below the ordinary profits and remunerations of trade. Hence the cultivation of these lands would be a losing concern, and therefore would very soon be abandoned. If then, in this case, tithe is neither paid by the owner of the soil nor its cultivator, as it must certainly be paid by somebody, it can only be paid by the consumer; and if it be paid by the consumer in

one case, it must be so paid in all, since the owner of the soil steps in, and takes to his own share the whole excess per acre of the produce of the lands that pay rent, over those that pay none. It would therefore appear, that, if this theory is true, tithe is a tax paid by the public; but if it should prove not to be true, then that consequence does not necessarily follow.

Now we have already seen sufficient ground to believe that this theory is not true; and we may very safely appeal, in support of this assertion, to the fact, that the rents paid on lands of different qualities, equally burdened with tithes, &c. are not equal to the difference of their produce, but very nearly in proportion to their produce.

Perhaps the heaviest single item of expence on farming, is manuring the land. It is true, that the manure required for good land, may not be quite so much in proportion as for soils of an inferior nature; but perhaps this advantage is counterbalanced by the less quantum of sun, and air, and rain, which each plant gets, where the crop stands thick, than where it stands thinner upon the ground; and the lighter crop is never so liable to be injured and spoiled by the effects of heavy rains and long-continued wet weather. In the ordinary course of husbandry, a farmer derives, if not all, very nearly all his manure, from his own fold-yard. The best farm no more than the worst, has any to spare. To keep the land in the same condition, as much must

always be put on as is taken off. Now, evidently, the manure made on any farm, is exactly according to its produce, whether the land be of the highest or of the lowest quality. This may satisfy us, that as far as the greatest expence of cultivation is concerned, it is not on all lands the same, but in proportion to the bulk of the crop. The same is evident as to the reaping, carrying off the produce, stacking it, thrashing it, and taking it to market. But a part of the labour of cultivation, is admitted to be the same for all lands per acre, as the ploughing and the fencing, &c. Now it is a fact, that land paying both rent and tithe, is cultivated, producing no more than twelve bushels per acre. Hence it is a very moderate calculation, which estimates all the labour, which is the same for all lands, at six or seven bushels, because, in this case, it leaves only five or six bushels to pay all other expences whatsoever.

It is very true, that a great deal may be spent upon poor lands; as much per acre as upon the most fertile, or more. But then the lands will be permanently improved in quality thereby, and this expenditure, either directly or indirectly, comes out of the landlord's pocket, and not out of the tenant's. For we must carefully distinguish between a landlord's improvements and a tenant's cultivation: it is the tenant's business to keep up the quality of his land, at least as high as it was when it first came into his holding. But if the

land is to be permanently improved in quality, so as to be made for ever capable of paying a higher rent, then it is but fair and just that the landlord should bear the additional expence. Again, whatever is only required once, as making the fences, draining the land, or levelling it, so as to bring the soil into a state suitable for annual cultivation, —all things of this nature, properly come under the province of the landlord's improvements; and the amount of their cost is nothing more than an investment in land; in which, it is true, the number of the land-owner's acres is not increased, but what is pretty much the same, his rental is. If these improvements cost more than the purchase of an additional quantity of land that would yield the same return, as the difference of rents upon the improved and unimproved soils, then they would not have been made by a prudent man; but if they cost less, then is the improver so much the gainer himself by the outlay; and the productive powers, and consequently the wealth of the country, so much greater than it otherwise would have been.

It is quite a mistake, to suppose either that all the best lands in England are in corn-cultivation, or that any part of our consumption is derived from lands paying no rent. For where can a single instance of a field be produced, which has been under corn-cultivation, and never paid any rent? Even barren rocks have paid a rent, certainly not for growing corn, but mayhap for the material of

which they consist. Land of the very worst sort, which no farmer in his senses would ever think of cultivating, is worth something annually, as a sheep-walk, or for growing some sort of timber, or underwood, or furze; and before what are called poor lands can be brought into cultivation, the land-owner must be tempted with the offer of a higher rent than he could otherwise obtain, or he would never permit the soil to be broken up.

Now, if all lands on which corn is now produced pay rent, what is there to prove to us, that if there were no such a thing as tithe paid upon them, the rent of these lands would not be greater than they are now, by the whole amount of these tithes? Or, even supposing that the worst lands at present under cultivation paid no rent, what is there to prove that they would assuredly pay no rent, if there was no such a thing as tithes? If it were a certain and undoubted fact, that in every country, whether there were tithes paid in it or not, the lowest quantity of land cultivated, never paid any rent to the owner of the soil, and that the price at which this was raised, regulated the price of grain produced on all other lands whatsoever; then it would be undeniable, that tithes increased the cost of production, and consequently were a tax paid by the consumer. But unless this position can be proved, which it assuredly cannot, the argument which is drawn from it, to shew that tithe is a tax paid by the consumer, fails, because it cannot be

proved in a single instance, that the tithes paid on any land, do not lessen the rent of that land by their whole amount. All that the argument proves is this, that tithes prevent the possibility of having recourse to lands of such inferior quality, as not to admit of more than one-tenth of their produce being paid as rent.

As to any considerable portion of our consumption being derived from inferior soils, the fact may be very much doubted. Where are those inferior lands under cultivation to be found? The average produce of wheat per acre, in England, is from twenty to thirty bushels, and probably the extent of land under cultivation, producing not more than twelve bushels per acre, one year with another, is very small.

It is quite a mistake, to suppose that the lands of England cannot produce more grain than they now do, and still continue to support the same quantity of cattle. If there was a demand for it, and a fair remunerating price was secured to the grower, a much greater quantity than now could be produced, without having recourse to any sandy deserts, or barren heaths, paying no rent. From the peculiarity of the climate, the United Kingdoms, in proportion to their surface, have a greater quantity of pasture-land than any other country in Europe, the corn-lands being to the pasture-lands apparently in the ratio of 1 to 3. Switzerland is also a pasturage country, but a great portion of

its pasture-land could not produce corn, because it is for too long a time covered over with snow, to admit of the operations of husbandry, or otherwise is ineligibly situated for that purpose. But in England all the grass-lands, except marshy meadows, would, if requisite, make corn-land of the very first quality. By housing the cattle, as is commonly done on the Continent, instead of turning them out, to tread down as well as to eat our rich herbage, a much less acreage might be made to support all our cattle, than now. But in addition to this, from the improved system of husbandry, from the use of green crops, turnips, rye-grass, and clover—with the aid of these products and the straw, pasture-land brought into tillage may be made, in addition to the corn it would produce, to maintain, through the judicious succession of crops, very nearly, if not altogether, the same quantity of cattle as before.

Another mode of increasing the quantity of corn grown, would be indirectly effected by the more general introduction over the kingdom, of the practice of irrigation. This is the only point in which our system of agriculture is less perfect than it might otherwise be made. We have numberless brooks and streams running through the country, of which, at present, no use is made, in many parts, by directing them judiciously over our meadows. We might greatly improve, in this respect, by imitating the practice generally pur-

sued in the North of Italy. The effect of watering meadows by streams, is this, that such meadows afford a double bulk of produce, though certainly, in most cases, not of so fine a quality; but instead of requiring a very expensive manuring every three or four years, they never require any manure at all. By this means a much greater quantity of manure might be applicable to our corn lands than now; and consequently the quantity produced would be proportionally increased; for the soil is, in fact, little else than a medium through which the food of plants, prepared and preserved by man, is judiciously and economically conveyed to them.

The writer in the Supplement of the Encyclopædia Britannica, (art. Taxation), in order to prove that tithes are paid by the consumers, and are not a deduction out of the rent, relies upon the fact, that where the labour is very expensive, as in the case of hops, the tithe is more than the rent, and that, therefore, as a part cannot be greater than the whole, the tithe cannot possibly be a deduction out of the rent, and must consequently be a tax on the consumer. The Rev. Mr. Howlett, "says the writer, by far the ablest advocate of "tithes, and whose authority cannot therefore be "questioned, informs us, that the tithe of an acre "of hops raised on land worth 40*s.* or 50*s.* an "acre, is, after deduction of drying and duty, "generally worth from 3*l.* to 4*l.*; and he further "states, that he had known 7*l.* or 8*l.* paid for the

"tithe of an acre of carrot-seed, where the land "was not worth 20*s*."

The case of the carrot-seed is an extraordinary case: it is not every body who thus pays tithe on their mint, annise, and cummin. Few people give themselves the trouble of raising their own carrot-seed. It is a thing sold by the ounce, and, perhaps, at a price far beyond the expence of the rent, or the labour employed upon it. But were there many acres of carrot-seed produced in the kingdom, it is not probable that the value of the tithe of the produce would long be worth 7*l*. As to hops, they are a very uncertain crop, more so, perhaps, than any other cultivated; so much so, that in the course of a very few years, their price has varied from ten-pence to half-a-crown a pound. In particular seasons, when hops had generally failed, it is very possible that the tithe of an acre, where they had succeeded, would be very high. But it is not probable, one year with another, that the tithe is a much greater portion of the rent of hop-yards than of corn-lands. There are thirty-four thousand acres of hops cultivated. Nearly one-third of the lands of England, scattered up and down the kingdom, is tithe-free. It is not all land which is adapted for the growth of hops; but it remains to be shewn, that all the tithe-free land in the kingdom does not contain a sufficient extent of land of the requisite quality and situation, capable of growing all the hops used in the country. Hence

it would follow, that if on the average of years, the tithe of hops was so much greater in value, as is represented, than the tithe of any other sort of produce, not a hop would be grown except on tithe-free land, for the tithe-free hop-growers would very soon ruin, and drive out of the market, their unfortunate brethren who were doomed to pay tithe.

Hence, upon the whole, the arguments adduced to prove that tithe is paid by the consumers, and is not a deduction from the rent, would seem to fail, and that the fact is by no means so certain as a certain class of men is pleased to represent it.—However, it by no means follows, because the arguments the supporters of that opinion adduce, are bad, or inconclusive, that, therefore, the contrary opinion is true. At present, the difference of rent between two acres of land of the same quality, and enjoying the same advantages of situation, one of which is subject to tithe, and the other not, is equal to the amount paid for the tithe; so that a farmer on tithe-free land is no better off than one cultivating land subject to tithe. Those who hold the opinion that tithe is a deduction from the rent, maintain, that if tithes were done away with, the rents of the tithe-free lands would remain stationary, and the rents of lands subject to tithes would rise to their level. Those of the contrary opinion maintain, that the rents of the tithe-free lands would fall to the level of the present rent of lands subject to tithe. Until the experiment were actually tried,

it might be difficult to say positively how the thing would be.

However, we have a case close to our own doors, that perhaps may be thought by most people decisive of the question. In Scotland, there are neither tithes nor poor-rates, and therefore, if the portion of the produce paid in that country to the owners of the soil, is greater than in England, it would be a pretty strong proof, that in England rents were diminished by the effect of tithe and poor-rates, and therefore, that one or both these burdens were borne by the landlords; whereas, if the portion of the produce paid in Scotland, as rent is less than in England, it would be an equally strong proof, that the rent of lands subject to tithe was not diminished by it, and that the rent of tithe-free lands was increased by the effect of tithe being paid upon lands not so exempted. But what is the fact? Why, the fact is, that in Scotland one-third part of the produce is paid as rent, and in England only one-fourth or one-fifth part is so paid. Hence the effect of tithes being indisputably to diminish the quantum of rent paid to the owner of the soil, we may very fairly conclude, that tithe is not paid by the consumers, but is paid out of the rent. The fact, that the rent in Scotland is a larger part of the produce than in England, has been proved beyond dispute; and the reason assigned for it is, "because those lands are free from tithe and poor-rates."

But it may be replied, that the price of corn in

Scotland is affected by the price in England; and, therefore, the tithe being paid in England raises the price in Scotland, and occasions a larger portion of the produce to be paid to the landlords than otherwise would be; in the same way, as it is contended, tithes occasion the rents of the tithe-free lands in England to be more than they would be, if there were no tithes paid. It is answered, the tithe-free lands in England being scattered up and down the country, enjoy the benefit of juxtaposition to lands paying tithe, and their produce can be brought into the same market at the same expence. Now, the Scotch tithe-free lands do not enjoy the benefit of juxtaposition to lands paying tithe, and the produce cannot be sent into the same market at the same expence. If the Scotch produce were to be brought into the English market, it would have to bear a heavy expence of carriage. Until it was so brought, the price of corn in Scotland would not be affected by the price in England, and the expence of transport would of necessity be a drawback upon the advantage the Scotch land-owners enjoyed from having their lands free from tithe; so that altogether, we may very safely conclude, that the sole reason why the rents of England are only a fourth or fifth part, and the rents of Scotland a third part of the produce, is this, that contrary to the theory of the wise men of the present age, tithes and poor-rates are a deduc-

tion from the rent, and are consequently paid, not by the consumer, but by the landlord.

But let us suppose, on the contrary, that the tithe is paid by the consumers, and let us calculate, on this supposition, what an enormous sum the consumers would have to pay, very far beyond what the Clergy receive. About one-third of the lands of England appear to be tithe-free. But if the tithes are paid by the consumers, the rent on these lands is thereby increased by the whole amount of the tithe that would be paid on them, if they had been subject to tithes; or the public would actually pay the full value of the tithe upon all the corn produced in the kingdom, which amounts to upwards of 6,000,000*l.*, in the place of about 4,000,000*l.*, at present actually paid to the Clergy and the Lay Impropriators together. But this is not all. As tithes, on this supposition, make corn one-tenth dearer than it otherwise would be, and as the rents are always a certain part of the produce, when these rents come to be converted into money, they must necessarily be increased one-tenth in amount. The rents on the corn-lands are estimated at 13,000,000*l.*; consequently, this increase of rents from the tithe-system, would amount to 1,300,000*l.*

But this is not all. Butchers'-meat, cheese, butter, &c. &c., always bearing a fixed ratio to the price of corn, if the price of corn be increased

one-tenth, their price must also be increased one-tenth. All this produce will cost upwards of 90,000,000*l.*, when wheat is at 74*s.* the quarter; consequently, its price will be increased by the sum of 9,000,000*l.* Hence, the tithe-account of the country will stand thus:

What is now actually paid for tithe, with increase of rent occasioned thereby on the tithe-free lands	£6,000,000
Increase of rent on corn-lands, occasioned by tithe	1,300,000
Increase of price of all other articles of agricultural produce, occasioned by tithes	9,000,000
	£16,300,000

Hence, if tithes were a tax paid by the public, they would be the most injudicious tax that could be imposed; because, whilst the Clergy and the Lay Impropriator received 4,000,000*l.*, the public, in consequence, would have to pay 16,000,000*l.*; or, in other words, to enable the poor Parson to receive 6*d.*, the public would have to pay 2*s.* This is the legitimate conclusion deduced from the principle of tithes being a tax upon the public, and is of itself alone too monstrous for any reasonable man to believe, that, notwithstanding this, tithes are indeed a tax paid by the public.

As long as any rent is paid, it is improbable that any thing can really increase the price of corn to the consumer, which does not either render the

quantity of corn produced inadequate to the demand, or increase the labour necessary for its production. It would seem, that all taxes paid by agriculture exclusively, fall upon the rent, and might be so increased on every acre of land, in the ratio of its produce, that no rent whatever could be paid from it. As soon as exclusive taxation on the land past this limit, it would then begin to increase the price of corn, and other articles, to the consumer. It is quite certain, that tithe and poor-rates do not increase the labour, and therefore the expences of cultivation. They do not act as charms, to change the chemical qualities of the soil, or to drive off the sun, and air, and rain. For a bountiful Providence makes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain to the just and to the unjust.

When the Scottish Nation abolished tithes, the land-owners obtained an increase of rent, equivalent to what was before paid for tithes. Should the English Nation do the same thing, the English land-owners, whose lands are subject to tithes, would derive from it a similar benefit. Tithes, however, are so unpopular, possibly unjustly, in some respect, that the man who dared to maintain that they are a great public benefit, would perhaps be ridiculed and despised. Yet is it not the less true on that account: for when the subject is properly examined and considered, the conclusion we must come to, appears to be, that tithes are a

deduction from the landlords' rents; and that, consequently, our Clergy, and Public Schools, and Universities, are supported by estates properly their own, and not by the public, as they assuredly must be, if all tithes were abolished.

Tithes are unpopular, perhaps from misrepresentation, or some other cause; and perhaps from their being ineligibly assessed and collected. The Author, once travelling through a part of Northamptonshire, greatly admired the richness and fertility of the lands on each side the road. A farmer, who happened to be a fellow-passenger, replied, that the lands were well enough, but that they were terribly infested with black slugs. The Author at first could not conceive what was meant. He had been familiar with black slugs from his infancy, but he had never known or heard of their having been any where of such a destructive and pestilent character, as to be spoken of in terms only applicable to the locusts of Egypt. But he was soon given to understand, to his shame and confusion of face, that by the black slugs, the Parsons were meant, of whose brotherhood he had then very recently become an unworthy member. However, he is glad to find, that the Sussex farmers have a better opinion of the Clergy than the men of Northamptonshire; for he has understood, that it is a current saying among the former, "All devils are bad enough; but a white devil is ten times worse than a black one;" meaning to say, that a tithe-payer

was more easily dealt with by a Clergyman, than by a Lay Impropriator. However, any injury sustained by the agriculture of the country, or any inconvenience or odium arising from the mode in which tithes are at present assessed and collected, might, with benefit to all parties, be very easily and practicably obviated, in the manner above alluded to, by their being commuted, and levied on all lands alike, according to their value, upon the principle, and after the manner used in the case of the corn-rent.

But if tithes are paid out of the rental of the kingdom, is not this a hardship upon the owners of the soil? Assuredly not now, though it might, or it might not, when they first began to be generally paid. Since tithes were instituted in this kingdom, all the lands in it have probably been sold many times over. Let the land-owners therefore consider, who was the last purchaser from whom they derive the lands they hold; and then let them reflect, that if there had been no such thing as tithes, rents would have been so much more, and of course the purchase-money paid for the land, so much more in proportion; and therefore, that that last purchaser could not have been able to have bought so many acres as he actually did buy, and, consequently, their present estates must have been so much less. Let us hear no more, therefore, of tithes being a hardship to any body; all the estates in the country have been bought

subject to them, and a price paid accordingly; neither let us be told that the Church is supported out of the toil and sweat of the people. It is just so much supported thereby, and no more, than the owners of the soil of the United Kingdoms are, or the landlords of any other country whatsoever. Tithes are pretty nearly equivalent to a certain portion of land, at the origin of the kingdom, being set apart for the support of the Clergy, and education. They are clearly public property. In America there are no tithes; but a portion of the lands of the country have been set apart for the support of education, and a tax is laid upon the people for the support of the Clergy.

Tithes may properly be considered as a portion of the rents of the kingdom. What does it signify to the country, whether the farmer pays his rent to one or to two landlords, or who the landlords are, with this exception in favour of the Clergy, that they are always educated men, and, in the majority of cases, as much distinguished by superior morals, as by superior education; that they are necessarily resident upon their estates, and, in consequence of holding them, discharge important public duties; whereas, other landlords, in virtue of their possessions, do not now discharge any public duties whatsoever, or at least very trifling ones, such as serving on juries, &c.? Lay Patrons and Impropriators are probably much more deeply interested in the continuance of the tithe-system,

than the Clergy are. To a public clamorous against tithes, they might say, Do as you please, it makes no difference to us; we must be supported; and if we are not paid, as now, in meal, we must be paid in malt. It makes no difference to us, either way; but it makes a great difference to you; because, at present, our meal costs you nothing; but if this were taken away, and we had to be paid in malt, it would cost you a great deal.

On tracing up the origin of property in land of all sorts, from the earliest ages, it may be said, that at the commencement of our monarchy and kingdom, all the lands of the country were considered as belonging to the King, who, after retaining sufficient for the maintenance of his own state and dignity, granted out the rest to divers valiant men and their descendants, for the perpetual protection and defence of the kingdom. Now, the support of the public religion was just as much a part of the public service, as the support of those who were paid to protect and defend it. Consequently the King ought, with equal reason, to have granted a suitable portion of the lands of the kingdom to the Clergy, for performing the offices of religion, as he did to the great Knights under the feudal tenure, for his defence against his enemies. It is not meant to deny, that, from the earliest times of the feudal tenure, or, indeed, of the Christian Church in England, the Archbishops, and Bishops, and Abbots, possessed large landed

estates, and long continued to hold them. But these were found not sufficient for their own support, and that of the Clergy requisite to discharge the duties of religion in all the towns and districts of the country. More land might have been given for this purpose; but it was thought not so well to burden the Clergy, all whose time ought to be otherwise employed, with the trouble of looking after such great estates; or else it was thought, at that time, though very possibly erroneously, that it was incumbent upon all Christians, to make the same provision for their Ministers of Religion, as the Almighty had ordained for the Priests and Levites, in the Old Testament. This impression, either from the propriety of the thing itself, or through the effect of the exhortations and the worldly wisdom of the Clergy, became very general, after the fourth or fifth century, throughout the whole of Christendom; and wherever Christianity was afterwards received, the system of tithes seems very soon after to have been established along with it. Hence, when the Kings parcelled out the lands of the kingdom to their valiant Knights, on the conditions of the feudal service, they were always given subject to tithe; and most commonly, though the subject seems to be obscure, after the division of parishes took place (probably, co-extensive with the different estates into which the country was divided), and after tithes became payable to a Parochial Minister, the Lord of the

estate or parish had the patronage or appointment of the Clerk, who performed the Church-duties, and in consequence received the tithes.

The tithes of corn were probably for many centuries always paid in kind. Indeed, in the early ages there was scarcely any other description of rents. But, at an early period, it became not uncommon to substitute a money-payment for the tithe of the produce of grass-lands, at that time no doubt equivalent in value. In process of time, that money-payment became invariable, and is now called a *modus*; the effect of which is, that all the pasture-lands of the parishes in which it prevails are nearly tithe-free. Still, however, where a parish or district has not the good fortune to have a valid *modus* to plead in bar of claim, tithe continues to be paid by its pasture, as well as its other lands.

But the Priests of former days were wise in their generation, in a two-fold sense. They almost engrossed to themselves the learning and science of the age. Knowledge is power; and they often made use of the influence it gave them, to enrich their order. Hence, they often either persuaded or permitted good and charitable Christians, on their death-beds, to bequeath to the Church their estates, or a part thereof, for the good of their own souls, and for the good of the souls of their forefathers, and of their children, and of their children's children; the good Priests covenanting, on their part,

that the proceeds of these estates should be religiously and faithfully expended on saying masses for all these souls, whereby they might be the sooner delivered from the pains of purgatory. This mass-saying for the dead was very lucrative to the Priests; and, through the effect of the continued donation of lands to the Church in this way, for ages, the Church got possession of much too large a portion of the landed property of the kingdom; though the Clergy, by great sacrifices, were frequently obliged to purchase quiet possession from the King, or the great men of the land. At last, Henry the Eighth had his irreparable quarrel with the Pope of Rome. Church property was no longer sacred. Nearly all but the tithe and glebe of the Parochial Clergy was seized, was wastefully expended, or given to the nobility and gentry of his court. Hence, these latter recovered the lands which had perhaps been given to the Church by their more pious and charitable ancestors; and not content with thus profiting by the profusion and liberality of succeeding Monarchs, they have, by repeated grants, so much diminished the royal domains, originally set apart for the maintenance of the royal dignity, that these have become totally inadequate for the purpose for which they were intended; and the Sovereign of the country, instead of being the greatest land-owner of the kingdom, has become, in a manner, a pensioner on the public. Who are the wise men in their generation

now? the owners of the soil, or the Priests? Now that the land-owners have got the King's property amongst them, let the public take care they do not get the remaining property of the Church, the tithes, also, as they would then have not only their Sovereign a pensioner upon them, but the Clergy also.

Having said thus much, and, in the opinion of some, perhaps more than enough, on the subject of tithes, let us next proceed to enquire into the effect of the poor-rates on the price of corn, and agricultural produce. By whom are these paid? They are paid by all occupiers of houses and land; therefore, they are paid by the gentry, by people in trade and manufactures, and by the farmers. If people in trade paid as much, in proportion to their capital, as farmers do, the price of corn, and agricultural produce, and rents, would not, in the slightest degree, be affected by the poor-rates. In this case, like other taxes paid by the farmers and manufacturers, the poor-rates would tend to diminish the profits of trade and agriculture; and since they did so equally, they would leave the profits of trade and agriculture pretty much on the same level as they found them. But if the farmers were called upon to pay a greater portion of their profits, in the shape of poor-rates, than persons in trade did, then, in order to prevent their profits being depressed below their proper standard, the price of corn must either be proportionably increased,

or the rents diminished; or partly one, and partly the other; that is, the excess of poor-rates which the farmer has to pay, must either be repaid to him by the consumers of agricultural produce, or by his landlord, or partly by one, and partly by the other.

Whether any part of the excess of poor-rates is paid by the consumers, it is very difficult to prove; but most assuredly a part, if not the whole, is paid by the landlords. In proof of this, there have been cases, in which the poor-rates have swallowed up the whole of the rent; so that land, otherwise of excellent quality, has been thrown out of cultivation, the taxes upon it being greater than the rent; and, consequently, the cultivator, even though he held it rent-free, ceasing to derive from it the ordinary profits of trade. This fact alone, seems sufficient to prove, that the excess of the poor-rates paid by the farmers, over that paid by persons in trade, and others, in proportion to their capital, falls upon the landlord. For if it fell upon the consumers, the landlord could not lose his rents thereby, neither could these be made less than they would have been, had there been no poor-rates; both which things, however, undeniably attend the system of poor-rates at present pursued.

From the public returns to Parliament, it would seem, that in some agricultural districts, the poor-rates are higher than in manufacturing ones. However, one circumstance of importance ought to be

attended to; that in some agricultural districts, the poor-rates may justly be said to be fraudulently increased; that is, that out of the sum levied for the maintenance of the poor, the farmers have managed, by trick and contrivance, to pay a portion of the wages of labour. For, having depressed the wages of labour beyond that for which a man can maintain himself and family, they have contrived to make it up to him by an allowance from the poors'-rate. By this means, an undue share of the burden is cast upon those who do not derive their annual income from the employment of day-labourers; and the farmers have the appearance and credit of being subject to a tax beyond the rest of the community, in other parts of the kingdom, which, in fact, they do not pay. For if in one parish, in comparison with another, the wages of labour are depressed to the same amount as the poor-rates are increased, then the farmers, in both places, are on a par, with respect to the expences of cultivation, and the rents will consequently be on a par too; or the landlord in the parish where the poor-rates are so high, in comparison, will receive as great an annual rent for land of the same quality and situation, as where the poor-rates are low. Therefore, whenever a public return of the poor-rates is required, it would be very important to have the rate of wages at the same place, coupled with it, could this be so obtained, that its accuracy might be relied on; for there would be, in most,

if not in all parishes, a strong tendency to return the daily wages of labour more than they actually were, especially in those districts where the poor-rates had been improperly applied to pay part of the wages of able-bodied, hard-working men.

Hence, then, upon the whole, there seems every reason to believe, not that the whole of the farmer's *bonâ fide* payments, on account of the poor-rates, are paid out of the rents of the landlords, as well as the tithes, but only the excess of poor-rates paid by farming capital, over that paid by capital engaged in any other way. Poor-rates differ very essentially and materially from tithes, and are far more injurious to the landed interest. The former never can take beyond a certain portion of the produce; whereas, there is no limit to the demands which may be made on account of the latter. Tithes make rents less than they would be, if there were no tithes; but the poor-rates have often not only greatly diminished rents, but also entirely consumed them.

The great evil of poor-rates, is their inequality. But this great evil seems to be without remedy. Any relief given to the poor, must be distributed by persons capable of judging of their necessities, and therefore residing upon the spot; and there seems no possible check against excessive and injudicious expenditure on this head, except making the payers, in every place, themselves the distributors, as is now done by the law authorizing the appointment

of select vestries. It is the interest of every person possessed of property, in any district, to prevent the poor-rates, as far as he can, from being excessive. If persons so interested, will not take due care, they have only themselves to blame for the depreciation of their property, beyond what due care would have prevented.

RECAPITULATION.

Hence then, there seems to be reasonable grounds to believe, that the high price of corn in this country, compared with that on the Continent, is not owing to excessive rents, to the effect of tithe and poor-rate payments, or to government taxation.

It is not owing to excessive rents, because no greater part of the produce is paid as rent, than probably in any other country, which has been inhabited and settled an equal length of time. It is not owing to the effect of tithe and poor-rate payments, because both these, either wholly, or in the greatest part, are paid out of the rents of the land, whereby those rents are made only a fourth or fifth part of the produce; whilst, in other countries free from them, they are found to amount to one-third. Neither is it owing to government taxation, because a large revenue is not the cause, but the consequence of high prices. Probably, no people are so much oppressed by taxation, as the unhappy cultivators of the soil under Mahomedan governments. Yet, in these countries, the price of grain is perhaps lower than in any other part of the world.

Since, therefore, the high price of corn is not owing to any of these causes, it necessarily follows, that it must be owing to the high price paid for the labour of different kinds, by which that corn is produced; especially, as it can be shewn, independently of all other considerations, that in every country, the money-price of corn must necessarily rise and fall permanently, with every permanent rise and fall in the money-price of labour. Hence, as it may be shewn that the income of all other persons, except those of fixed and invariable income, varies with the price of labour, it follows, that no other part of the community but this, has any just grounds to complain of the high price of agricultural produce. Barring the effect of scarcity occasioned by unfavourable seasons, the higher that price is, the more flourishing and rich does the country become, and with the greater ease can the revenue necessary for the wants of the state be collected; because a less aliquot part is taken from the income of each individual, than otherwise would be, under the same amount of taxation.

In many countries in Europe, labour is not so expensive as in England, because that part of our labour which we may be said to export, or sell to foreign nations, is worth more than the same quantity of labour, exported or sold by any other nation, in the general market of the world. This great advantage is owing to our machinery, mechanical skill, canals, freedom of government, coals, mine-

rals, and insular situation. But labour being cheaper elsewhere than with us, and we possessing no advantage over other nations, in the production of corn, at all equivalent to our advantages over them in most manufactured articles, it follows, that agricultural produce abroad, both is, and, as we have already seen, must be, cheaper than with us, as long as this difference in the price of labour exists. So much so, in fact, that notwithstanding its having to bear very heavy expences of carriage, foreign grain, when admitted into our ports, can be sold for a price, at which it is not possible for our own farmers to sell theirs, at the present price of labour.

If it were attended with no diminution of national income, and no loss to private property, then most assuredly the cheaper corn was sold, the better it would be for all classes. Now, if the ports were thrown open, and the corn trade were perfectly free, without any duty whatsoever imposed on the importation of corn, grain of all kinds would most probably be sold thirty per cent. cheaper, than it has been upon the average of the last ten or twelve years. Would there be any diminution of national income thereby, or any loss to private property?

At present, our lands in cultivation are able, *communibus annis*, to supply all our consumption of grain. But if we change our system, and derive a part of our food from foreign countries, instead of deriving it all, as now, from our own lands, then, of necessity, a part of our lands, proportional to the

quantity of our consumption imported, must be thrown out of cultivation, and all the capital invested in farm-buildings, and agricultural improvements, and in the agricultural horses and implements used thereon, be rendered worthless. Still it would not follow, that we ought not to adopt this policy, because, balancing our gain on the one hand, with our loss on the other, the gain might be the greatest. Yet if we not only destroyed a part of our national capital, but also reduced our whole national income, in the same degree that the price of corn was reduced, then this line of policy would seem to be most pernicious.

It would seem to be undeniable, that the price of corn must regulate the rate of agricultural wages. If therefore the price of corn, by virtue of a legislative enactment, be reduced one-third, the price of agricultural labour must also be reduced one-third; and as there cannot be two rates of wages in the same country, where competition of labour is free, all other descriptions of labour must also be very soon reduced one-third. And all sorts of labour being thus reduced one-third, every kind of property produced by that labour, must necessarily be depreciated to the same extent. The national income may be considered as made up of the price paid for labour, and profit. Profit is so much per cent. on the capital employed, and is probably much the same in all countries in Europe, as the rate of interest, on good security, is nearly the

same. Profits being in proportion to the capital employed, must be diminished or increased in their aggregate amount, by any diminution or increase of the capital necessary to carry on the labours and industry of the country. But if labour be reduced one-third, the capital necessary to carry on the labours and industry of the country, will also be reduced, and nearly in the same proportion; and therefore the aggregate profits of the kingdom, on the reduction of the price of labour one-third, will be found to be also reduced, and little short of being so to the same extent. But labour and profit, in the aggregate, being reduced about one-third, the annual income of the country, which is made up of labour and profit, must be reduced in the same degree.

Hence, a more absurd or destructive policy cannot be pursued, than that which tends needlessly to diminish the price of wages: because it at the same time diminishes the national income and property, it thereby diminishes the power both of the Nation and of individuals to fulfil engagements contracted; and diminishes the quantity of foreign produce, or in other words, of foreign labour and profit which we can now command. It is very true, that the value of our labour abroad, and therefore its price at home, may fall, from those causes which have raised it so much above that of other nations, ceasing to operate with all their former force; but it would be as well to wait for this less

favourable state of things, and not unadvisedly to bring it upon ourselves.

Now, suppose foreign grain was always admissible into our ports, but with such a duty imposed upon it, as would occasion its being sold at no lower price than our present; then indeed the preceding arguments would not apply. Labour would not be lowered in price, neither would the national income. But as our own and foreign grain would only just be upon a par, the foreign grain would have a tendency, according to the quantity introduced, either to throw a corresponding part of our land out of cultivation, or, in order to prevent this, to lower our price of corn and labour; so that, in common years, the foreign grain should just be kept out of the market. Hence, if the system of a fixed duty be adopted, and it is not wished to lower our own price of labour, or diminish our land in cultivation, the duty ought to be so high as only to admit of the importation of foreign corn being profitable to the merchant in seasons of scarcity, or failure of our crops. It would be wiser for the Legislature to set the duty rather too high than too low. A fixed duty of from 20*s.* to 30*s.* the quarter, would seem, at the present prices here and abroad, sufficient for this purpose. A less duty than 20*s.* a quarter might have an injurious effect, should our manufactures recover their former value abroad. A fixed duty so high as only to admit of the importation of foreign grain in years of scarcity,

would have many advantages over the present system. It would do away with the system of averages, in the striking of which there certainly seems to be a good deal of unfairness and contrivance; and it would also do away with the system of bonding corn. The purchase of foreign grain, and the bonding it in the public warehouses at all times, on the distant chance of the ports being opened for importation, is too hazardous and doubtful for a legitimate branch of commerce, and ought not to be encouraged by the Legislature. Capital is thereby locked up, and the public derives little or no benefit. Whether the crops have been so deficient as to afford reasonable apprehensions of a scarcity, will always be known soon after harvest. The greatest importation of foreign wheat ever known, is said to have been less than a two months' consumption; and therefore it may be concluded, that more than that quantity we can never want. Now, there is abundant time between harvest and harvest, for the introduction of so much as that, and therefore the country would appear to gain no advantage, but, on the contrary, to be a loser, by having corn stored up in bonding warehouses.

Any restriction or any duty on the importation of foreign corn, however high the restriction or duty may be set, will have no tendency whatever to make grain dearer, than it would have been with a lower restriction or duty, provided that

lower restriction or duty had had the effect of excluding foreign grain. When the present system of Corn Laws was devised by the Legislature, immediately after the conclusion of the late war, the price of labour was so high, that it was calculated that corn could not be grown under 80*s.* the quarter, and accordingly that was the limit at which importation was allowed. Now, the truth is, that since the end of the last war, from various causes, wages have considerably fallen, and, in consequence, except during one or two unfavourable seasons, instead of the importation limit of 80*s.* the quarter having kept up the price of wheat, at or about that rate, wheat has been sold ever since considerably under that price, which is at once a proof, that the restrictions imposed by the Corn Laws, have no effect in forcing up the price of grain beyond what may be termed its natural price, compared with the price of labour. Had the limit been fixed at 100*s.* the quarter, instead of 80*s.*, there is no reason to suppose that corn would have been at all dearer, since the Corn Laws were past, than it has been, except in the years of scarcity, during which the ports were open for importation.

Besides a fixed duty, which it would be very difficult to arrange, so as to give general satisfaction, another system might be adopted, which, however, would require something like the present system of taking the monthly averages; but it would prevent the bonding of corn in the public

warehouses, waiting for the opening of the ports. This is, by the public sale of licenses for the importation of grain.

Suppose that an average price of 80*s.* the quarter is now a scarcity price. As soon as wheat arrives at that price, let a number of licenses, say altogether for 500,000 quarters of wheat, or any less quantity agreed on, be sold by public auction in the different principal ports of the United Kingdoms, as London, Bristol, Liverpool, Greenock, Leith, Newcastle, and Hull, the quantity allotted to each being according to the population, or local consumption. Each license should be for the usual quantity which ships employed in the Corn Trade are in the habit of carrying; or the bidding might be for so much a quarter, with the option to the highest bidder, of taking out as many licenses as he pleased, and each license for as large a quantity as suited his convenience. Competition would occasion such a sum to be given for each license, (the proceeds to be paid into the Customs), as would leave to the importer nothing more than the ordinary profits of trade. Should the price of wheat still continue at or near the scarcity price, the sale of licenses should be repeated every one or two months, till the diminution of price had proved that a deficiency of food was no longer to be apprehended.

This plan would seem to be a sufficient protection against a casual scarcity arising from the

failure of the harvest, from accidents of which kind no country is free; and the occurrence of which, the government of every country ought to be aware of, and to provide against. It would remedy the fluctuations in the price of grain, as far as it is possible to do so, and it would, perhaps, give a greater confidence and certainty to a farmer's calculations than any other plan whatsoever, as he would always be aware of the exact quantity of foreign grain brought into competition with our home produce; and the price could never be unduly depressed by excessive importation. Whether, however, this plan has any advantages to recommend it, over that of a fixed duty, some may doubt. In the Author's opinion, it is much preferable. Either would, probably, be a great improvement on the plan at present pursued.

Hence, upon the whole, on a careful consideration of this most important subject of the Corn Laws, it may perhaps seem to many, that the clamours raised against them, are an exemplification of the far-famed Fable of the Belly and the Limbs. Ancient tradition informs us, that once upon a time, the limbs, disgusted with the apparent inactivity and gluttony of the belly, refused any longer to labour, as they supposed, for its exclusive gratification. The legs would no longer carry it, the hands would no longer feed it, and the mouth would no longer grind its food. But, unfortunately, they had quite forgotten the strength and vigour

which the belly, in return, imparted to the different members of the human body; and though they had indeed the high satisfaction of destroying the belly, they found, too late, to their cost, that they must be content themselves also to perish with it.

Just so the Merchants, the Manufacturers, and the Operatives, are envying the power and wealth of the Landed Interest; inconsiderately believing, that whatever is enjoyed by it, is all at their expence. It would seem, that they would very gladly bring it down a little, and, as the limbs did of old, impose upon this seemingly useless part of the body politic, a wholesome discipline of abstinence and fasting. Let them, however, beware of the result; and let them take care, lest, acting under the influence of vain and delusive notions, they not only ruin the Gentry and Nobility of the land, but also give a death-blow to the prosperity of the Nation at large. A house divided against itself, cannot stand. As long as all are united together, all are safe. Division must produce destruction and ruin. Great has been the national prosperity. As long as we can divest ourselves of angry passions and unreasonable prejudices, we may firmly hope and trust, that great it will long continue to be; and most assuredly, with respect to it, "*esto perpetua*" is the enthusiatic and devoted sentiment that warms every Briton's heart, and nerves every Briton's arm.

Let us hope that this whole subject will be very

shortly taken into the serious consideration of the Legislature of the country; and that, without its being unduly biassed by popular clamour, such laws and regulations will be speedily passed, as may set this question at rest for ever, and as may secure on a firm basis, the wealth, power, industry, and general prosperity of the United Kingdoms.

Finis.

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