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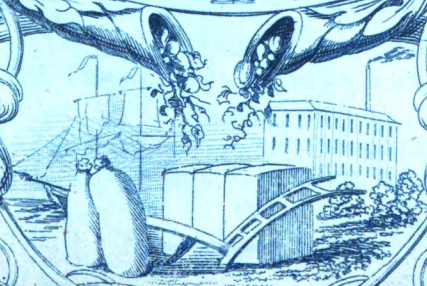


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FREE TRADE
PRESENTED
TO
BY THE
National
ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE.
THE



THE
THREE PRIZE ESSAYS
ON
AGRICULTURE
AND
THE CORN LAW.

PUBLISHED BY THE
NATIONAL ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE.

"A system from which the agricultural labourer is suffering more than any other part of the community."—*Earl Fitzwilliam's Address to the Landowners.*

"The painful confession must be made, that our own benefit is the true object for which this obnoxious code is established."—*Ibid.*

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THE COUNCIL
OF THE
NATIONAL ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE
TO THE
FARMERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN,

We entreat you to read dispassionately and calmly the following pages, which are devoted exclusively to the consideration of your interests and the interests of your dependants.

Although we have been constantly told that the Corn Law is maintained for your benefit, the history of British agriculture, for the last twenty-five years, affords too much reason to believe that it has brought much suffering and loss upon both farmers and farm labourers. We ask you whether, since the passing of the famous Corn Law of 1815, with all your industry, intelligence, and frugality, you have found farming to be a thriving business? On the contrary, how many moderate capitals have since that time been swept away for rent—how many small holdings have been swallowed up by rich speculators, who now occupy vast breadths of land which formerly supported several homesteads? Cast your eyes around your various districts, tax the memories of your older neighbours, and reckon the number of tenants that have been ruined and sold up for rent since the Corn Law of 1815.

If the business of farming has not been prosperous during the last quarter of a century, we submit to you that the time is come when you ought to inquire whether the whole system of PROTECTION has not been contrived solely for the short-sighted gain of the landlords. This question is fully discussed by the authors in the following pages; and the writer of one of the Essays being a farmer, and therefore identified in interest with yourselves, you will, doubtless, give to his opinions all the attention due to a practical agriculturist. Again commending these pages to your candid consideration,

We are, fellow-countrymen, your well-wishers,
(On behalf of the Council of the League,)

GEORGE WILSON, Chairman.

AGRICULTURE
AND
THE CORN LAW.

PRIZE · ESSAY.

SHOWING THE
INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF THE CORN LAW
UPON
TENANT FARMERS AND FARM LABOURERS.

BY GEORGE HOPE,
TENANT FARMER.

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1842.

PRIZE ESSAYS.

AGRICULTURE AND THE CORN LAWS.

The Council of the National Anti-Corn-Law League hereby offer the following PRIZES for the BEST PRACTICAL ESSAYS, each not to exceed sixteen pages octavo, demonstrating the Injurious Effects of the Corn Laws on Tenant Farmers and Farm Labourers, and the Advantages which those classes would derive from its Total and Immediate Repeal:—

Best Prize	20 Guineas.
Second ditto	10 „
Third ditto	5 „

The Council will publish the three best Essays, with or without the authors names, as may be most agreeable to them. The Essays to be sent in not later than the 1st of November, addressed to George Wilson, Esq., Anti-Corn-Law League, Manchester.

THE COUNCIL HAVE AWARDED THE HIGHEST PRIZE TO EACH OF THE THREE
ACCOMPANYING ESSAYS.

YRAGILL 1831

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AN ADDRESS ON THE CORN LAWS.

I have no intention to enter at any length into the question of Free Trade, except so far as it affects the tenant farmers and farm labourers of the kingdom. Free Trade has indeed been long recommended by those who have made political economy a study: and the last session of parliament, by the amended tariff and slightly modified corn bill, did homage to this principle; not so much by the extent of the alterations actually made, though they all pointed in one direction, as by the enunciation of the reasons and principles with which the head of a Conservative government advocated those changes. Arguments of a peculiar kind were used regarding the corn monopoly. High prices for grain were deprecated as an evil, but still it was urged that anything approaching to a free trade in corn would ruin the farmer, throw the land out of cultivation, starve the agricultural labourer, and, finally, ruin all classes. Now, what I wish to show, as a farmer, is simply this, that however necessary a corn bill may be to enable landlords to obtain high money rents, it is not at all requisite for the existence and well being of the tenant farmer, and still less for the agricultural labourer, but, on the contrary, that it is a positive evil to both.

I undertake to prove, that it signifies but little to tenant farmers and agricultural labourers what the nominal price of their produce is, in comparison to steady markets and good customers; that the best, the only honest and true plan of fostering agriculture has yet to be tried, and that that method is, *cherishing the growth and securing the welfare of the largest possible number of consumers*. The landlords, who have hitherto governed this country, blinded by their own apparent interest, mistaking immediate profit to themselves as the best means of promoting the general well-being, have never hesitated to prevent the consumers buying their food at the cheapest market. If this odious monopoly of the first necessary of life must still be kept up, let it be distinctly understood by the country at large that it is solely for the benefit of the landlords. "Let," I say, "the saddle be put upon the right horse," for the tenants and labourers neither have, nor can they have any permanent interest in a system which directly lowers profits and wages, a system

which restricts the energies of the people to the supply merely of the home market, necessarily of a limited character; or compels them to leave the home of their fathers and their affections, to seek a livelihood in distant colonies, and endure all the rigours and hardships of a first settlement in a wilderness.

A short review of some of the principal enactments regarding grain may not be uninteresting. At one period of the history of Britain the only law relating to grain was the prohibition to export it. The "wisdom of our ancestors" at *that time* did not imagine that a country could possibly be ruined by an over abundance in the supply of either corn, beef, or mutton. This discovery was reserved for later days. In the reign of Edward IV. the first act was passed prohibiting the importation of foreign grain, but only when the price of wheat did not exceed 6s. 8d. per quarter. It was said to be for the benefit of the "poor farmers," (this cant phrase is not of yesterday,) as they might be ruined from the plentifulness of the supply. Then, as yet, I suppose, "poor landlords" had no interest in high prices, and the "poor buyers" could always shift for themselves. King William, in 1688, secured the firm alliance of the landed interest, by not only extending the acts prohibiting importation, but by granting bounties on grain exported. Millions sterling were thus expended, which both raised the prices at home and enabled foreigners to eat British food at least 20 per cent. lower than the resident native could do. The Corn Laws of 1773 and 1791, were improvements upon this barbarous policy, both allowing importation at nominal duties, the former when wheat reached 48s. per quarter and the latter at 50s. and 54s. per quarter. But the laws prohibiting importation were practically inoperative, principally from a deficiency in the machinery for ascertaining the averages, until a short time previous to the year 1773. By the law of 1815, however, importation was wholly prohibited until wheat reached 80s. per quarter. This was done with the avowed purpose of bolstering up the price to something about that sum. Farmers were found, and brought from various parts of the kingdom, to state in evidence to Parliamentary Committees that unless they obtained 80s. or 90s. per quarter for wheat, the great bulk of the wheat-growing lands would be thrown out of cultivation, and the whole population might ultimately be starved, as the world could not supply us with a single month's provision. Fortunately, however, the result has since shown that high money rents were the only things incompatible with lower rates. The law of 1815 was the first that practically secured a monopoly of the home market to the British grower. It was then thought that, as we could not grow a sufficient quantity of food for

our own population, the legislature had it in their power to fix the minimum price at which grain should be sold. We all know the bitter disappointment of those who entered into contracts and leases with that idea. A few years' experience made a solvent tenant almost a rarity. Notwithstanding these attempts to produce a continued artificial famine, a large importation of foreign grain taking place immediately previous to, and joined to the good crop of 1822, reduced prices one half, or wheat to 40s. per quarter. Then, again, we had Parliamentary Committees, but they could not report where the evil lay, because it did not happen to occur to them that rent had anything to do with the distress of the farmer. But I need not remind of this period those "poor farmers" who were obliged to sell their crop to pay a rent which they had agreed to give by calculating the price of grain at double what they could then obtain. Much persuasion surely cannot be required to satisfy them of both the danger and the folly of attempting to obtain famine prices in ordinary seasons. Neither shall I attempt to convince the wealthy, who could afford to store up their own crop, or buy that of their poorer neighbours, because I acknowledge at once that, for them, this system "*of a hunger and a burst*" wrought admirably, whatever wretchedness it produced to other members of society. The law of 1828 was a new plan to prevent importation by means of a sliding scale of duties; but as it has been confessed by all parties to have proved only beneficial to gambling speculators, it has been tinkered anew, and, as the bill of Sir Robert Peel, it has been again placed on the statute book during the last session of parliament. It is clear, however, that this supposed amendment was not meant to go to the root of the evil, (and indeed this was not even pretended by Sir Robert Peel,) but was intended to keep the price of wheat at 56s. per quarter, which has now been discovered to be a fair price, though we have seen that little more than twenty years ago farmers asserted that 80s., and some even 90s. per quarter was the lowest sum that wheat in this country could be raised for.

I have noticed only a few of the parliamentary enactments regarding grain, for there have been at least fifty during the last 200 years; but they all proceed upon the same short-sighted policy of endeavouring to extract the last penny from the buyers. Yet, notwithstanding all these laws, and the most complete monopoly of the home market that laws could give, how often have we heard of agricultural distress? distress which I know to have been no phantom of the imagination! *Parliament* has been besieged with petitions which should have been presented to the *landlords*. Committees have sat inquiring into the causes of the distress, but which only diverted the

practical agriculturist from the right remedy which was at hand—the reduction of his rent. These artificial famine laws compel British farmers to occupy a singular position,—they are ruined, not by bad crops, but by the very richness of the blessings of a bountiful Providence. Such a startling fact at once begets suspicion in the mind that the position must be a false one. This may be converted into certainty by a perusal of the evidence given before the Agricultural Committee of 1836: There you will find that though for years no foreign grain had been in the market, yet that farmers paying money rents were distressed, while those whose rents were regulated by the price of grain had no cause of complaint. Corn bills, by raising prices in ordinary years, raise rents; but in years of superabundance, or after a large importation of the accumulated stocks of the continent, with even a moderate crop, these rates cannot be maintained; then high rents cannot be paid; and thus a money rent, which is only fair to a landlord in ordinary seasons, is so very hazardous to a tenant with a moderate capital.

As a tenant farmer, in an exclusively arable district of Scotland, paying a rent depending upon the price of grain, and averaging for several years past upwards of £1500 a year, for a farm possessing no peculiar advantages from vicinity to a market town, or anything of the kind; and upon a lease, originally of twenty-one years, of which there are a considerable number yet to run, and during which period repayment is confidently expected of large sums already expended in thorough draining with tiles more than five hundred acres, and otherwise improving and enriching the farm; thus situated, I should rejoice were the corn laws to be abolished whenever parliament meets, as I am satisfied that, *with a rent properly adjusted*, the skill and capital of the British farmer require no privilege that is unjust to the other classes of society; and I am by no means singular in holding these views. Many, whose hearts are with us, are silent from *prudential* motives; yet we know the sentiments of the Roxburghshire tenants, as testified by the gentleman (himself a farmer) who seconded the nomination of the Hon. J. Elliot in the last contest for that county; and also from what took place in the Haddington district of burghs, where almost all the farmers in the neighbourhood of North Berwick, who had votes, polled for the Free Trade candidate; and six or seven of these farmers each pay from £1000 to £1500 a year of rent. But it is unnecessary to extend examples; all farmers must know that what is so injurious to the other members of the community cannot possibly be ultimately beneficial to them; that, in fact, the success of agriculture depends wholly upon the prosperity of our manufac-

tures; that it is this prosperity which makes agricultural produce of more value in Britain than in any other country in the world. But unless we are contented with the great natural advantages we possess in our proximity to the market, we shall assuredly starve to death "the goose that lays the golden eggs." It is matter of history that the farmers and gardeners in the neighbourhood of London keenly opposed in parliament bills that were introduced for the purpose of repairing and extending the public roads, because they said it would deprive them of their "natural monopoly" of the market of the metropolis; they said they paid much higher rents, and labour was much more expensive than what it was in the country,—precisely the arguments now used against the admission of foreign corn; but, fortunately for themselves, they were not listened to. London has grown and increased in size, and land and its productions have become of more value than ever. It is thus that the landlords themselves will be benefitted in the end; for may we not anticipate the same improvement and increase of population as has taken place in London for the kingdom at large, when the highways to it shall be cleared, not only of sliding scale bills, but of all turnpike charges for the exclusive benefit of any party whatever?

There is one reason often urged against the possibility of cultivating the soil and raising crops in this country without a monopoly of the home market, viz., *the expenses of cultivation*. I solicit the attention of my brother farmers to this question. It is admitted that the nominal price of labour is much lower on the continent than here, but when the quantity of work done is taken into account, this difference vanishes. In the principal wheat-growing countries, the labourer is at least four months in the year confined within doors, by the intense frost which seals up his rivers, and the snow which covers the ground; the burning heat of summer equally incapacitates him from the heavy labours of the field; whilst here both men and horses are actively employed on the farm every day in the year. And with perhaps the exception of America, where money wages are much higher and grain lower than here, there is no country in the world where the labourers bring the same spirit, activity, and intelligence to their work as they do in Britain; so that a far less proportion of produce is consumed by the labourers and cattle together, in raising any given quantity of grain, than what is required on the continent. But without insisting on this, I hold that, in farming operations in this country, the actual expenditure, in money, irrespective of the price of produce, is not by any means so large as to render necessary the present prohibitive system. I confess that, personally, I am but little acquainted with the methods of

cultivation pursued in many parts of England, but I know well how matters are conducted in the best cultivated districts of Scotland, and I should imagine that what is found to answer well in this more northern region, would be found to be equally suitable on the richer soil, and with the more genial climate of England. In Scotland one man and a pair of horses are found amply sufficient to till properly sixty imperial acres, even under the six-course shift, or with one-sixth only in grass. The horses are, of course, kept entirely on the produce of the land, and it matters nothing to the farmer, whether the food so consumed by them be either high or low in price. The ploughman himself never, in Scotland, receives his wages wholly in money, but he is oftener paid in full with the produce of the farm, having, besides different quantities of grain, his cow kept, &c. But admitting that his wages are wholly money, and call them 10s. per week, which is the hire for day labourers, who lose time by wet weather and other casualties, this does not amount to 9s. per acre on the sixty acres so managed. And I know, from practical experience, that over a farm under ordinary management, all the other outgoings payable in money, taking wrights', smiths', and saddlers' accounts, cash paid for clover seeds, public burdens, labourers' and harvest wages, need not exceed in amount 15s. per imperial acre; so that this added to the ploughman's wages, if these are to be paid in cash, amounts to but twenty-five shillings the imperial acre, and which sum would be considerably reduced were there to be a permanent reduction in the price of food. You must consider also, that there are various modes of management, by some of which manual labour may be much more dispensed with than by the six-course shift, which, in Scotland, is reckoned the most expensive rotation. From anything, therefore, that appears, regarding the expenses of cultivation, it is not at all likely that any portion of land now cultivated will be thrown into pasture by any fall in the price of grain. That it may check the rendering waste land arable is conceded, but if it has been already improved, and at present yields sufficient to feed the men and horses employed upon it, and leaves a surplus as rent to the landlord, whatever the price of that surplus may be, it will still continue to do so. Nothing can prevent this except the labourer getting a greater share of the produce, which would be a most decisive proof of the national prosperity. But as beef and mutton always bear a relative proportion in their price to that of grain, so if, from the low price of the latter, land will not yield a rent, the proprietor can hardly expect it from raising the former. In the vicinity of large towns, or in densely populated countries, pasture grass for dairy purposes, and for the con-

venience of stock, will always command high rents. At present, in the immediate neighbourhood of Edinburgh, £8 to £10 per acre is a common rent for pasture fields, for which if they were a few miles distant from the town, half those sums would be thought extravagant.

Perhaps you may have seen statements, by agricultural writers, of the expenses of cultivation and the value of the produce of a farm, and the difference exhibited between high and moderate prices, showing results apparently disastrous enough. If, however, you examine these statements narrowly, you will observe that an obvious fallacy pervades the whole, even where the different expenses appear to be fairly given. This consists in everything being converted into money, such as expenses of keeping horses, cows, &c., and the price of seed, corn, &c., *whereas, were these and the landlord's rent deducted in grain, as they ought to be*, and if the tenant had, as his share, one hundred or two hundred quarters of wheat, or other grain, according to circumstances, it would then be seen that there was little if any cause of complaint.

I fearlessly appeal to you, my brother farmers throughout the kingdom, if there is not a mighty deal of humbug vented about the price necessary to remunerate the farmer, and about the expense of raising grain. You and I both knew well that these depend almost, if not altogether, upon the *rent*. It is high money rents that make farmers sometimes think corn too cheap, and that is too often the cause of all their perplexing anxieties. When markets are high, farms are taken at such rents as if prices never could by any possibility fall lower, and then not seldom the tenant exists, as such, only by the generosity of his landlord, or bankruptcy and ruin follow. Free Trade would do away in part with that ruinous competition among farmers for land, by opening up other and more profitable investments for capital, while, by steadying the markets, which, by widening the range from whence the supplies are drawn, it would unquestionably do, it would enable us farmers to know something near what prices might be expected in ordinary seasons, and to frame our calculations accordingly. For it is those violent fluctuations that derange all our economy. No doubt if an individual occupies a farm on lease, at a money rent, it is his interest to obtain and keep up the price of grain as high as possible; but the moment his lease expires, a corresponding advance to the rise in the price of grain takes place in his rent, and justly too. But where the *rent* is regulated by the price of grain, which is by far the simplest and the safest measure of value, it is a matter of comparative indifference to the farmer what the price may be. In truth, it is then sometimes

his interest to have that price very moderate. I allude to those years, (of which we have had several lately,) when we are unable, from deficient crops, to sell as much grain as we pay in rent to the landlord; whatever number of quarters we may want is still to be paid for; so the lower in price that it is calculated at, the better for us. Certainly, if we could get a high price with a good crop, we should make more money, but even in this country high prices and abundant crops rarely go together. It is only when we have little to sell that great prices are obtained. It must be obvious then, that a corn bill that prevents the regular importation of grain into a country like Britain, must be a crying evil even to farmers. A sliding scale of duties appears to be solely calculated to accumulate stores of grain, until, perhaps, immediately before the harvest, when the grain is almost wholly out of the hands of farmers; then only do prices reach that pitch to enable the importer to pay, or rather avoid paying, the duty, when the whole is thrown upon the market, just as we, the home growers, begin to dispose of our new crop. This has happened repeatedly; and what has taken place this season is a beautiful illustration of the working of such a measure. We had hardly got into security a most abundant crop of the finest quality, when the market was flooded by an accumulated stock of upwards of two millions of quarters of foreign wheat and about five hundred thousand cwts. of flour being suddenly thrown upon it. Had this wheat and flour been brought to market during the summer, as it was landed, (without noticing the advantage it would have been to our famishing population,) there cannot be a doubt but that now we should have been getting much higher prices for the crop we are disposing of. But it was kept in bond when we farmers had little or nothing to sell, and liberated just in time to forestall our market; so that in this instance the law, professedly framed for our advantage, has operated in a manner injurious to our interests. But a sliding scale will always have this effect, over and above attracting the attention of speculators exclusively to foreign corn, however low in price home produce may be. Men will take shares in lotteries. Besides, for every shilling grain rises, there is the additional advantage of the *fall* in the duty, so that there is a profit two ways. If the prices rise and the duty falls to 12s. or 10s., it may still fall to 8s. or 6s., and then, if kept still longer out of the market, it may be got out of bond at the nominal duty. Of the 12,000,000 of quarters of foreign wheat which we have imported within the last five years, more than two-thirds of it have been entered for home consumption, either immediately before or during the time of harvest, so that the new crop and the foreign supply come to market together. But it is

an invariable law of Providence that every attempt, whether through ignorance or design, to possess unjust advantages, recoils upon the heads of the offenders.

The uncertain nature of our demand for foreign grain causes the country to pay *higher* prices than would be the case with a regular trade; it also occasions heavy demands for specie, and compels the banks, for safety to themselves, to limit their circulation; it cramps trade and restricts the means of consumers; and in a short time it tells upon the agriculturist by a falling off in the demand in his market also. It is absurd to say that corn is the only article of trade that foreigners will not exchange unless for gold, especially when coupled with another common allegation, that they are so ready to sell it for such a small quantity indeed of the precious metals. Let the trade be regular, and grain will be grown for England; our manufactures will be readily taken in exchange, and our merchants will only require bills to enable them to square their accounts. But when we, as we now do, intercept the grain intended for others, according to all the laws of trade, *gold* can alone be taken in return for that grain.

Farmers without leases should have little cause to complain of free trade in grain, as they can have no difficulty in making new arrangements with their landlords, if such shall be found necessary. Those paying *grain rents*, we have shown, do not require any alteration. There remain however those tenants with leases, paying *money rents*, who may be entitled to relief so far by act of parliament, as that their money rents should be converted into grain at the average prices of the last five or six years, and be regulated for the future accordingly. Supposing that the said average price for wheat should be found to be £3 per quarter (less or more,) then for every £3 of rent now paid, the price of one quarter of wheat should be paid hereafter. Justice demands that this be done, and nothing more.

I may here allude to what is well understood as a fact, that, in many parts of England, *leases* are rarely granted by the landlords to their tenantry. Now, this I would consider "to be a heavy blow, and sore discouragement to agriculture." Landlords who refuse leases can have but an equivocal title to be ranked among "the farmers' friends." A lease, for a period of not less than nineteen or twenty-one years, is an absolute requisite to obtain correct or even economical management, or anything like the largest possible produce at the least possible expense. What tenant would for a moment think of expending on a farm £6 or £8 per acre, for draining, or of annually buying foreign manure, to cover, perhaps, the fourth of his farm, or even to erect a steam thrashing machine

which so economises labour, while his rent was liable to be raised upon him the next year, or he himself be turned to the rightabout? Assuredly Scotsmen would hardly think any land worth occupying without a lease, unless at such a rent as would be little more than an acknowledgment of the landlord's superiority. It is these leases giving a temporary property in the soil, a property that is heritable, though not alienable, which has been the main spring in raising Scottish husbandry to the position it now holds.

There is one argument in favour of Free Trade, which will reach both the judgment and the feelings of every farmer who is a parent. What is to become of our sons and daughters, if the manufactures and commerce of the country cease to offer an opening for them? Farmers' sons cannot be all farmers, nor can their daughters all find settlements amongst their own class. We cannot, like the privileged orders, quarter our younger sons upon the State, or find them employment in the army, church, or colonies. They must push their fortunes in trade. A farmer with six children may probably keep a son and a daughter at home; but the other four will, in all probability, depend for their prospects in life upon the prosperity of trade and manufactures. In such a case, the family are more interested in trade than farming, in the proportion of two to one. With every parent, possessing natural affections, to whose heart his offsprings' welfare is dearer than his own, this view of the question will have great weight. Let it be remembered, at the same time, that if there is no opening for the younger members of the agricultural body in the towns, they will be forced back upon the soil, either to be supported out of the labour of others, or to bid against their neighbours for farms, and to raise rents and diminish profits. In fact, nothing can be more clear than that the trade of farming cannot long survive the ruin of manufactures and commerce.

I sometimes wonder my brother farmers have never asked themselves this question—"Have we, as a class of capitalists, been more prosperous than other classes of traders?" Take for instance the grocers, linen drapers, or innkeepers, of your neighbouring market towns. Take the average of those engaged in any of these trades with a capital of say £2,000; then take the average of farmers, similarly circumstanced, and I ask you, which party, at the end of a dozen years, upon an average, has realized the most money? I know your answer will be in favour of the grocers, drapers, and innkeepers. How is this to be reconciled with the notion we have been taught to entertain by the landowners, that the farmers are especially protected? There have been no laws passed under the pretence of giving protection to drapers, grocers, or innkeepers; there are not

a large number of landlords owning the grocers' shops in parliament professing to watch over *their* interests; and yet the retail grocers are more prosperous as a body than you. Surely this is enough to awaken your suspicions of the delusiveness (to use no harsher term) of all those promises which political landlords make to you at the hustings, or at agricultural dinners. But let me further ask, did you ever know the entire body of grocers, or any other trade, to be up in arms at the same time all over England complaining of distress? You may have known bankruptcies and losses to fall upon particular individuals, but did you ever know the whole body of any particular trade throughout the kingdom calling exclusively to Parliament at the same time to relieve them? No, such a thing never happened, and never can occur. Yet, we have known the farmers of England, in a body, five times complaining of *unparalleled* distress, since the passing of the famous law for their protection in 1815; and appealing to Parliament for the relief of their sufferings, and this generally happened when trade and manufactures were comparatively prosperous! Will not such facts as these induce you to doubt whether the law which interferes with your trade, with no better result than these, had not better be totally and immediately repealed?

Upon this subject of protection, let me remind you that you have always secured to you the *natural* protection of the cost of bringing the corn from distant countries. Upon an average, I believe the freight and other charges, upon corn imported from the Baltic or America, amount to ten shillings a quarter. Now this, I say, is a *natural* protection, which nobody can deprive you of. Supposing you grow four quarters of wheat an acre, this protection of ten shillings a quarter is equal to two pounds an acre.

Let me offer an opinion as to the *mode* of repealing the Corn Law. It is apparent to every observing man that a tax upon bread will not be permanently borne in any shape. Neither fixed duties nor sliding scales will much longer be tolerated. Public opinion has decreed the overthrow of the entire system of mis-called protection, and the question now is one of *time* only. I have a strong conviction that nothing can be so unfavourable to your interests as the lingering death of the Corn Law. Whatever modifications take place short of total repeal, the burden will be thrown, if possible, under all sorts of pretences, upon the farmers. The experience of the late changes in the Tariff and the Corn Law has shown this pretty plainly. The Landowners have laboured to convince you, at your recent agricultural gatherings, that the alterations in the late session have had little effect upon prices. They still try to assure you that *the law* will afford you ample protection. But, even

if the law did protect you, (which it never did and never will,) what guarantee have you that the political landowners will not come to an agreement again in London next session, as they did in the last, with Sir Robert Peel, and consent to another alteration? Depend upon it, there is no chance of your coming to a satisfactory adjustment of rents and leases, *so long as you allow the intervention of politics in your bargains with the landowners.* Politics may be a winning game to those who have their own arrangements to make with the minister of the day, but I pity the case of the farmer who reckons any Corn Law for the value of a farthing, in making a bargain for his farm with his landlord. So long as the owners of your farms can point to a law, as a reason for obtaining a certain price for their produce, you will in no case be able to make a safe agreement for the use of their land. Get rid of all such interferences with your dealings at once. Let the Corn Laws be totally and immediately repealed, and then every tenant throughout the kingdom will at once be brought on fair terms to a settlement with his landlord. Public opinion and the necessities of the case will then force an equitable adjustment of rents and leases; and the dealings between landlord and tenant will thenceforth settle down into mere matters of business, with which politics will no longer interfere.

I now address myself to you—the farm labourers, for it is unblushingly declared that it is on your account, too, that we enjoy a Corn Bill. If you have attended to the preceding remarks, you will have observed what I think I have satisfactorily established, that, though the Bread Tax was abolished to-morrow, we should still possess the fertile soil of Britain, and that ploughing, sowing, and harrowing would go on much as usual. It has been said that, with low-priced food, a reduction in wages would immediately follow, but we see high-priced grain in Ireland, and wages from 8d. to 1s. a day, while the same quantity of labour, in America, with low-priced food, would earn a dollar, or 4s. 2d.; so that it must be an undoubted proposition that the wages of labour, like everything else, depend upon the supply and the demand. The only real connection between wages and the price of food is, simply, that the labourer's wages must be sufficient at least to keep soul and body together, while all past history proves that abundant seasons, or a plentiful supply of food, tend to raise both the real and nominal wages of labour. When the means of living is cheap, many labourers are tempted to leave their masters and become independent workmen. A large number of farm servants throughout the kingdom lodge and board with their masters, their board and lodging being usually esteemed equivalent to about half their wages; so that, when

food is cheap, many farmers prefer (correctly for their own interest) taking on more hands to sending the subsistence fund to market. This demand occasionally raises the money wages paid to the labourers. When provisions are easily obtained, labourers can afford to be occasionally idle; at least, they are not so readily obliged to agree to the terms offered by masters as in dear years, which so increase the difficulty of obtaining subsistence that workmen are glad to close with the first offer of employment. But it is not so long since 1836. You may remember the demand for labour, the rate of wages, and the price of grain at that time, and compare it with what you experienced last year. It has been found that, in every country, wages are high, in proportion as the people are increasing in wealth; that however wealthy a nation may be, if that wealth be stationary, wages are very moderate; but when a nation retrogrades, the working classes die off from absolute starvation. Now, free and unrestricted commerce is the only means that can give Britain a chance to continue to progress; without it we must even go back. When it is recollected that millions in this country exist by manufacturing goods for foreign markets, which our own policy is constantly losing us, this will be at once conceded. Unless this policy is speedily changed, and we accept, as payment for our manufactures, American flour, Dantzic wheat, Baltic timber, and Brazilian sugar, an immense proportion of our population must inevitably be starved off through famine, which God forbid! or, what is almost equally to be deprecated, compete with you, the agricultural labourers, in your already over-stocked market. If there is one class more interested than another in this great question, it is you. With the impetus which every one admits Free Trade in food would give to our manufacturing body, I ask, is it too much to expect, that at least a portion of your number would be drawn off to that class, and thus leave a better remuneration to those who should remain? An additional demand for manufactures would raise the price of goods, and increase the profits of capital; workmen would be better paid, so that they and their families might enlarge their consumption of agricultural produce, to the benefit of all classes.

An intelligent farmer and shrewd writer,* at the close of last century, objected to Free Trade in corn on this ground amongst others, that it would raise the wages of agricultural labourers, while the farmer, by the admission of foreign corn, would be prevented remunerating himself by enhancing the price of his produce. Can there

* Mackie's Supplement to Dirom on the Corn Laws. Edinburgh :
William Creech. 1796.

then, be two ways of thinking, as to which side of the question your interest lies? Assuredly not.

After what has been stated, I call upon every *elector* especially to dispassionately consider this question of questions, as well as the signs of the times. I am no alarmist. I have no dread of dependence on foreigners, even for food. The large importations we at present annually make show that we have come to that already, as well as for other things almost equally necessary. Neither am I afraid of war, knowing, as I do, that Free Trade is our best guarantee for peace; and that, "were subjects wise, war is a game kings would not play at." But I do look with anxiety on the great and extended unions of the working classes, with the Chartist lecturer in every village, pointing to the palace of the wealthy and the wretched hovel of the workman. I am afraid of our institutions when he can say, "*You tell us we are unfit to govern ourselves, and you show your fitness to rule by robbing us with your bread tax.*" Property, whether in land or in accumulated capital, has unquestionably its rights; but is labour, the sole property of the masses, to be less sacredly regarded? Preventing tradesmen and mechanics from disposing of their labour in the best market, by refusing to allow them to take in exchange for it food, the staff of life, is certainly class legislation of the most odious description. With the world for our market, and wise and beneficial laws adjusting fairly to the shoulders of all the heavy weight of our grinding taxation, I have no fear, but a confident anticipation, that a long career of onward progress and prosperity still awaits our beloved land; that our population, increasing even now almost a thousand souls a day, may become so numerous and wealthy that even the cancelling of our untold debt may be readily accomplished. Suicidal madness alone prevents commerce in what is most essential of all, *food* for the millions of her people.

GEORGE HOPE.

Fenton Barns, by Haddington, N. B., 26th October, 1842.

AGRICULTURE
AND
THE CORN LAW.

PRIZE ESSAY.

SHOWING THE
INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF THE CORN LAW

UPON
TENANT FARMERS AND FARM LABOURERS.

BY W. R. GREG.

MANCHESTER :
WILLIAM FOTHERGILL, PRINTER, KING STREET.

1842.

PRIZE ESSAYS.

AGRICULTURE AND THE CORN LAWS.

The Council of the National Anti-Corn-Law League hereby offer the following PRIZES for the BEST PRACTICAL ESSAYS, each not to exceed sixteen pages octavo, demonstrating the injurious effects of the Corn-Laws on Tenant Farmers and Farm Labourers, and the Advantages which those classes would derive from its Total and Immediate Repeal:—

First Prize 20 Guineas.

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Third ditto 5 „

The Council will publish the three best Essays, with or without the authors' names, as may be most agreeable to them. The Essays to be sent in not later than the 1st of November, addressed to George Wilson, Esq. Anti-Corn-Law League, Manchester.

THE COUNCIL HAVE AWARDED THE HIGHEST PRIZE TO EACH OF THE THREE
ACCOMPANYING ESSAYS.

THE
EFFECT OF THE CORN LAWS,

&c. &c.

THE effect of our restrictive corn-laws in hampering the commerce, depressing the manufactures, and famishing the people, of England, has been long known, and amply discussed. But that these laws are equally injurious to those classes for whose especial benefit they profess to be enacted—viz. farmers and farm labourers—has not been so clearly made out, and is not so generally believed. The fact that any system of legislation should have the effect of diminishing the subsistence, and fettering the trade of a great nation ought, no doubt, to be sufficient to procure its immediate alteration. But unhappily it is not so; and in this country, as long as any numerous and powerful body of men believe, however erroneously, that their own interests are bound up in the continuance of unjust and partial enactments, so long will those enactments be maintained; or, if abolished, will be abolished only at the cost or the peril of a severe civil struggle.

The following pages, therefore, will be devoted to an examination of the real operation of our corn-laws on the welfare of farm-tenants and farm-labourers;—and if it shall appear, upon a dispassionate inquiry, that these classes have been, and are, *not gainers, but sufferers*, by these laws, we may hope that they will speedily join their commercial and manufacturing fellow-citizens in demanding their total abrogation. And first, as to their effect upon FARM-TENANTS.

I. At the very outset of the inquiry, it cannot fail to strike us as remarkable, *that the very classes, professedly to promote whose interests the principles of equal justice and commercial freedom have been trampled under foot, are, generally speaking*—in the majority of cases, and in the majority of years—*about the most depressed and unprosperous in the community*. If the system of legislative protection which has been so uniformly and unscrupulously followed were a sound one, the farmers ought to be the most thriving and fortunate of men; since for centuries back, but particularly for the last seven and twenty years, their prosperity has been professedly the especial care of Parliament; the agricultural interest has been the one to which all others have been at all times unsparingly sacrificed; and if their measures have not answered,—if their end has not been attained, it can only have been either because their object was not attainable, or because their measures were unwisely adapted to their end.

Now, what is the actual state of the case? None can answer this question so well as the farmers themselves. Since 1815 they have had almost everything in their favour. Their customers, the consumers of agricultural produce, have multiplied with enormous rapidity;—the wealth of these customers, and their consequent power of purchase, have increased with the extension of trade in a still more rapid ratio;—the manufacturing and engineering enterprise of the country has absorbed immense numbers of labourers, who must otherwise have remained a heavy burden on the land;—of late the remodelling of the poor-laws has relieved them from a pressing and severe embarrassment;—and taxes which bore exclusively upon the agricultural interest have been repealed to the extent of a million yearly.* Yet what has been the result? Is it not notorious, that, during this period, farmers have been in a state of frequent and deplorable depression? During this period, have there not been *three* several corn-laws passed for their relief and encouragement alone? And during this period have there not been *five* parliamentary committees† sitting, to prove the existence, and inquire into the causes, of agricultural distress?

It is clear, then, that the object of our legislators has not been attained;—not, we believe, because it is unattainable, but because the measures pursued have been unfitted to their aim. We are convinced (and, if we were not, the history of our corn legislation would go far to produce the conviction), that, in public as in private matters, selfishness, if too gross, generally defeats its own purposes; that unjust laws are always unwise ones; that the prosperity of any branch of industry can have no firmer basis, no more precarious tenure, than protective enactments; that the elevation of one class of the community cannot be permanently procured by the depression of the rest; and that an end which can only be obtained by oppression and injustice carries its own condemnation on its face.

* The following table is taken from parliamentary returns, and the details may be found in the Companion to the Newspaper for 1836, p. 232:—

Year in which the reduction was made.	Agricultural Taxes repealed or reduced in that year.	Years since elapsed.	Total Saving to Farmers by the reduction up to 1842.
	£		£
1816	281,695	26	7,324,070
1819	3,868	23	88,964
1822	470,108	20	9,402,160
1823	52,792	19	1,003,048
1824	6,876	18	123,768
1825	49,659	17	844,203
1832	8,710	10	87,100
1833	10,110	9	90,990
1834	102,000	8	816,000
Total.	£985,818		£19,780,308

† In 1816, 1821, 1822, 1833, 1836.

The corn-laws, then, so far from having ensured success to the farmer, have not even secured him from frequent and severe distress. Thus far all men will agree with us. Let us now inquire whether this distress may not be, in a great measure, traced to the operation of these very laws.

II. The case may be thus briefly stated. The existing corn-laws profess to secure a certain price to the farmer for his wheat. On this price the landlords—the authors of these enactments—calculate and fix their rents; and on this price the farmers make *their* calculations, and contract to pay those rents. *But it turns out that the corn-laws do not ensure this price.* The rents have been adjusted on a fallacious supposition: the two contracting parties, therefore, cannot both be satisfied, and the weakest goes to the wall. The landlord exacts his rent, and the farmer is ruined. We appeal to the farmers themselves, whether this is not the true process in five cases out of six, in which they have been unfortunate.

The avowed object of all the corn-laws that have ever been passed has been to fix and secure a price which would remunerate the grower; and the agriculturists generally, having a most religious conviction of the omnipotence of Parliament, have naturally concluded that the avowed object of any law would be effected by that law. The avowed purpose of the law of 1815 was to fix the price of wheat at 80s. a quarter. The language of the landed legislature was uniform upon this point. They declared that no lower price could be endured by the farmers; they told the farmers that such a price should be secured to them by law, and they arranged their rents accordingly. What has been the consequence? *In only two years* since that period has the annual average reached that price;* and those two were years of scarcity. The farmers, who had contracted to pay rents, *which only a uniform price of 80s. would enable them to pay*, were, of course, impoverished or ruined.

In 1822 the average had fallen to 43s. 3d., and the deluded farmers were clamorous in their complaints. It was then declared, that the price of 70s. a quarter must be ensured, in order to induce the farmer to keep a sufficient breadth of land under the plough; and a new corn-law was passed to procure the desired result. Again the farmers were deceived, and lulled into fancied security. Again rents were readjusted on the new assumption of a permanent average of 70s. *Yet in only one year† since that period, and that one a year of scarcity, has the price reached this point.* The rents, however, had to be paid. The landlord whistled and the farmer paid the piper.

For some years subsequent to 1822, every one was dissatisfied. The consumers of corn thought they paid too much, and the growers of corn thought they received too little. Again in 1828, a deliberate attempt was made to secure prices at once high and steady;—such prices as would enable landlords to exact extreme rents, and farmers to pay them. *Sixty-four shillings* was now declared to be the remuneration.

* 1817, 1818. † 1839.

nerating price; and rents were calculated and settled on this basis. *Yet in only seven years out of the subsequent thirteen has this average been reached;** and of those seven five have been years of deficient harvests. And at least four years out of the thirteen have been years of severe agricultural distress.

In the spring of the present year, a new law was passed, in the hope of fixing 56s. as the minimum price of wheat. Yet before the harvest had been fully reaped, and before any wheat could be thrashed out, and brought to market,—viz. by September 10,—*the average weekly return had fallen to 51s. 6d.*; and by November 5, it had dropped to 48s. 7d. Each successive corn-law has in fact been a new and cruel deception to the unhappy farmer; yet to each has he looked with renewed confidence for his salvation:

Cassandra's fate reversed is theirs;
She, true, no faith could gain;
They every passing hour deceive,
Yet are believed again.

Our advice to him is to trust no more to such delusive protectors,—to lean no more upon such broken reeds; but, after the experience he has had, to feel convinced that whatever prospects may in future be held out to him from the same quarter will be as faithless as the past have been.

But do not thou
The tale believe;
They're sisters all,
And all deceive.

The *first* evil, then, which the corn-laws have inflicted upon the farmer, has been this:—*they have induced him to contract to pay rents which—except in years of scarcity—the price of wheat will not enable him to pay.*

III. The purpose of our restrictive corn-laws is to secure high prices in this country by protecting the home grower against the competition of foreign produce. And by dint of looking always at the *intention*, and never at the *operation*, of legislative measures, a great number of our farmers have come to believe, that low prices are the effect of foreign competition, and that high prices are the consequence of that competition being shut out. Now, how stands the fact? Why, that it is impossible to point to a single year of low prices, in which there was any perceptible import of foreign produce; or to a single year of great foreign importation, which was not also a year of high prices. The years 1834, 1835, and 1836, were years of low prices, and of great distress and discontent among farmers, the average of wheat being under 45s. a quarter; yet the import of foreign wheat was only 122,175 qrs. The years 1838, 1839, and 1840, were years of high prices, and comparatively of farming prosperity, the average of wheat being 67s 2d.; yet in those years we

* 1829, 30, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41.

imported the enormous quantity of 7,858,500 qrs. Of this we say nothing more at present than that it undoubtedly establishes the fact, *that low prices of wheat in England are not, and have never been, the effect of foreign competition.* For five months at the close of 1835, and the commencement of 1836, the price of wheat ranged under 36s. a quarter; at which price no foreign wheat could have been imported from any country in the world, even had the corn-trade been perfectly free, instead of being burdened as it was with a duty of 50s. a quarter. And in 1839, in spite of an importation of 2,681,400 quarters, prices never ranged so low as 66s. and averaged above 70s. The fact beyond all question is this,—and it should be immoveably rooted in the understanding of every farmer,—*that low prices are owing to abundant harvests, and not to the admission of foreign corn; and that high prices are owing to defective harvests, and not to the exclusion of foreign corn,—since in the former case it is never admitted, and in the latter case it is never excluded.*

There is one case, and one case only, in which this rule will not altogether hold good. There is one case, and one case only, in which harvests of extreme plenty will *not* bring prices of extreme depression; and that is, when the prosperity of trade, and the thriving condition of the whole community, enable the poor to live better and to eat more, and the rich to add to the number of their servants and their horses; and thus to increase the consumption till it keeps pace with the increased production. There is one case, and one case only, in which scanty harvests will not ensure to the farmers prices extravagantly high;—and that is, where the distress of trade and the impoverishment of all classes have produced a diminution in the demand for food equivalent to the diminution in its supply. Had the country been flourishing, and the people been in easy circumstances during the last two years, good wheat would have reached 100s. instead of 80s. Low prices may be produced by two causes; either by excess of production, or by diminished power of purchase on the part of the consumer. High prices may be produced by two causes; either by a deficient supply or a brisk and vigorous demand; and it is evident that they will be most profitable to the farmer when produced by the latter cause. Under the present system, high prices are only producible by deficient crops; so that when the farmer obtains the highest price, *then he has least to sell. If he is ever to profit equally by good harvests and by bad ones, it can only be by the community, who constitutes his customers, being in a condition to buy largely in the former case, and to pay dearly in the latter.* If large crops and high prices are ever to go together, it can only be when manufactures are profitable, when industry is well remunerated, when all the people are well off.

In the production of this general prosperity, then, the farmer is as deeply and directly interested, as the merchant, the tradesman, or the labourer. *Yet to this general prosperity the corn-laws are notoriously the greatest obstacle.* By the concurring evidence of the ablest men in every department; of practical merchants, of theoretical economists, of celebrated statesmen; the corn-laws restrict our com-

merce, depress our trade, deprive our people of employment, and derange our friendly relations with foreign powers.

The *second* great mischief, then, which the corn-laws inflict upon the farmer, is that they spoil his market by impoverishing his customers.

IV. We presume, that no doubt can exist in the mind of any one, that the *steadier* prices can be made, the better for the producer, as well as for the consumer.* A trade in which the fluctuations are excessive, partakes of the nature of gambling; and a gambling trade is in the long run always a losing one, and generally a ruinous one. The uncertainty which pervades prices prevents anything like safe estimates, or accurate calculations. The farmer, being wholly unable to foresee whether he shall obtain 40s. or 80s. for his wheat, knows neither what rent he can afford to pay, nor in what style he can afford to live. If the price of corn were fixed, he would know pretty exactly what he had to expect, would be able to lay out his expenses beforehand, and to calculate beforehand on a certain, though it might be a moderate, amount of profit. This degree of uniformity, we know, is not attainable; but, the nearer we can approach to it, the more desirable will become the condition of the farmer. Now nothing can be more certain than that our corn-laws have increased fluctuations of price—*except that they were intended to prevent them*. One of the chief pleas for the perpetual legislative peddling on this subject has been the necessity of preventing excessive variations in the price of so important an article as food. The far-famed sliding-scale is the result of this alleged necessity; the offspring of previous variations; “the fruitful parent of a thousand more.” It was a patent invention to produce uniformity of price. Yet the annexed table† will show

* “Fluctuations of price, whether they arise from alteration in the value of money, or from changes in the corn-laws, cannot fail to produce evils in every branch of rural economy, which, independently of these disturbing causes, must ever remain exposed to grievous vicissitudes from the uncertainty of seasons. These artificial fluctuations, however, only aggravate the natural evil: they render the income of the landlord precarious, *the fixed rent of the farmer a hazardous speculation*, and the wages of the labourer an uncertain remuneration. *Steadiness of price*, which is conducive to settled habits, and forms the basis of all fixed engagements, is the primary object never again to be overlooked.”

Report of Committee of House of Commons, 1833.

Year in which the Corn Law was passed.	Lowest Price of Wheat. under this law.	Highest Price under this law.	Fluctuation under this law. Per cent.
	s. d.	s. d.	
1670	35 6	64 0	80
1689	23 0	81 0	252
1773	35 7	59 0	67
1791	41 0	156 0	280
1804	49 6	155 0	213
1815	38 1	112 7	196
1822	40 0	69 0	72
1828	36 0	79 0	119

how completely this, as well as all previous enactments, has failed in effecting even an approximation to its object. And Mr. Tooke, Sir Robert Peel's favourite authority, declares (and, we doubt not, with perfect correctness), that, under the sliding-scale, prices *must* fluctuate at least from 36s. to 73s. a quarter, or more than 100 per cent.*

Here, then, we have three remarkable facts. *First*, we have a parliamentary declaration, that steadiness of price is the primary object; which must never be lost sight of, and which is perfectly essential to the welfare of the landlord, the farmer, and the labourer. *Secondly*, we have a law passed for the purpose of procuring this steadiness, which nevertheless has not prevented the most excessive fluctuations. And, *thirdly*, we have it shown on the first authority, that this very law does, and *must* aggravate these very fluctuations.† Surely a law passed with a definite object, and producing the exact opposite of that object, needs no further condemnation.

Moreover, it is perfectly evident that steadiness of price is at least as important to the consumer as to the grower of corn. The grower, if he be a man of capital, may to a certain extent set a high-priced year against a low-priced year, and so make a decent average. But the poor bread-eater cannot do this. He cannot lay in a stock of flour at 36s. and keep it by him to consume when the price is 73s. He eats what he wants in the low-priced year; and when the high-priced year comes he lives upon something else, or eats only half the quantity. Had the price been stationary at 50s. he would have been to the farmer a regular customer for a regular quantity. But, as it is, he is a customer at 36s. and he ceases to be a customer at 73s. This, therefore, brings us to the important principle,—*that the country could afford to pay the farmer a better average price, if prices were steady, than if they are fluctuating.* What we complain of is, not so much that wheat should average 60s. a quarter as that it should ever reach 80s.

The *third* great mischief, then, which the corn-law inflicts upon the farmer is this:—by aggravating fluctuations, it upsets all his calculations; and *prevents the country from paying him as high an average, as with steady prices it would be able to afford.*‡

* Tooke on Prices, III. pp. 95, 98.

† Under a fixed duty or a free trade, corn would come in just as it was wanted; the supply would meet the demand, and be proportionate to it, both in time and in amount. Under the sliding scale the price is rapidly and inordinately raised by the artificial withholding of the supply, till the lowest duty is attained, when it is as rapidly depressed by the sudden liberation of the whole quantity in bond.

‡ We apprehend that the farmers are very much deceived as to the actual average prices of wheat. The *apparent* average from 1829—1841, as taken from the weekly returns, was 58s. 9d. a quarter; but, as by far the greater quantities are always sold in the low-priced years, and generally in the lowest-priced weeks of those years, the real average paid to the farmers will be far lower, probably about 53s. On examining the quantity of wheat sold in the 150 towns from which returns were made to the corn inspectors, we find that in the *three dear years* 1829, 30, 31, when the average price was 65s. 7d. the quantity sold reached only 8,515,000 qrs. which in the *three cheap years* 1834, 5, 6, when the price had fallen to 46s. 2d. the

V. From what has been already said, it appears pretty clear that restrictive corn-laws are decidedly injurious to the farmer. It remains to be seen, that, of all possible modifications of such laws, that which is known as the *sliding-scale* is the most fraught with mischief and delusion. It is, indeed, the very quintessence of evil. It is ruinous alike to the merchant, to the manufacturer, to the consumer; to the foreign producer, to the English farmer. If our legislators had sat down in all diligence and good faith to contrive a law which should be productive of a minimum of benefit to any class, and a maximum of injury to all, they could not possibly have devised one more exquisitely adapted to its end. Such are the singular errors into which even able men will ever be liable to fall, when they endeavour to counteract the operation of natural causes; when they commit themselves to an impotent struggle with the laws which govern the moral and material world.

Had the sliding-scale been the exact converse of what it is;—had it been made to slide in the opposite direction, the duty falling with the fall in price, and advancing with its advance;—had the duty been nominal at 40s. and prohibitory at 73s.; then, though in many respects more burdensome to the community, it would have afforded to the farmer a less delusive protection than the present law; as he would in that case have reaped the full benefit of high-priced years. In one case he would have been secured against foreign competition by low prices; in the other case by the high duty. *His protection would have been proportioned to his danger.*—"What," says Dr. Johnson, "is a patron? Is he not one who will see a man struggling in the waves, without stretching out a hand to his assistance, but who, as soon as he had reached the shore in safety, *encumbers* him with help?" Just such a patron has the sliding-scale proved to the deceived and miserable farmer. When wheat is at 40s. a quarter, and no foreign corn can in consequence possibly come in, it mocks him with a needless protection of 50 per cent. But when prices are rising, and prospects brightening around him, and he—unhappy dupe!—is solacing his tantalized and thirsty soul with a golden vision of 73s. a quarter for his coming crop, the protection is suddenly withdrawn, and the deluge of foreign competition is let in upon him. Yet this is the law which farmers, in their darkness, have been strenuously struggling to save.

The sliding-scale has yet a further operation which presses with peculiar severity upon the English agriculturist. *It depresses prices*

quantity sold reached 11,286,000 qrs. And in 1839, 40, 41, when the price had again risen to 67s. 1d. the quantity sold, notwithstanding a great increase of population, had fallen off to 10,938,000 qrs. In 1838, at 64s. 7d. 4,064,000 qrs. were sold. In 1839, the price had risen to 70s. 8d. and only 3,174,000 qrs. were sold. The same peculiarity appears if we compare different parts of the same year. In the two highest-priced months of 1835, viz. July and August, at the price of 40s. 9d. only 510,513 qrs. were sold. But in November and December, when prices had receded to 35s. 5d. 704,100 qrs. were sold.

Mr. Tooke has a similar remark (Prices, III. p. 40). Between 1831 and 1839, the *apparent* average was 56s.; the *real* average obtained by the farmer, he estimates at 50s.

*just when his stock of corn is largest, and when he is most anxious to realize;—and raises them when he has none to sell.** This is not an accidental operation : it is inherent in the nature of a sliding-scale. In five years out of six, prices are highest just before the harvest, because then the stock of wheat in the country is the lowest ; and they fall immediately after the harvest, from the opposite reason. We give in a note a table illustrative of this fact from 1829 to 1841,† showing that the average price has invariably fallen about harvest-time nearly eight per cent. or from 60s. 4d. to 55s. 9d. a quarter. In the present year this result has been still more remarkably brought out. The harvest was unusually early, and the stocks of farmers more than usually exhausted. On July 9th the weekly average was 65s. 8d. ; on September 10th, when the harvest was generally got in, and when farmers in the south were ready to bring their wheat to market, it had dropped to 51s. 6d.—a fall of nearly 22 per cent. !

Now that this fall is to be attributed chiefly, though not altogether, to the operation of the sliding-scale, is evident from the fact that it is equally observable in defective as in abundant years. *But* for the sliding-scale, a rise in price would naturally be the immediate consequence of a deficient harvest. But the duty being always lowest when the price is highest, and prices having, as we have just seen, generally reached their maximum in August or September, the whole of the foreign corn in bond is certain to be liberated at that time, and is thrown upon the market so as to depress the price, just as the

* “The sudden admission of so large a quantity of foreign wheat in September 1838 [1,513,113 qrs. in one week] had the effect, notwithstanding the ascertained deficiency of our own growth, of depressing markets ; so that the average price, which on the 24th of August had been 77s. declined within the four following weeks to 61s. 10d.—so that whereas the previous rise to 77s. was for the benefit only of the wealthier farmers who had been able to hold their stocks of the crop of 1837 to the last, the subsequent fall was to the detriment of the numerous class of small farmers, who, having by that time got their crops in everywhere south of the Humber, were thrashing out, and as usual bringing the earliest supplies to market.” —Tooke, III. p. 30.

Year.	Average Price of July & Aug.	Average Price of Sept. & Oct.
	s. d.	s. d.
1829	64 5½	59 0
1830	69 8	60 7½
1831	62 5	59 8
1832	60 10	53 4
1833	53 3	51 5
1834	46 10	41 3
1835	40 8	36 5
1836	48 0	46 5
1837	56 4	53 1
1838	71 0	65 2
1839	70 3	68 11
1840	71 2	64 5
1841	69 5	65 5

farmer (who being rarely a man of capital, cannot wait till the reaction of the following summer, but must realize at once) is preparing to thrash out his wheat. The annexed table* will show, that, in every year of considerable foreign importation since the enactment of the sliding-scale (except 1831 and 1839), the chief portion has been poured into the market immediately before the harvest, and the lowest point of duty has almost always been reached in August or September.

The experience of the last fourteen years, then, and more especially of the present year, must, we think, have convinced the farmer, *that the inevitable operation of the sliding-scale is to expose him to the overwhelming competition of a sudden influx of foreign corn, just at the period when he has most to sell, when he is most anxious to sell, and when consequently such competition will be most severely felt.* Is this the effect which he looked for from it? Is it an effect which he is desirous to perpetuate? Does it not convince him, that the sliding-scale, to which he trusted for protection, has been, in truth, his greatest enemy?

But it has a still further, and still more hostile operation on the poor farmer. *It exposes him to the depressing competition of a larger quantity of foreign corn than is actually wanted, or would otherwise come in.* When it becomes evident that our harvests are likely to be deficient, orders are sent abroad for large quantities of wheat, which continue to come in long after the deficiency is supplied, and when prices are receding to a moderate level. Under ordinary circumstances, this extra quantity would not be called for till it was actually wanted. But as, under the sliding scale, the duty is rapidly rising, and will soon become prohibitory, the importer is obliged to

Year.	Quarters of wheat and wheat flour entered for home consumption in July, Aug. & Sept.	Quarters of wheat and wheat flour entered in the other nine months.
1829	681,000	761,000
1830	1,435,700	294,000
1831	59,700	1,447,000
1832	278,300	98,400
1833	42,000	42,000
1834	23,000	41,900
1835	10,000	18,500
1836	12,200	17,900
1837	196,900	46,100
1838	1,538,500	409,500
1839	840,800	1,870,900
1840	1,587,600	813,500
1841	2,343,200	304,600
1842†	2,580,000	320,000
Total	11,628,900	6,465,300

† Up to September 5.

enter it at once, and bring it upon a market where it is not required, and which, consequently it must tend unduly to depress.

Moreover, this happy invention, the sliding scale, not only exposes the farmer to the risk of more foreign wheat coming in than is required, *but of much coming in when none at all is required..* The corn merchant is obliged to act beforehand in an estimate of probabilities. If he conceives that the harvests are likely to be deficient, he does not wait, as under a free trade he would be able to do, till the deficiency is ascertained,—but he sends out his orders for foreign corn to come in at the period when the duty is usually the lowest, and the price the highest, viz. just before the harvest. But it sometimes chances, that he is mistaken in his anticipations,—that the crop turns out a fair average, and that importations are not needed. But his orders are executed, and the foreign corn comes pouring in. He dares not wait for the chance of the duty rising to a point which shall make his speculations overwhelmingly ruinous: he must liberate his corn on the best terms he can, and bring it to market as early as he can, whether wanted or not, before the full effect of the harvest in depressing prices has had time to operate.

This, then, is the *fourth* count of the farmer's indictment against the corn-laws:—*that they introduce foreign corn at the worst possible moment; that they introduce more than is wanted; and that they introduce it when not wanted at all.*

VI. Thus far we have considered the effect of the corn-laws on the interests of the farmer, considered merely in his capacity of a producer;* and as a producer, we have shown them to be in every way injurious to him. Either they raise the average price of corn, or they do not. If they do not, it is clear that neither he nor his landlord has any interest in maintaining them. If they do, we have seen that his landlord reaps the benefit, because he calculates his rent accordingly. *But the farmer is a consumer as well as a producer,—an eater of corn as well as a grower of it; and, in this capacity, low prices, and not high prices, are desirable for him.* Nay, more, he is a consumer to a greater extent than any other individual in the community; for to his own consumption must be added the far larger quantity required for seed-corn, and for feeding his cattle. High prices, therefore, not only add materially to his household expenses; they increase his cost of production, and thereby diminish the profits of his occupation. This point is too clear to need any further elucidation. As consumers, we repeat, farmers are more interested in low prices than any other class of men in the country.

But farmers are consumers in another point of view. They have to feed the poor. In the agricultural districts they are the chief rate-

* It should be borne in mind, that the farmer is a producer of other articles besides corn; he is a producer of meat, of milk, of cheese, of butter; and in proportion as the price of corn rises, must the people's consumption of the other articles be reduced. But our limits prevent us from dwelling upon this point at present.

payers. Now the corn-laws augment the poor-rates by a double operation. They increase the number of paupers, by depressing trade and manufactures;—and they add to the cost of their maintenance, by raising the price of corn. The latter effect may be judged of from the annexed table,* from which it appears, that, in five agricultural counties alone, the difference of pauper expenditure between a cheap year, and a dear one, was £78,131 under the old system, and £71,913 under the amended law. The former effect, though equally certain, it is not so easy to show by tabular statements; but it is notorious that the manufacturing districts, when prosperous, draft off, and provide employment for many thousands of labourers from the agricultural counties, who would otherwise have to be supported by the rates of their native parishes;†—that if these

* SUMS EXPENDED FOR THE RELIEF OF THE POOR.

COUNTIES.	Under the Old Poor Law.		Under the New Poor Law.	
	1829.	1833.	1837.	1839.
	£	£	£	£
Bucks	135,239	124,200	61,634	72,367
Bedford	84,513	77,819	37,447	39,889
Essex	282,132	239,946	149,356	165,340
Devon	222,381	210,825	169,449	194,361
Dorset	90,949	84,293	63,531	81,373
Total	£815,214	£737,083	£481,417	£553,330
Average Price of Wheat	66s. 3d.	52s. 11d.	55s. 10d.	70s. 8d.

† “We do not know the exact amount of migration from rural to industrial districts, but we know that it must have been immense; for while the *natural* increase of the population (i.e. the excess of births above deaths), during the last ten years, has been much the greatest in the former, the *actual* increase has been much the greatest in the latter. A careful examination of the table given below, coupled with the annual increase of the population, will leave little room for doubt, that since 1836, the manufacturing districts have found employment and subsistence for at least 400,000 additional persons.

AGRICULTURAL COUNTIES.	Increase per cent. in the Population from 1831 to 1841.	Births to Popu- lation in 1830.	Deaths to Popu- lation in 1840.	MANUFACTURING COUNTIES.	Increase per cent. of Population, from 1831 to 1841.	Births to Popu- lation in 1830.	Deaths to Popu- lation in 1840.
Hereford . .	2.9	one in 37	one in 63	Lancaster . . .	25	one in 38	one in 32
Cumberland .	4.8	36	51	Durham	27	35	43
Norfolk . . .	5.7	33	51	Warwick	19	36	45
Oxford	6.1	32	50	Stafford	24	32	51
Suffolk	6.3	37	52	York, W. R. . .	18	38	43
Buckingham .	6.4	36	52	Chester	19	43	42
Average . . .	5.4	35	52	Average	22	37	43

N.B. The year 1830 is the last for which we have any calculation of the births.”
“Not Overproduction,” &c. by W. R. Greg, p. 16.

labourers had remained, or were now to be returned upon their native parishes, the consequent augmentation of the rates would bring ruin upon every farmer in the country ;—that this re-emigration will assuredly take place, if the present depression of trade and manufactures should unhappily continue ;—and that continue it assuredly will, unless those restrictive corn-laws, which press so heavily both upon our foreign commerce and our home demand, shall be speedily removed. *The repeal of the corn-laws is therefore necessary to save the farmer himself from ultimate and entire ruin.*

Let us now consider the effect of the corn-laws upon the FARM LABOURER. The effect may be stated in two words :—*They raise the price of the commodity he has to buy, and lower the price of the commodity he has to sell.* They enhance the cost of provisions, and depress the wages of labour.

1. Like all consumers, the agricultural labourer has a paramount interest in cheap food. It is calculated, that in ordinary years one-half his whole expenditure is laid out in bread. In years of scarcity, however, he must expend much more than this, and yet obtain much less. When the price of corn is low, he has therefore a far greater command of the comforts and necessities of life than when it is high. This requires no elaborate demonstration. The labourer knows it to be the case. A very slight consideration will show that it must be so. Uniform experience has shown that it is so.

Some persons, however, have ventured to assert, that this operation is counteracted by an alteration in the rate of wages ;—that the wages of the labourer rise and fall according to the price of corn, and in proportion to the price of corn ;—and that his command of the necessities of life in consequence always remains the same. The falsehood of this statement is obvious from the following consideration :—Years of high price are always years of scanty crops, and are so merely *because* they are years of scanty crops. To affirm, therefore, that when corn is dear, the labourer is enabled to purchase as much bread as when corn is cheap, *is to affirm that he can obtain a larger proportion of a scanty crop than he can of an abundant one* ;—which is manifestly both an untruth and an absurdity. In years of scarcity, it is obvious that *some classes* must consume much less bread than they do in years of plenty ; because there is much less to be consumed. *What are these classes ?* Are they the rich or are they the poor ? Are they the higher and middle classes, or are they the labouring classes ? We know that the former rarely alter at all, and never alter materially, their rate of consumption ;—we know, therefore, that the consumption of the latter must fall off in a more proportionate degree. When the rich are compelled to retrench, they retrench in luxuries, not in food. When the pressure of scarcity compels the poor man to retrench, he has no luxuries to lay down, and his retrenchment therefore falls almost immediately upon his daily bread.

It is no doubt the case in many parts of England, perhaps in all, that the wages of the farm labourer do vary to a certain extent in years of great diversity ; that is to say, that, when the price of pro-

visions is so high as to make it impossible for the labourer to maintain his family on his ordinary wages, those wages are advanced, though in an inadequate degree; otherwise he would be obliged to seek assistance from the parish;—and the farmer knows, that, whether he pays the advance in the form of wages or of poor-rates, is a matter of comparatively little moment. In like manner, when the price of provisions is unusually low, wages are commonly reduced, because the general redundancy of labour in the agricultural districts enables the farmer, in the great majority of instances, to procure hands at the lowest rate of earnings that will afford a bare subsistence. But is there a single agricultural labourer in the country who will affirm that his wages go as far when wheat is at 60s. as when it stands at 40s.? We believe not.

In 1835 and 1836, the prices of all kinds of farming produce were unusually low; and, in the spring of the latter year, a committee of the House of Commons was, of course, appointed to inquire into the causes of the existing agricultural distress. Great numbers of witnesses from all parts of the country were examined, the chief portion of whom were farmers. Of thirty-eight of these, who were particularly questioned as to the comparative condition of the labourer at that time, in order to ascertain whether or not he had benefitted, as he ought to have done, by the low price of food, only eight spoke doubtfully, or negatively;—the remaining thirty declared, with one consent, that, although wages were unquestionably low, the labourers were in general fully employed, *and had never within their memory been in so comfortable a condition, or able to procure so large a supply of the decencies and necessities of life.** A similar committee, which had sat in 1833, at which period also prices were moderate, and produce was abundant, reported to the same effect in the following words:—

“Amidst the numerous difficulties to which agriculture in this country is exposed, and amidst the distress which unhappily exists, it is a consolation to find that the general condition of the agricultural labourer in full employment is *better now than at any former period; his money wages giving him a greater command over the necessities and conveniences of life.*”

In 1836, when the committee made their report, wheat was under 40s. a quarter. Within three years of this period, the price had reached 73s. or nearly double. Was the labourer as comfortably off in 1839† as he had been in 1836? Could he procure any thing like

* First, Second, and Third Reports of the Committee of 1836, especially p. 353.

† “The state of prices of provisions, and of the rate of wages in the last two years (1838, 1839) strikingly confirms the deductions from previous experience of the little tendency which exists in wages to follow a fall or rise in the prices of provisions, except at long intervals, and then only in a degree far short of such fall or rise. . . . In a few instances the wages of agricultural labourers have been raised, but in a very trifling proportion to the rise of necessities; and in cases where an advance has been granted, it has rather been from motives of fear or humanity on the part of the employer, than as a legitimate consequence of an improved demand relatively to the supply of labour.”

Tooke on Prices, III. p. 52.

the same amount of wholesome and nutritious food? Could he expend as much in clothing? Had his wages advanced in any thing like a corresponding proportion? *If they had*, why was the home trade so bad? Why were the poor-rates so much heavier in the latter year? * Why had the consumption of exciseable articles so greatly fallen off? † And why had the duties on malt, tea, and sugar, been so singularly diminished? ‡ *If they had not*, what becomes of the assertion that the high price of wheat is no injury to the farm labourer?

II. But the wages of the labourer are not only *not raised* in proportion to the price of corn;—it admits of certain demonstration, that in the long run they are actually lowered by the operation of the corn-laws. That these laws have the effect of curtailing *both the foreign and the home demand*, for the products of manufacturing industry, we shall take for granted, because it has been so repeatedly proved, and is now so generally acknowledged, that all reasoning upon the subject here would be superfluous. In proportion as they have this effect, they limit the extension of manufactures, and the employment of the people therein. They limit the demand for labour, and consequently lessen its remuneration.

The number of individuals occupied in the cultivation of the soil has not increased, and will not increase, with the extension of that cultivation. On the contrary, it has diminished, and we have no doubt will continue to diminish, unless some such change should take place in our system of agriculture as shall approach to garden cultivation. In the ten years ending with 1830, we know that tillage had been much extended, and that large additional quantities of land had been brought under the plough. The number of enclosure bills passed during that period was 205; yet during that period, the number of families engaged in agriculture had *decreased* from 978,500 to 961,000; while 470,000 families had been added to our total population. The returns of the last ten

* In spite of the increased economy brought about by the progressive introduction of the amended law, the total amount expended for the relief of the poor had risen from £3,800,000 in 1836, to £4,310,000 in 1839. And the increase had taken place in every county in England, except Lincoln, Shropshire, and Southampton.

† The excise duties collected in 1836 were £16,587,992; and in 1839 they had fallen off to £15,488,000, instead of having risen to £17,088,000, which they would have done had they kept pace with the population.

DUTIES ON	1836.	1839.	Would have been in 1839 had it kept pace with the Population.	
	£	£		
Malt . .	5,776,094	4,853,992		
Tea . .	4,255,949	3,222,571		
Sugar . .	4,348,609	4,224,595		
Total . .	£14,380,652	£12,301,169	£14,812,500	Diminution, two millions and a half.

years, from 1831 to 1841, have not yet been published, but we will venture to predict, that, when published, they will show a similar result. From this we draw two conclusions, which admit of no denial :— *first*, that the economy of labour by the introduction of improved modes of culture more than counterbalances the demand for labour by fresh land being brought under the plough ;—and consequently, *in the second place*, that it is not to any advance in agriculture that our increasing population must look for employment and support.

But the population of Great Britain multiplies at the rate of 200,000 annually, of whom three-fourths, or 150,000, must be estimated to belong to the working classes, who must either starve or live upon charity, or subsist by the labour of their hands. Employment must be found for 150,000 additional pair of hands every year. As long as trade and commerce prosper, they will find this employment in manufacturing pursuits, and the subsidiary crafts ;—when trade and commerce are depressed and blighted, they will be thrown back upon the land, either to live in idleness upon its fruits, *or by competition to depress the wages of the farming labourer*. Hitherto the course of events has happily followed the former alternative ; but the time for the latter is fast approaching, nay has actually commenced ; and, unless the corn-laws are speedily removed, it can no longer be arrested. Now, we have seen that no additional hands are required for the cultivation of the soil ;—in fact, their numbers are already redundant. What, then, must be the effect of the annual influx of 150,000 additional labourers into a market already overstocked ? What but *ruinously to depress to wages of labour,—the price of the only commodity the poor man has to sell ?* The conclusion is as certain as any in arithmetic, that *such a check to the advance of manufactures as the corn-laws are fast bringing about, will infallibly reduce the earnings of the agricultural labourer to the very lowest point at which even the most uncomfortable life can be sustained,—far below even their present pitiful amount.*

As to what the corn-law *has* effected, some controversy may arise. As to what it has *not* effected, there can be no controversy whatever ; since it must be evident to the dullest understanding, that what has not been effected at all cannot have been effected by the corn-law. The corn-laws, then, have *not* made farmers prosperous,—have *not* made prices steady,—have *not* raised nor maintained the wages of the labourer. Yet these were the *avowed* objects for which they were enacted. The object they *have* effected was one which was *not* avowed, viz to raise the rents of the landlords :—and this they have effected at the expense of undermining that national prosperity by the continuance of which alone can high rents be permanently secured. With the blind unthrift which is the usual companion and corrective of rapacity, they have killed the goose which laid their golden eggs.

Caton, Lancaster, 30th Oct. 1842.

W. R. GREG.

AGRICULTURE
AND
THE CORN LAW.

PRIZE ESSAY.

SHEWING THE
INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF THE CORN LAW

UPON
TENANT FARMERS, AND FARM LABOURERS.

BY ARTHUR MORSE.

MANCHESTER:
HAYCRAFT, PRINTER, 11, BROWN STREET.

PRIZE ESSAYS.

AGRICULTURE AND THE CORN LAWS.

The Council of the National Anti-Corn Law League hereby offer the following PRIZES for the BEST PRACTICAL ESSAYS, each not to exceed sixteen pages octavo, demonstrating the Injurious Effects of the Corn Laws on Tenant Farmers and Farm Labourers, and the Advantages which those classes would derive from its Total and Immediate Repeal:—

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THE COUNCIL HAVE AWARDED THE HIGHEST PRIZE TO EACH OF THE THREE
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PRIZE ESSAY.

To protect and encourage agriculture has for many years been regarded by our legislators as the stepping stone to prosperity, and the foundation of wealth and power; but whatever may have been the results of its supposed encouragement and protection, nothing can be more clear, than that though for a time the profits of tenant farmers may be raised by a law unduly raising the price of corn, yet that in the end the profits of farming must be regulated, not by the profits of that particular trade, but by the profits and well being of other trades generally. It is impossible to doubt, and indeed every man's experience would tell him, that if the profits of farming are large, and with a prospect of continuance, people from other trades whose profits were not so large, and even farmers themselves, would so bid against one another, as speedily to bring the rent of land to its proper and actual value, according to the increased price of corn.

But it would be wrong to suppose that the profits of farming were always to be estimated by the amount of rent that is paid in any one year, or even series of years, for the history of the prices of corn shows us that it is one of the most variable of all articles of human consumption; and it also shows us, that independently of artificial causes, such as war, a derangement of the currency, or laws regulating the import and export of corn, it is affected by seasons frequently for many years together of a very abundant kind, and these followed again by many very deficient years. To say with any degree of certainty, therefore, what should be the amount of rent for any future year, must always be a matter of the greatest difficulty, but still it is obvious that a period of rising prices, when neither the landlord nor the farmer has calculated upon a rising rent, must be a season of prosperity to the farmer, and a period of falling prices when a farmer is paying a rent calculated on high prices, must be equally a period of great loss to him.

The object of our corn laws, according to the avowed intentions of our legislators, professes to be to maintain a high and steady

price of corn, and if they did accomplish this end there could be no shadow of doubt as to the benefit they would confer on the tenant farmer, but that they have succeeded in no one of these results, I think events have most fully proved.

The high prices of corn which were attained in this country at the close of the war, from the accumulated effects of bad seasons, the increase of wealth and population, and the formidable obstacles thrown in the way of importation by war, had led our farmers and legislators to form extravagant ideas of the price the country could afford to pay, and of the price at which corn could be afforded to be grown, and led to the passing of the act of parliament in 1815, by which wheat was not allowed to be imported for home consumption until the price had reached 80s. a quarter. For some time previous to this period the home price had been so high as scarcely to be affected by the duty on importation.

The corn law of 1815, aided by deficient harvests, had certainly the effect of maintaining prices considerably above what they would otherwise have been, but still during the whole period the act remained in force, from 1815 to 1822, the price of wheat averaged but 69s. a quarter, and in the last three of these years 1820, 1821, and 1822, the price was respectively 65s. 10d., 54s. 5d., and 43s. 3d. a quarter.

At this period we read of great distress among the farmers, public meetings held, and parliamentary committees appointed to inquire into the cause of the distress. The question why corn was low, and why it should not have been low, seems never to have entered into any one's head ; the question always was, why was it not high, and why should not acts of parliament be made to keep up the price ? It never appears to have occurred to farmers why rents and tithes, and the various outgoings upon a farm were high, nor do they ever appear to have entertained a doubt of the power of the legislature to maintain prices, or to make the trade of farming a better trade than other trades, which it must always be borne in mind is one of the necessary inferences of a corn law. With a view of allaying the fears of the agriculturist, and probably reflecting also that the importation of corn at a time when it was needed, might in some degree be of benefit to the community, and indirectly to the farmer, a new law was framed upon a rather more liberal basis than the old, but still of such a restrictive nature, as more than once to require the liberation of foreign corn as a temporary expedient.

The average price of wheat during the time this act remained in force from 1823 to 1828 inclusive, was 59s. a quarter.

In 1828 a new law was passed on a still more liberal basis than either of the two previous laws, and has been in force from that time to the present year. The years 1834, 1835, and 1836, were again periods of agricultural distress; and from the evidence taken before a committee of the House of Commons in 1836, it appears, that with the exception of the Scotch farmers who farmed upon corn rents, farmers generally were making no profits, and in many instances living upon their capital. On one point they generally agreed, that the agricultural labourer was never in more comfortable circumstances than he was at that time.

Since 1815 the farmer appears to have survived under prices, constantly falling from 69s. during the first period to 59s. in the second, and under the third from 1828 to 1839 of 57s. 7d.

Such is the history of the farming interest since the war, and it appears to corroborate what I before observed, that a period of falling prices must inevitably be a period of loss to the farmer.

While the hope has been held out to the farmer that the price of agricultural produce would be sustained, rent has fallen but little, and in many instances it has increased. Had the fall in agricultural produce been sudden, (like the fall of manufactured goods,) as undoubtedly it would at the close of the war, had no protection been extended, there can be no doubt but that there would have been a great and sudden fall of rent. The loss would then have fallen on the landlord, which now has fallen almost entirely on the tenant. Farmers on a low rental, and with leases, would then have reaped all the advantage and profits to be derived from improved modes of cultivation, which under the fancied security of the corn law, has now gone into the landlord's pocket in the shape of rent. There would then have been the probability to the farmer, instead of farming against a constantly falling price of corn, of having a constantly rising price. But it may be said that had all protection been withdrawn at the close of the war, the race of farmers existing at the time would have been swept from the land by so sudden a change. That it would have been a period of loss to the farmer I will not deny, but one which was unavoidable, and has since taken place to a greater extent. The high prices of the war had not been brought about by legislative interference, but by natural causes, over which parliament had no controul. It had been a period of great prosperity to landlords, and during which farmers had made large

fortunes. It was to both a period of unmixed and gratuitous benefit, and they had not the slightest ground or pretence to ask of the nation to perpetuate such a state of things. They had derived all the profits from the high prices, and when the natural causes of the high prices no longer existed, it was but reasonable and just that high prices should cease. The war had left no taxes or burdens that were not more than shared by the rest of the community; and though some expenses of farming had risen with the high prices, yet most would speedily have fallen and adjusted themselves to low prices. Labour would not perhaps have fallen in the same ratio with corn for reasons which I shall presently give, but horsekeeping, tithes, poor-rates, seed corn, and rents, must all have fallen in a very near proportion to the price of corn. The farmer had not been encouraged by acts of parliament to pay a high rent, nor could he have complained of parliament not doing that which it had never promised to do. The men who had profited most by the high prices might not have been the identical men who were in occupation of their farms in 1815; but then it would have been as fair that the farmers of 1815 should have borne the loss as the farmers of 1822, or the farmers of 1835. But still the loss to the farmer was not a question as to time altogether, it was a question of amount also, for we have had lower prices occasionally since, than we ever should have had with a free trade; and it is also unquestionable that the loss would have been largely shared by the landlord, had it taken place in the first instance.

It will hardly be disputed that the corn laws have not been successful in preventing very low prices of corn, or that they have not succeeded in maintaining a rising price, which, of all things, is of the most essential benefit to the farmer. That a free trade would operate powerfully in accomplishing these ends there are very good reasons to suppose. Upon a view of the situation of this country as to the importation of corn, we find that in years of abundance the prohibitory duties have so operated as to prevent any importation at all, and that the trade in corn has been of such a precarious nature, and of so small an amount, as not to form an article of regular and increasing supply from abroad; and in one year, since the passing of the law of 1828, we have actually been an exporting country. Now the interest of the farmer is to maintain and encourage such an amount of importation as shall, from the increased wealth and population of the country, render it absolutely impossible that the home-growth could ever equal the demand. Let the quantity grown at home be ever so great, it is still the interest of

the farmer that the consumption of the country should be greater. If with a free trade, instead of the present annual importation of one or two millions of quarters, we had five or six millions, it would be impossible that the low prices of 1821 and 1822, or 1835 and 1836, could ever again occur, for it would be impossible, under such circumstances, that we could be an exporting country. Nor would it be a small remuneration to the farmer if, instead of 39s. 4d., the price of wheat in 1835, it were 46s. or 48s., which would be at least the difference between an importing and an exporting price. It is not the interest of the farmer, as our pro-corn law advocates tell us, to be independent of foreigners, and to grow enough for our own consumption, for it is not the interest of the farmer that prices should be the same here as abroad; and it must always be a protection to the farmer that the freights and expenses of sending corn to this country should be incurred by the foreigner, and that at no time we should cease to import corn. That corn would be at a high price under a free trade, I do not think possible, or even desirable, but that it must gradually increase in price, I think the situation and circumstances of this country render probable. Though there is still much waste land in the country capable of being cultivated, and much land already under cultivation capable of improvement, yet the importation required would be very great; and as soon as countries near to England had disposed of their surplus produce, we should have to go further for our supplies, and the more distant the ports from which we have to obtain them the higher must be the freights and expenses. The price of corn would thus be naturally enhanced to the producer in England, and being paid for, as it must be, in manufactured goods of some kind or other, would not be felt as a burden or an injury by the rest of the community. It is not altogether a low price, but the power and liberty to exchange with other countries that we want. The price would then be yielded by willing wealth that is now wrung from poverty, and our landlords and farmers would find to their surprise that there are high prices of two kinds; one caused by deficiency in one particular article, and the other by general abundance of all useful articles. By the first of these two methods of obtaining high prices, they have attempted to benefit their own class, by keeping corn out of the country, and the result has been disappointment to themselves, and misery and suffering to others, by the second mode—by letting corn come into the country, other classes will be benefitted, and will live in ease and abundance; and from this ease and abundance will flow those remunerating and steady

prices, and that prosperity which have in vain been sought for in acts of parliament.

That the prices of corn in this country should have been appealed to in support of the arguments that our corn laws have caused steadiness of price, is indeed strange, when prices in England have been more variable during the last thirty years than those of any country we are acquainted with; and when the variations that have taken place from the highest to the lowest price, under the law of 1815, amount to no less than $199\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and under the law of 1828, to 129 per cent. It may be said that the nature of this country would have given, under any circumstances, a more unsteady price than other countries; but upon examination I think we shall find there are abundant reasons for supposing the contrary to be the case. It cannot be said that a narrow market is more steady than an extended one; nor can it be said that a country would have more steady prices were it excluded so entirely from the rest of the world as to have no importation of corn, whatever might be the wants of the inhabitants; nor can it be said that it is the nature of highly civilized and populous countries to be more variable in price than countries in a rude and barbarous state. The whole tendency of improved cultivation, and a higher and better kind of farming, is to make corn more steady in price, and if any country in the world should have been steady from this cause it is England. From the maritime situation of England, and the great command of a variety of climates, and variety of markets, the argument is still stronger in favour of steady prices, for they are advantages in which respect few countries are similarly situated.

Though it is my opinion that prices would advance slowly under a free trade, yet, should prices remain stationary, there are many reasons to show why the trade of farming would improve under such circumstances. With low rents, low tithes, and low expenses, every improvement that is made in the implements of farming—every improvement that the farmer may himself make in the application or economy of labour, or the rearing or feeding of stock would, in the first instance, redound to his own advantage; and not until a lease or tenancy was expired could the landlord take advantage of the improvements, instead of, as at present, anticipating improvements in the rent. In the natural course of things, when improvements become general, and the price of food reduced in consequence of them, the public reap the benefit, and not the individual farmer making them. But then the farmer, as one of the public, and as a consumer himself, participates in the increased

production, and so also the mechanic or manufacturer, and each and every class of the community who invents and increases the supply of articles useful or agreeable to man, in time surrenders his improvements to the public, and reserves to himself no more than the share necessary to his own individual consumption. In this, and in this way only, can increased production benefit the farmer; and if it can be shown that a steady and constantly increasing supply of corn, at a moderate and remunerating price, is the true interest of the public, there cannot be a doubt but that it is at the same time the true interest of the tenant farmer, and ultimately, the land-owner.

Though the advantage the **FARM LABOURER** would derive from the total and immediate repeal of the corn laws depends generally on the same principles that are necessary for the well-being of the farmer, yet there are other causes called into action which show that the labourer is more interested in a low price than the farmer.

The high price of corn in this country is a proof that in proportion to other articles it has a comparative scarcity, and in order to judge of the results, as affecting the wealth of the country in the particular article of corn, it is necessary to observe the mode in which the high price is brought about. Corn being a necessary of life, has a greater tendency to variation, from a sudden addition or contraction, than a luxury; and a small quantity thrown into the market more than usual, either from the effects of abundant seasons, or increased importation, has a very great effect in lowering prices, and the subtraction of a small portion has also considerable effect in raising prices. Though no very accurate proportion between a deficiency of crop and a rise of price can be established, yet there is a rule, by an old author, who says, that a defect of one-tenth raises the price above the common rate three-tenths, and a deficiency of two-tenths raises the price eight-tenths, and so on, increasing very rapidly with each increased deficiency. But whatever the actual proportion may be, there is no doubt that the principle is correct. To keep corn higher than our neighbours, it is merely necessary for us to keep a portion of corn out of the market, and as we can seldom grow enough for ourselves, the end of raising the price is at once and easily accomplished by prohibiting importation. To say that the deficient quantity is made up by an increase of our home growth, is not the fact, nor ever can be the fact, as long as the price is higher here than in other countries, and no importation allowed. The very

circumstance of a continued high price proves the existence of a continued deficiency; and it may fairly be inferred, that at least one or two millions of quarters of wheat are annually prevented by our corn law from coming into the country and being consumed. Whether this amount of corn was first produced, and then thrown into the sea, to raise the price of the remainder, or whether it is prohibited entering the country by law, is precisely the same thing.

It is not so much my object to prove that the money price of labour should be high, as that the actual condition of the labourer with reference to his command over the necessaries of life must increase with the increase of wealth in a country, and that with each increase of wealth the distribution will be more equal, by the labourer obtaining a larger share of the products of the earth for his own use than before.

The common sense and experience of mankind would tell us that cheap bread is better for a poor man than dear bread; and the first and most obvious answer to the question, why should it be so? is, because it is plentiful—its abundance is the cause of its cheapness. But it is asserted that the labourer's wages are generally reduced to such a price as to enable him to get but little more than the same amount of food at all times, with scarcely any increase in years of abundance. That this is very nearly the case in England is a lamentable fact, and partially but not wholly true. But it is not of what the condition of the labourer is, but of what it might be, that I have to speak. It is not that instances can be quoted which show that people in a state of political servitude and dependence may be constantly and permanently degraded in their situation, whatever may be the price of the necessaries of life. Of these there are unfortunately too many instances; but that other circumstances being equal, the condition of the working man must be advanced by the increased production of any article of his daily consumption, it is impossible to deny; that wages rise with a falling price of corn is the rule,—that they fall is the exception to the rule.

With regard to the distribution of the particular article of corn, through the various classes of society, it may be observed, that there is not much more consumed in the houses of the wealthy in years of abundance than in years of scarcity. The corn over and above the quantity consumed by the farmer or the producer of corn, must be brought to market and sold in course of

time, for it would not keep without injury, and the interest of the money would always prevent corn being held for many years together. Now if it should happen that either from an abundant harvest, or increased importation from abroad, the quantity of corn produced should suddenly or permanently amount to a million or two of quarters more than before, it is clear that the relative quantity of corn compared with the quantity of labourers in existence for the time being is altered. Instead of there being 90 quarters of corn to 100 labourers, there are 100 quarters of corn to 100 labourers. The farmer is a seller of corn, and the labourer is a large buyer and consumer of corn. Here is a bargain to be made between the two parties as to the amount of corn to be given for a certain quantity of work, and the principle that comes into operation here is precisely the same as that of two men going into the market, each with something to sell. One has apples and the other has eggs to dispose of. If apples are abundant and eggs are scarce, the man wishing to obtain eggs for his apples, must give a larger quantity of apples than he would have done if apples had been scarce. This is the principle which regulates the exchange of all commodities, of which man has a surplus to dispose of that he cannot consume himself; and it is this principle which operates in the same way between two men dealing, the one for labour and the other for corn. If corn is abundant, and a man is able to earn as much in four days as will keep him for six, it is not likely that he will give his other two days labour for nothing. Our corn laws alter the relative supply of labour and corn,—our corn laws make a provision that corn shall be less plentiful, but they make no provision that the number of the labourers should not increase—the relative supply of labour and corn is altered, and the consequence to the labourer is that he gets less for his share of the produce of the soil than he otherwise would.

The irregularity of the price of corn has been of serious injury to the labourer in more than one respect, for it has induced the habit on the part of the farmer of lowering the wages of the labourer, and the habit on the part of the labourer of submitting to the reduction. A rise in the price of labour seldom takes place until some time after a rise in the price of corn, and during these periods the habits and modes of living of the labourer are lowered, and many comforts are sacrificed. The condition and habits of the labourer thus reduced enable the farmer to take advantage of a fall in the price of corn;

and, as is generally the case, the wages of the labourer are the first item in a farmer's expenses that the latter begins to curtail. Were the price of corn steady and the habits of the labourer improving, he would not submit to the reduction, and each improvement in agriculture which, under a free trade, would have the effect of lowering prices, would be participated in by the labourer, instead of being as at present entirely absorbed by the landlord and farmer. The labourer would then say—"Why should I continue to work and apply my labour to the land, without an increased share of the increased products, and why should the landlord and farmer, and tithe-owner, usurp all the increased production, and leave me in the same situation that I was in fifty years ago. Improvements in manufactures have made almost all kinds of clothing a third cheaper; we are better clad than our forefathers, why should we not be better fed also?" This would be a very fair argument for a labourer, and serves well to illustrate the effects of monopoly in corn, and free trade in clothing. How often do we hear people say that the working classes are dressing too fine, and above their situation? Why it only shows that articles of dress have become cheaper, and as a natural consequence the poor are better clad than they used to be. There has been no monopoly in manufacturing, and the consequence has been that the public have reaped the benefit. But with food the case is different. Of this there has been a monopoly, and the consequence has been that the people are not better fed than they used to be.

Though the money wages of agricultural labour have in many instances fallen with the price of corn during the last thirty years in England, yet they invariably form in cheap years a larger portion of the expenditure of a farmer than they do in dear years. In the outgoings of one farm with which I am acquainted, I find that the labour in a dear year formed 19 per cent. of the whole outgoings; and in years of comparative cheapness it formed 25 per cent. of the whole outgoings. Thus the labourer in the one case takes 25 per cent. of the produce for his share, and in the other case only 19. Though the proportion may not be the same upon all farms, still, I believe, the principle to be the same; and I have heard farmers say, that in some years of extraordinary cheapness it has taken nearly all their wheat crop to pay the labour. This has sometimes been made an objection among farmers to a repeal of the corn laws; that they

cannot get the price of labour down to a level with the price of corn. It would thus be necessary if the price of corn were to fall much, that rent should fall in a greater ratio to compensate the farmer for the increased proportion of the produce taken off by the labourer. A better proof, perhaps, cannot be given of the poverty and stationary physical existence of the agricultural labourer of this country, than the fact of his having been so habituated to wages rising and falling with the price of provisions, as to be scarcely sensible of the advantage of a steady price of corn. Well did Mr. Burke say—"The squires of Norfolk had dined when they gave it as their opinion that wages ought to rise and fall with the price of provisions." If they really did so it would involve the supposition that the rich alone should share the good things of this life, and that whatever may be the abundance in the land, the poor shall not partake.

The charitable feelings of some landlords and farmers, may at times keep the wages of labour higher than they might otherwise be, but this cannot exist every where, and if it did it would surely be better that the labourer should earn his bread by an honest independence than by the charity of the rich, and that he should obtain his wages as his right, and not as a favour bestowed by the patronage or caprice of the powerful.

America, perhaps, affords a better illustration of the principle that regulates the exchange of labour and food, than is to be found in England. It is a very general opinion, that because America is a newly settled country, the wages of labour are high merely on account of the vast quantity of fertile and uncultivated land, and that as the country becomes more densely peopled, the wages of labour will fall. The supposition usually is, that the reward of labour is highest in newly settled countries, and that with the progress of civilization it usually diminishes. But as far as the history of America will guide us, the very contrary appears to be the case. Instead of the population approaching nearer to the limits of human subsistence, it appears that food has increased faster than the population. The habits of industry, the light taxation, the high intelligence and general education of the people, appear to have rendered their condition as a producing nation the most prosperous on the face of the earth. The price of flour, by which we may obtain a tolerably correct estimate of the costs of other agricultural products,

appears to have gradually fallen in the last forty years. The price of a barrel of flour of 196lbs. appears to have been for the following periods:—

	Dols.	Cts.
From 1795 to 1804	9	37
„ 1805 to 1814	8	24
„ 1815 to 1824	7	44
„ 1825 to 1834	5	36

which would be in our money, per stone of fourteen pounds, for the different periods respectively, about 2s. 9d., 2s. 5d., 2s. 2d., and 1s. 7d.

With other articles of agricultural produce, proportionably cheap, people here who say that wages rise and fall with the price of provisions might imagine that wages were in America about 9s. a week, and that people would be very well satisfied and contented upon that sum. But so far from this being the case, the usual price of a day's labour is now a dollar (4s. 2d.), and this high price appears to have had no connection with the price of flour during the whole of these periods, but to have been constantly increasing while the price of flour has been constantly diminishing. As the result of a certain quantity of labour at given periods, Mr. Carey, of Philadelphia, gives the following. In 1699, as appears from the books of William Penn, according to the price of flour, and the price of a day's work at that time, it would have taken a man,—

To earn a ton of flour 137 days

In 1790, wages being about 3s. a day, and flour having

fallen, it would have taken..... 125 „

And, in 1834, wages having risen to about 4s., and flour

having fallen still further, it would have taken..... 78 „

For an agricultural labourer in England, at the present day, with wages at 9s. a week, which would be about the average, and flour at 2s. a stone, it would require 213 days' labour to obtain a ton of flour.

There is also an absolute necessity for wages being high to enable people to purchase and consume large quantities of food, for if the increased food were not consumed by the working classes, it could not be consumed at all. Had the markets of England been open to the corn of America, there is no doubt but that the price of corn would have been lower in England, and more would have been consumed by the working classes. The proportion consumed by the working classes would have been larger, and the share of the capitalist

less. It would have been a matter of difficulty for the wealthy classes to have kept down the price of labour, even had other circumstances been unfavourable to the labourer. The habits of a people are difficult to break through when once improved by increasing wealth and the enjoyment of new comforts, and it being the tendency of our nature rather to acquire fresh luxuries than to relinquish those already possessed, it is thus that the manners and customs of a people become every day more and more civilised.

The author of some corn tracts, writing in 1765, says—"Bread made of wheat is becoming more generally the food of the labouring people," and the cause of this happy change appears to have arisen from a comparatively low price of corn. There is, indeed, no other cause to which it can be reasonably ascribed. According to Arthur Young, the average price of wheat for 100 years previous to 1700, was 38s. 2d. a quarter, and the average wages of an agricultural labourer were 10½d. a day. For the sixty-six years ending in 1766, the price of wheat was 32s. 1d. a quarter, and the average wages of a labourer were a shilling a day. In the first instance, a man could earn but little more than a bushel of wheat for a week's work, and in the second instance, a bushel and a half. The steady fall in the price of corn appears to have operated favourably for the labourer, and to have done that which a sudden fall could not have effected. Rapid changes in price being, as I have before observed, unfavourable to the labourer, inasmuch as, in dear years, he is deprived of comforts, and, in cheap years, neither his own wants, nor the situation of the farmer will allow of the full advantage.

It may be said that the demand for agricultural labour will be injured, in the event of a repeal of the corn laws, by land being thrown out of cultivation. No intelligent agriculturist, I think, can be found at the present day, who believes that such would be the case. So long as land will pay any rent at all, it is almost needless to observe it will never go out of cultivation. A vast quantity of the waste land, enclosed during the last sixty years, was enclosed when wheat was at 40s. a quarter, and there is no reason to suppose that the same land, which is now improved, will go out of cultivation with wheat, at the same price; and, in order to make the poor or badly cultivated land of England grow more corn, a larger expenditure of labour, rather than a smaller, would be required. The Scotch farmers, who gave evidence before a

committee of the House of Commons, in 1836, all agreed in saying that they could do very well with the prices wheat had been at ~~up to~~ that period, viz.: from 40s. to 48s. a quarter; and they also said that there had been no distress among the farmers *paying corn rents*. Farmers paying money rents had done badly, and many of them ascribed their doing so to the circumstance of the corn laws raising expectations as to prices which were never fulfilled. A repeal of the corn laws might perhaps bring on a system of corn rents and long leases, but this would be beneficial, rather than otherwise, to the farming interest. Of the various items of expenses on a farm there are none, with but few exceptions, and these not amounting to 10s. an acre, that will not bear a strict reduction with the price of corn. Rent, tithes, poor-rates, and even taxes, would fall, and, in the receipts of a farmer, many kinds of produce would rise, such as wool, butter, and cheese, and milk, and all articles which cannot be imported. The landlord would have no cause to complain even if his rent did not bring in so much money as before. He would have his share of the produce of the soil, and in reason and in justice he can no more demand of the legislature to give his share a fictitious value than any other class in the community, and he would derive the same advantages that other classes would derive from lighter taxation, and from the daily improvements in the arts and sciences.

The same causes which led people in America to suppose that the opening of canals connecting the western with the frontier States, would destroy the value of land in the old established States, will affect England as they did the old States in America. By the increased trade that was gained by the old States, the value of land and the value of labour were advanced, and the increased consumption of agricultural produce prevented any material depreciation of price. In the same way would England, by opening her markets to the produce of the world, become the centre of civilization and wealth; and to suppose that in the increase of her wealth, the very large classes, of whom I have more particularly been speaking, will not be participators, is to refuse the experience of history, and to doubt of the principles of human nature.

ARTHUR MORSE

Swaffham, Norfolk, 25th. Oct.. 1842.

Heycraft, Printer, 11, Crown-street, Manchester.

CORN LAWS:

SELECTIONS

FROM

A PLEA FOR THE POOR.

BY THE

HON. AND REV. BAPTIST W. NOEL, M.A.,

MINISTER OF ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW.

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." Ps. xli. 1.

"He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." Prov. xix. 17.

"The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it." Prov. xxix. 7.

"If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not." Isa. lviii. 10, 11.

THE destitute condition of numbers among the labouring classes has been to me for some years one of the most painful subjects of reflection. My professional duties have forced me to witness something of it in London, and from gentlemen habitually occupied in visiting the poor, I have learned much more respecting it. There are many families in the metropolis half starved, the heads of which would willingly work hard to obtain a slender maintenance. In other parts of the country there is equal want. In the summer of 1839, several poor persons, with whom I conversed in Devonshire, assured me that the whole of a poor man's wages, at that time, would scarcely procure dry bread for a family of four or five children. In various agricultural counties, if I am rightly informed, the labourers and their children can scarcely ever touch meat. But the distress among agricultural labourers is not equal to that among many of the operatives in manufacturing districts. It is shocking to look down into the cellars which are tenanted by destitute thousands in the poorer parts of Liverpool and Manchester. The town missionaries in these two towns, who, living entirely among the poor, probably know more of their circumstances than almost any other persons, not excepting even clergymen, assured me last year that the distress which they witnessed in visiting among the people, was wide spread and intense beyond description. How could it be otherwise? I saw some mills closed. Others were working half time; and in the store rooms of several, I saw immense piles of goods heaped up to the very ceilings, for which the manufacturers could find no profitable sale.

* * * * *

"In 1790," says Mr. Slaney, "the number of manufacturers and workmen living in towns

was, to the labourers in country districts, as one to two. In 1840, the proportions have become exactly reversed, and the number of the former are to the latter class as two to one."* The number of families employed in agriculture was, in 1811, 895,998, and in the year 1831, it had only increased to 961,134; while the number of families employed in trade and manufactures, &c., had grown, during that period, from 1,129,049 to 1,434,873;† and on the whole, if Mr. Ward is correct, two millions of persons of agricultural origin, whose parents were employed upon the land, have, since 1811, obtained a livelihood by manufactures.‡ Should our manufacturing industry be repressed, the country labourers, already too numerous, must become an intolerable burden to the parishes; but should our manufactures flourish, many will find employment as domestic servants, porters, warehousemen, artisans, and sailors. The effect of this demand for labourers, must be the same as the effect of a similar demand in towns. While labourers are abundant and labour scarce, the farmer may obtain labourers at the lowest wages which will sustain life; but when labour is abundant and labourers scarce, the labourer can make his own terms. The extension, therefore, of our commerce would speedily be felt by the labourers, who would obtain better wages and enjoy a more comfortable existence. Their number at present pauperizes them; their scarcity would then increase their comforts.

All these advantages, which appear likely to flow, from a reduction of the duty on corn, to English artisans and labourers, would be ex-

* Speech on the State of the Poorer Classes, February 4th, 1840.

† Porter's Progress of the Nation, p. 51.

‡ Speech of Mr. Ward to the Electors of Bedford.

tended also to the labourers of Ireland. Nearly one-third of the poor creatures who are driven by hunger from their native fields to the streets of Liverpool, are constantly, as I have been assured, without employment; in other words, nearly one-third of the Irish population of Liverpool would be found, at any time, to be starving there in damp, dark, and pestiferous cellars. Not only would these find work and food, but many of their countrymen, from the wilds of Connaught and Munster, following them across the channel, would exchange the maddening contemplation of their forced idleness and hopeless want, for the habits of a cheerful and well-paid industry. In the same manner, numbers of them would be required for the lower departments of manufacturing labour throughout the cotton district; while, the farms of Ireland being thus freed from their surplus labourers, wages would rise there as well as in England; and thus the Irish peasantry, now starved when the potato crop fails, and insufficiently fed even in the best potato years, might begin, like the labourers of England, to eat cheap bread, with the potato crop to fall back upon in the years of scarcity.

It seems then clear that cheap bread would secure to the labouring classes of Great Britain and Ireland, more abundant employment, better wages, and a larger share of the comforts of life; and it is most satisfactory to think of the consequences which might result from their improved condition. Thus many would have their lives prolonged, who are now sinking prematurely to the grave from insufficient food. Children, now dwarfed and crippled in their growth from the same cause, would grow up in the enjoyment of ruddy health to a vigorous maturity. The demoralization generally attendant upon hopeless inaction and habitual mendicancy would cease. Parents who now cannot afford to pay anything for their children's education, would then be able to provide for it; and these children, now taken from school the moment that they can earn any thing, however trifling, by their labour, might then remain much longer under instruction. The new poor laws, so wise and wholesome if well administered, would be no longer felt to be a grievance, because there would no longer be able-bodied labourers of good character unemployed, and anxious to obtain relief; and the millions of Chartists who lately carted their enormous petition to the door of the House of Commons, too busy and too comfortable to think of grievances, would no longer hate the constitution and the government, because the one would seem to them beneficent, and the other would have no occasion to be severe.

With these considerations before them, ought not those who have any measure of political power, to hesitate much before they employ it to prevent by law this improvement of the condition of the poor? For the poor do not ask the charity of their countrymen; all they wish is, to be permitted to buy with their own la-

bour what other nations are willing to sell. Left alone, they could feed and clothe themselves, educate their children, and provide for the decrepitude of age. Why should the law step in and say, "You shall neither labour nor eat?" God has provided food for them in other lands; and if no law prevented, they could easily buy it. Can it be right that the law should intercept the bounty of God, and sentence them to perpetual want?

If it be replied that grave interests require this interposition of the law, let me ask what interests? It is not very likely that agriculture would suffer by a reduction of the corn duty, since the Dukes of Bedford and Devonshire, of Sutherland and Cleveland, the Marquis of Westminster, Lord Leicester, Lord Spencer, and Lord Fitzwilliam, are all favourable to the change. Too much interested in this question on account of their large possessions to adopt an opinion hastily, and too enlightened to be easily deceived, they yet believe that the change is safe; and their opinion is surely entitled to the very highest respect. Indeed, why should not competition do in this case what it has done in every other? Imaginary alarms and forebodings, never to be realized, have attended every relaxation of the system of monopoly. The East India Company opposed the opening of the trade with India in 1814, predicting the ruin of the trade, yet the exports of Great Britain to that country only increased by the change. The shipowners, in 1815, opposed Mr. Harrison's inroads upon our navigation laws, and yet his measures have been proved to be wise. In 1824 the silk manufacturers predicted the ruin of the silk trade, if the duties on silk should be lowered, and foreign manufactured silks be admitted; yet the effect of those measures was, that the average consumption of raw and thrown silk, which had been in the ten years preceding 1824 under the protective system 1,940,902 lbs. became, in the twelve years following 1824, under a partial freedom of trade, 4,164,444 lbs. Similar reductions on various raw materials of manufacture have been attended with equal success.* To turn from innovations in trade to others of a different character, I may ask what great legislative improvement has not been met by fierce opposition and numerous predictions of mischief? It was not without repeated struggles that Mr. Wilberforce was enabled to secure the admission of Christian missionaries into British India. The slave trade was obstinately defended. For many years the apprehensions of West India planters and merchants rivetted the fetters of the slave; and even to this day the fears excited by Catholic emancipation, and by the reform bill, have not wholly subsided. If other great improvements have given rise to visionary alarms, the fears excited by the proposed change in the Corn Laws may be also visionary; if in other processes of industry,

* See Report to the Chamber of Commerce at Manchester, upon restrictions in trade.

competition, though strongly deprecated, has proved advantageous, it may also be serviceable in the production of corn, and lead generally to a more scientific and less costly cultivation of the land.

* * * * *

Is it not more generous to protect the weak than the strong, those who have no political power than those who have much? If rents are the rich man's property, labour is the poor man's; and while poor men do and must pay much of the direct taxes of the country, because the most productive taxes must be ever those which are laid on articles of general consumption; is it right that their labour should be taken from them, by an indirect taxation which limits employment and depresses wages? The spirit of our constitution is to protect the poor: why else are houses beneath a certain price not rateable, and carts and ponies beneath a certain size not taxed? And still more it is the genius of the gospel to protect them. The reign of the expected Messiah was thus prophetically described by David: "He shall judge the poor of his people; he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor." "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also and him that hath no helper." "He shall spare the poor and the needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight." Agreeably, therefore, both to the practice of the legislature, and what is infinitely more to be regarded, the will of Christ, should the weak and the poor be freed from those artificial restraints upon their industry, and that unproductive taxation of their food, which without serving the country, inflicts suffering on them.

Some persons think, indeed, that the country has prospered under the existing Corn Laws; that the repeal of them, without being advantageous to the poorer classes, would involve other classes in ruin, and that other remedies should therefore be sought for the distress occasioned by the present depression of trade.

In proof of the prosperity occasioned by these laws, it has been alleged that our exports and imports have increased between the years 1830 and 1839; the former from the value of £39,000,000 to £53,000,000 and the latter from £46,000,000 to £62,000,000.

* * * * *

Meanwhile the annual additions to the population of the United Kingdom have been nearly as follows:

In Great Britain (14 per cent on 16,530,318)	248,000
Ireland (1.45 per cent on 7,767,401)	165,000
In the United Kingdom	413,000
Total Increase in the Nine Years	3,717,000

It appears then that there are 3,717,000* more persons to be maintained at present, than there were in 1830. Of these very few can be maintained by agriculture, for although

the quantity of produce raised has also been greatly increased of late years, yet, owing to the improvements in agriculture, this has been effected with a very slight addition to the number of labourers.

The number of agricultural families in Great Britain, which amounted in 1811 to 895,928, had only increased in 1831 to 961,134, which is at the rate of 3256 families; or, reckoning five to a family, at the rate of 16,380 persons, each year. But the population of Great Britain, in the same period, grew from 12,609,864 to 16,529,818, i.e. at the same rate of 195,972 each year. Every year therefore 179,592 persons were added to the population, none of whom could be maintained by agriculture; and in the whole 20 years, 3,854,318 persons had been added beyond those who could be so maintained. There is moreover reason to believe, that the numbers now added to the agricultural families will be less than formerly, because a large proportion of profitable wastes have already been brought into cultivation. Accordingly the number of agricultural families, which in 1821 amounted to 978,656, had decreased in 1831 to 961,134; and Ireland is likewise over-stocked with labourers. Meanwhile the population of the United Kingdom is now increasing at the rate of 400,000 per annum; and since nearly the whole of these must be maintained by commerce and manufactures, the alleged increase of exports amounting to the value of £14,000,000 in nine years, which is at the rate of £1,555,000 per annum, may still leave a vast number of persons unemployed, and allow a constant increase of permanent distress. To justify the present Corn Laws, it should be shown either that the amount of employment has grown faster than the population, or that if the population has been outgrowing the means of employing them, that the want of employment has not in any degree arisen from the operation of the Corn Laws. But if each workman can, on an average, manufacture annually goods to the value of £200, these additional exports have employed annually not more than 7775 additional workmen. And as the whole additional population was in each year 400,000, it is obvious, that population may still have outgrown employment.

On the other hand, the want of employment has unquestionable been aggravated by the Corn Laws. Why were the average annual exports to the whole of Europe in the five years ending in 1836, less in value by nearly 20 per cent., than they were in the five years that followed the war? Because we would not allow the continent to pay for our goods with corn. Why have we been exporting large quantities of iron, steel, coals, linen, and woollen yarns, cotton twist, and machinery, to enable them to manufacture for themselves against their own interest, dearer and worse goods than they could buy of us? Because they could only pay for ours by their corn, and we would not permit them. Why has the value of fin-

* M'Culloch's Statistics, i. 443.

ished cotton goods exported to the countries of northern Europe, sunk from £4,651,681, which was its amount in 1820, to £1,607,900, which was its amount in 1838? Because by refusing to take their corn, we forced them to manufacture their goods for themselves.

Notwithstanding the Corn Laws, the industry and skill of English artisans has extended our commerce with distant nations, from whom we obtained other produce besides corn; but owing to these laws, the corn-growing nations, who from their proximity, numbers, and civilization, ought to have been our best customers, have been our worst; and although the extension of our commerce has not been entirely prevented by them, it has been so restricted as to leave a large mass of poor unemployed.

* * * * *

Nor would the farmer and the landlord suffer either from low prices or any change of cultivation, as I shall have occasion to show. The foreign market would not therefore be a substitute for the home market, but an addition to it, and the workmen will clearly have more employment and better wages.

But will the labourers derive equal advantage from the change? It seems clear that they will. In the opinion of persons of the highest authority, there will be very little loss of employment from lands being thrown out of cultivation. Mr. M'Culloch, of whom Sir Robert Peel said, in his late speech at Tamworth, that he is "one of the most intelligent and able advocates of a fixed duty," who "takes a dispassionate and able view of the case in question," "looks at it calmly, and reasons upon it closely and deliberately," "a clever and able man," writes thus, in the pamphlet which Sir R. Peel so justly eulogized: "*The truth is, that the agriculturists have nothing to fear even from the total and unconditional repeal of the corn laws. It admits of demonstration that it could do them no real injury. It would not throw an acre of land out of cultivation, nor sensibly affect rent.*" Mr. Porter, whose intelligent and assiduous researches into the progress of the nation are so well known, referring to the fears of some agriculturists that land would be thrown out of cultivation, adds, "It is because I am firmly convinced that there is no reasonable ground for these fears,—that, on the contrary, there can be no permanent prosperity for the agricultural classes in this country, so long as any semblance of artificial protection is continued to them, that I am induced to bring forward on this occasion my contribution towards the efforts in progress for a total repeal of the Corn Laws."*

Mr. Woolrych Whitmore, late member for Bridgenorth, who has spent his life in agriculture, derives all his income from land, has reflected many years upon the subject, and writes with equal calmness and sense; in his "Letter to the Agriculturists,"

Porter's Restrictions on the importation of Corn, page 11.

writes thus: "That a great change in the Corn Laws is now probable, I need not attempt to prove. My conviction is, that it is not only probable, but certain; and that at no remote date. Whatever may be the result of this subject in the House of Commons;... I have that confidence in the strength of the case, and in the overpowering force of public opinion in this country, when really brought to bear upon any important matter, that I entertain no doubt of the issue. That issue will be a complete change in the present system of the Corn Laws... and my conviction is, that, although this, like all other great changes, will produce at first some loss and inconvenience to individuals, it will, in the end, be found no less beneficial to your, or rather, I should say, linked as our interests are together, *our* interests, than to the rest of the community."

"If we do change this law, and at the same time, modify, with a view to the ultimate adoption of the principles of free trade, the rest of our commercial code, there is no degree of national prosperity which we may not expect; if we do not, if we are determined blindly to persevere in every species of vexatious impost and monopoly, of which the Corn Laws, as they afford the most flagrant instance, so are they the ground-work and support, we shall assuredly, at no distant period, reap the bitter fruits of our own folly, and see the prosperity we might have enjoyed pass away to other lands." "I entertain no doubt that every interest in this country, including the agricultural, would be essentially benefited by an immediate change and ultimate repeal of the Corn Laws."*

Lastly, Lord Fitzwilliam, with immense estates to be affected by the change, and an excellent understanding to judge of its probable effects, not only shares in these opinions but has most actively promoted them. When persons so competent to judge, and so far removed from all suspicion of self-interest, concur in these opinions, with many of the most intelligent men in the kingdom, there seems little reason to apprehend that any lands will be thrown out of cultivation. Could this take place, it must be by such a fall in prices, as would give an enormous extension to our trade, and diffuse unparalleled comforts among all the working classes; but those whose incomes depend upon poor land, need be under no such apprehensions. It is impossible, as various writers have shown, that prices should fall to such an extent.

But should no land be thrown out of cultivation, landowners, farmers, and labourers, would all be gainers by the change.

1. The lowered price of corn would tend to diminish rents, but as the prices of all other things would fall in the same proportion, the diminished rent would be as valuable as the higher rent had been, for the purchase of all the comforts and luxuries of life. So far, therefore, the landowners

* Whitmore's Letter, p. 10, 24.

would be no losers. But, in other respects, they would be considerable gainers. The improved condition of the people would extremely reduce the poor rates. The increase of trade, by adding to the revenue, would lighten taxation, and the relief from these burdens would enable the farmer to pay a higher rent. This effect would also follow from the increased value of all kind of grass produce. Every one has observed how large a proportion of the land near great cities is turned into pasture, because of the demand for such produce. In the event of a repeal of the Corn Laws, there would be a similar demand throughout the country. The working classes, fully employed and well paid, would require more milk, butter, and cheese, more meat and leather; and arable lands would, in many cases, be turned into pasture, not because the corn would pay worse than it does now, but because grass would pay better. But, as pasture requires fewer hands than corn lands, the gross returns being equal, the farmer would be a gainer by the change, and would be enabled to pay a higher rent. Lastly, while the artificial stimulus afforded by high prices has thrown an undue proportion of land into corn cultivation, by which manure has been rendered scarce, the abundance and cheapness of manure arising from this change would render arable lands more productive, and their cultivation less costly, thereby enabling the farmer to bear a still higher rent. Taking all these important circumstances into consideration, the reduction of the rates, the removal of taxes, the increased value of grass produce, and the saving in the cultivation of corn, can we doubt that the farmers would be well able to bear a rent which, though absolutely less, would be, as compared with prices, greater than before?

In the next place, the farmers would have their share in the advantages to be derived from the repeal. Nothing can be more ruinous to them than the fluctuations in price occasioned by the present laws. In the years 1829, 1830, 1831, the average prices of wheat in the London Gazette were 60, 64, and 66 shillings. Such high prices would tempt the farmers to bid high for any farms which were then to be let. But these prices also led, first, to a large importation of foreign wheat; and, secondly, to an undue cultivation of wheat at home. Hence, when in the years 1834 and 1835, the prices fell to 46 and 40 shillings, numbers of those farmers who had engaged to pay those high rents must have been reduced to the greatest distress. A fixed and moderate price, enabling the farmer to know what would be a fair rent, would save him from that unwholesome speculation, and from those terrible reverses. Under the repeal of the existing Corn Laws, the farmer would also be in a better condition to make terms with his landlord. We have seen that he would be enabled to pay a higher rent without inconvenience, but any rent which was unfair he would be able to refuse. When respectable situations are very

scarce, the children of a farmer, rather than sink down into the condition of farm servants, will consent to almost any rent which may be proposed. The competition among them for farms raises rent, as the competition among labourers for employment depresses wages. But an extension of our manufactures and commerce, providing situations for a farmer's children, as well as employment for the labourer's, must change the competition among young men for farms into a competition among landlords for tenants; hence rents will be kept down.

But the proposed change would be still more certainly beneficial to the labourers. A certain proportion of arable land being turned into pasture would lessen the amount of agricultural employment; but, meanwhile, an *unlimited* extension of our commerce would so much enlarge manufacturing and mercantile employment as to drain the country of all its superfluous labourers; and this must increase the comforts of the poor, for as rents will be kept down, not by the liberality of the landowners, but by the increased number of situations open to the children of farmers, so wages will rise, not from the liberality of the farmer, but by the increased amount of employment for the poor. The farmer will indeed be prospering; but, should he be distressed, the poor will not suffer, for so long as cultivation at all repays him, he will continue to cultivate his land: if he cultivates it, he must employ labourers, and if labourers are scarce, he must pay them equitable wages. So likewise the landowner will indeed be deriving better rents than before from his land; but, should these anticipations not be verified, his loss of rent could not in the least affect the working class, for his whole loss of rent arising from the increase of their wages, all that he lost would be gained by them. He would have less to spend, but they would have more: his diminished power of charitable contribution would be of less moment to them than their increased power to provide for themselves. Higher wages would far more than compensate for diminished alms; and whatever might be his own loss, every equitable and humane landlord would feel that he would have no right, merely for the increase of his income, to take, by the force of law, from the cultivators of the soil, more than he could have obtained from them without that artificial aid. The advantage, therefore, to the working classes, though happily coincident with the prosperity of the farmer and the landlord, would not be dependent upon it. The change must bring them better wages and greater comforts, whatever else may happen from it.

As we have now seen that the working classes would be great gainers by the change from an artificial to a natural state, which should leave them the right of buying corn in exchange for their labour, let us consider whether this change is, on other accounts, inconvenient or dangerous.

Because large supplies of foreign corn have, of late years, been paid for in bullion, it has

been argued, that they would still be so paid, were the duty fixed or altogether removed. But this is a mistake. Under the present law, the duties are so heavy that corn cannot be imported till the price is extravagantly high: when, therefore, the price rises, it stimulates to increased production; and over-production again unduly depresses the price. Besides the ruin which this brings upon farmers, it renders an exchange of foreign corn for English goods impossible. 1,491,631 quarters of wheat and flour were required in 1831, and 30,046 in 1836. Thus the stimulant given to the cultivation of corn by the high price of 1831 led to the low prices of 1835, 1836, and 1837. By these low prices, the foreigner is shut out of the market, and, consequently, can take no English goods. When the low prices have again reduced the quantity of corn, and a bad harvest ensues, then there is a sudden demand for foreign corn, but it cannot instantly create a corresponding demand for English goods, and the corn must be paid for in bullion. But the drain of bullion, which is the effect of the present sliding scale, would cease upon the duty being fixed or removed.

There is little need to anticipate the indisposition of foreigners to take our goods. As we wish to get their corn because it is cheap, they likewise wish to get our goods because they are cheap. If their surplus population can be more profitably employed on land than in manufactures, as ours can be more profitably employed in manufactures than on land, they will be as eager for the change as we.

It is as much the interest of the Germans or French to obtain cheap clothes as it is our interest to obtain cheap corn; and it is as much the interest of the merchants to obtain a profit upon English goods in the foreign market as it is to obtain a profit upon foreign corn in the English market. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce has satisfactorily shown, in its recent report on the injurious effects of restrictions on trade, that there is no indisposition in foreign nations to trade with us, their forced manufactures and their prohibitory duties being entirely the result of our own restrictive policy.

This has been repeatedly declared by foreign officials. The Prussian Government especially, in 1823, declared by its minister, "that reciprocal commercial restrictions were reciprocal nuisances, prejudicial to all nations having reciprocal interests, and particularly to those engaged in extensive commerce; and that the policy of Prussia was to substitute in the place of reciprocal prohibitions, reciprocal facilities."* Only let us be wise enough to see our interests, and they will not be so blind as to mistake theirs.

Should this trade be established, it is further impossible to conceive that foreign governments should lay prohibitory duties upon the export of their corn. France has prohibited that export, because our sudden and fitful de-

mands only did her mischief; but for corn-growing nations generally to lay a heavy duty upon the export of corn would be the same thing as for us to lay a heavy duty upon the export of calicoes. No foreign government would be unwise enough to act thus. Besides, if they did, what would be the consequence? Such a duty at Dantzic would drive our corn-merchants to Hamburg or the United States, and sentence Polish corn lands to lie idle; in other words, it would injure their landowners, without benefiting their government. Under these circumstances, no government would make the ruinous experiment; and we may be sure, that these corn-growing countries will very gladly welcome our traders upon equal terms.

It has been further said, that it is dangerous to England to be dependent upon other nations for its food. But the idea of independence seems to me chimerical. Not to insist upon the fact, that under the present system there is occasionally such a demand for foreign corn, from the inadequate supply at home, that the entries of foreign corn, for home consumption, during the year 1839, amounted to 2,681,390 quarters, for which the sliding scale forced the country to pay in bullion, let us bear in mind, that we are not now, and cannot be, independent of foreign countries.

If we do not get our corn from other lands, we must obtain from them our cotton, fine wool, and silk. Stop these supplies, and the disaster to the country would be little short of any which could possibly arise from the suspension of a trade in corn. Upon the arrival of such a catastrophe, the cotton, woollen, and silk mills of Great Britain must stop. The ships which supply them with their raw materials must discharge their crews, and millions of the working classes employed by spinners, weavers, bleachers, printers, and owners of warehouses, must be thrown out of work. In such circumstances, who would feed these starving millions, without employment and without money? There might be corn in the country, but how could they get it? There has been corn in the country during some of those famines which have periodically visited Ireland, but the peasantry did not get it; and there was rice in Bengal, when thousands were dying of famine, not long since, in Agra, but the labourers did not get it. On such occasions charity is inadequate. Government wants power to meet the evil, and the necessitous starve. The barns of Kent and Essex might be filled with corn, but the Lancashire artisan would still perish in his hunger. Meanwhile, all imports ceasing, and £20,000,000 of customs being withdrawn from the revenue, the nation would be bankrupt, canals would be overgrown with weeds, and roads become impassable, because there would be no trade to keep them open. The rates would be overwhelming, because the poor would be unemployed; the farmers would be ruined, because their produce would be unsaleable; and finally,

* Report to the Chamber of Commerce, p. 19.

the same ruin would seize on those landowners to whom our manufactures and commerce have given such princely incomes, as are unknown in any country which is merely agricultural.

To this dependence upon foreign nations, it would add very little that we should import any quantity of corn. If their interests secure to us a supply of cotton, they would much more secure a supply of wheat. For cotton may be sometimes held back with advantage, but wheat, which is much more perishable, must be sold speedily. Our dependence is not, therefore, greater in the one case than the other; nor would our danger from this dependence be much increased in a time of war. Hostilities would not necessarily suspend our trade with any country. If, for instance, we were at war with Russia, and that government should attempt to shut against us the port of Dantzic, the clamours of the Poles to be relieved of their crops, then rotting in the ground, would probably open it again: or should that government be in such a case unwise enough to reject the prayer of its subjects, the rest of Europe would be ready to supply us. Europe failing, we could obtain any conceivable quantity, at moderate prices, from Virginia, and from the valley of the Mississippi: and should we be even excluded from those countries, there is the rest of the world before us still.

In the event, therefore, of war with any corn-growing nation, we have little cause to fear for our supplies, but in truth one great argument for increasing as much as possible this mutual dependence of nations on each other, is, that it affords the best possible guarantee against the recurrence of war. Who can doubt that the important commercial relations between Great Britain and the United States, exercised lately a considerable influence in both nations upon the question of peace or war. And the same relations between any countries would always exercise a similar influence upon them. Nations united by important interests will not quarrel about trifles, nor suffer the ambition of military glory to hurry them into an expenditure of men and money, which would exhaust their treasury, disturb their commerce, and cripple their resources.

War may be the game of ambitious potentates, but it is the horror of commercial communities; and an extensive commerce between civilized nations is therefore one of the best securities for the peace of Europe and of the world.

* * * * *

Should such imaginary dangers be allowed to intercept the relief which this wise measure would afford to the working classes, what other remedies can be applied to their permanent and growing distress? It has been proposed to afford increased facilities for emigration, and every enlightened friend of his country would rejoice to see this done. Let those who have sense and courage seek happier homes, if they will, under fairer skies and on less crowded shores. Let new-born nations,

on the most distant wastes of the earth, give to our language, laws, literature, and religion, an almost ubiquitous influence on the world. But this vent for a distressed population must be always unsatisfactory and inadequate: unsatisfactory, because most of those who expatriate themselves would do it with the greatest pain; and inadequate, because the poorer classes, having generally less enterprise than more educated persons of the middle class, can never be induced in sufficient numbers to make the experiment. Besides, if they were disposed to submit to voluntary exile, they have not the means. Large funds would be required; and, instead of having some millions at command, the government has to provide for a deficiency in the revenue. Direct taxes have failed to afford the necessary supplies; and whence is the money to come by which 400,000 persons are annually to be enabled to emigrate? If this difficulty were removed there are others behind. The prosperity of a new colony depends on the proper proportion being maintained between capital and labour; and if the number of labourers greatly exceeded the right proportion, so that there were no persons with capital to employ them, they would be landed on the edge of the wilderness simply to die of want. Alone, therefore, emigration can never be an adequate remedy for the prevailing distress, until there is a much greater disposition among the wealthier classes to emigrate than has ever yet been manifested. Nor even then would the proposal be in the least applicable to a manufacturing population; a colonist to Canada, Australia, or New Zealand, should be a carpenter, a bricklayer, a smith, or an agriculturist. Those colonies are not about to raise factories; and spinners or weavers would be as much out of place among them as a hedger and ditcher would be in one of Mr. Birley's mills in Manchester. For manufacturers to emigrate in numbers to distant agricultural colonies, without the slightest knowledge of the arts by which alone the colonists can live, would be to commit suicide.

One other remedy has been proposed. A distinguished opponent of the repeal of the present Corn Laws, after describing the present sufferings of the manufacturers, their lowered wages, and their increasing numbers, adds, "I confess it is frightful to contemplate such a state of things and of society, but it can no longer be concealed; *and yet the only remedy seems to be, to diminish their sources of employment*, in order to produce future or permanent good. Inadequate employment has stripped their dwellings bare, driven them to dark cellars, loaded the pawnbrokers' shops with their pledged property, taken the clothes from their backs, crowded the hospitals, withered their limbs, and broken their spirits; and when it is utterly impossible that they should emigrate, and would be fatal to them if they could, the only means suggested for the alleviation of their misery is, that there should be a greater diminution of their sources of employ-

ment." However benevolent the intentions of the writer may be, the effect of his proposal would be very similar to that mentioned by Mr. Carlyle, as made "in grim earnest," in a pamphlet bought by him in a chartist shop, "that all the children of the working people, after the third, be disposed of by painless extinction." It would be a remedy for a redundant population, exactly like a plague at Constantinople, or a famine in Bengal. No humane person who allows himself to reflect, could long entertain it. And yet there is an opinion too nearly resembling it, sometimes expressed by well meaning persons, that we ought to keep up the agricultural population, and prevent the multiplication of great manufacturing towns, with all their disagreeable accompaniments of dirt, and smoke, and noise. But this opinion is surely thoughtless. The population of Great Britain and Ireland is at present growing, by an annual addition of 400,000. The land is already so thoroughly cultivated, that while the number of families in Great Britain employed in agriculture in 1821 was 978,656, the number employed in the same manner in 1831 was reduced to 961,134. The land, therefore, cannot employ the additional population; and to endeavour to prevent the multiplication of towns, and the extension of manufactories, is to endeavour to secure that the whole additional population of Great Britain and Ireland should be without employment and without food. On other grounds, too, the wish has more in it of romance than of wisdom. Manufacturing towns, though they have not the woodbined cottage and the clear stream, the scent of flowers, and the song of birds, have much that is not less attractive to a benevolent mind. They have crowding congregations of thoughtful worshippers; they have unrivalled Sunday-schools, in some of which there are from 100 to 200 regular communicants among the teachers and the pupils; and those who have seen the cottages of Mr. Ashton's workmen, at Hyde, Mr. Bright's, at Rochdale, and Mr. Ashworth's, at Bank Top, near Bolton, well know that the best ordered villages in England cannot furnish dwellings more clean or convenient, or with better furniture, or, in ordinary times, with a more thriving population.

Of these two remedies, then, the one being inadequate, and the other cruel, we are driven back to the proposed change in the Corn Laws. Four hundred and thirteen thousand persons added every year to the population of the king-

dora, must be employed. Emigration cannot employ them, agriculture cannot, and manufactures can. With the Corn Laws, they must starve; emancipated from them, they will prosper. Cheap bread and a regular commerce with other countries, will feed the people, supply the exchequer, promote morality, lessen the chance of war, and injure no one. In the name, then, of the unemployed poor, whose sufferings I have witnessed; on behalf of the depressed artisan, the ill-fed labourer, and the starving Irish peasant, I entreat every religious landowner, clergyman, or member of parliament, who may honour these humble pages with a perusal, to reflect seriously, and to pause long, ere he uses his influence to prolong the existence of those laws, which, in the actual condition of our country, must lead to such calamitous results.

When our Redeemer preached the gospel to the multitudes who followed him, he also healed their diseases and supplied their wants. Like him, his disciples should seize with joy the opportunity of affording a relief to the necessitous, compared with which all the charitable contributions of England are absolutely insignificant. Myriads of the working classes, whose interests are especially at stake, have implored the legislature, not to vote them any public money, not to give them any unfair advantage over others, not to invade private property, but to break off the fetters which the law has laid upon their industry; to restore them their natural liberty to purchase bread in return for the produce of their labour; to permit them to maintain their families by honest and laborious exertion.

For no fault of theirs, they are suffering the pain of hunger, with all the physical and moral evils which accompany it. God has provided for them corn, not in their own crowded country, but in others less densely peopled. They have the ability to buy it by their labour, if the law forbids not; and the restoration of their natural right will invigorate every branch of British industry. Generously, therefore, as becomes the disciples of Christ, let every Christian reader overcome all party spirit, silence each ignorant prejudice, and, trampling on the suggestions of a short-sighted self-interest, labour with every friend of his country to effect that extension of our trade which, while it improves the condition of the working classes, will open the prospect of unbounded prosperity to the whole nation.

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CORN LAWS.

SELECTIONS

FROM

MRS. LOUDON'S PHILANTHROPIC ECONOMY.*

"We measure our horses' oats to them, in return for their labour, by the feed, not by any money price, which circumstances may put on their services. Why are we thus just to them? Because they are our property; if they die, we lose money. But if we can cheat the poor operative with nominal wages, while we put such a price on corn, and all other necessities, that he can buy but half a feed, when he should have had a whole feed, we let him take his chance, put himself on short allowance if he chooses, or work the harder; should he die in the effort, we lose nothing, we do not even suffer inconvenience; there are other labourers in the market place, who will do our work as well."—p. 73.

"What nation will the most rapidly, and most surely become wealthy, not in the mere conventional mediums of exchange, lying in motionless masses; but in true national wealth, that is, in the ability of the greatest number of its inhabitants, to enjoy the greatest quantity of necessities, comforts, and decencies?"

"That nation which is itself a skillful and adroit manufacturing community, and which can obtain, in exchange for the products of the skill and labour of its inhabitants, the greatest quantities of food to sustain them while at work, and of raw material to which again to add a new value, by new labour, and again exchange for a new profit.

"Does the artificial price, paid to the home monopolist, take wealth out of the kingdom? No; it only, like any other fraud, or breach of the principle of goodwill to all, transfers wealth unjustly from one portion of the community to another. In its immediate consequences, therefore, it neither increases nor decreases the existing

national fund. But we must look at its remoter consequences; if the artificial price, paid to the monopolist, whether home or foreign, be on food, or raw material, and that the goods to be manufactured are intended for any foreign market open to the competition of goods produced by those who do not pay a monopoly price for food or raw material, the labourer and capitalist must abate a portion of that part of the price of the article, which they might else have divided between them, as the wages of labour, and profit on capital; or they must give up the market, and bring their goods home again. But, if the wrought goods thus rendered useless in the foreign market, are sold much under their value in the home market, will national wealth be thereby increased, or decreased?"

"Of existing wealth, itself, the transaction would be but another unjust transfer; but of the end of wealth—happiness—it would occasion considerable loss, by depriving many of subsistence, to bestow needless luxuries upon others. Of future wealth, it would also occasion incalculable loss, by causing large portions of the seeds of wealth to be consumed, without yielding the usual increase, and thus hindering the growth of national wealth, almost indefinitely."—p. 81, 82.

"Were the importation of food freely permitted, in return for value added to raw material by manufacturing labour, not only each factory workman, but each poor factory child, who could thus by certain movements of its tiny fingers, fill, as by enchantment, our granaries with the rich harvest, wafted from the fertile vale of the Mississippi, would become a sort of modern representative of the fabled old Aladin himself, with his 'Wonderful Lamp,' who,

by the simple friction of his hand on the magic talisman, could summon his attendant Genii around him, and cover the festive board with supernatural abundance. For, inasmuch as the movements of the child's fingers give to the raw cotton the surplus value it acquires when wrought, whatever corn that surplus value purchases, which did not grow on territory belonging to the nation, is, as far as the nation is concerned, as much the absolute creation of those movements, out of nothing; that is, without territory to be produced upon, as though the sheaves of wheat came in obedience to a supernatural summons, wafted on fairy wings, from a world of enchantment."—p. 92, 93.

"Oh! the time will come, some generations hence, perhaps, when an Englishman's greatest anxiety will be to prove that he is not descended from any one of those whose names will then appear marked with obloquy on the pages of history, as having, in the great assembly of legislators to whom the people of England had confided the guardianship of their rights, lifted up their voices, and in the presence of their Maker and the nation, uttered sounding sophisms, with a view, to gaining over a majority of the unwary, the uninformed, or the unprincipled, to join them in trampling upon those rights which they had one and all undertaken to protect!"—p. 123, 124.

"Such being the advanced state of public opinion, nay, the results of anxious research, the deductions from close reasoning on these important points, being, as they now are, reduced to self-evident propositions, and dispersed throughout the country in almost every journal of the day, leaving to none the excuse of ignorance, it becomes matter for amazement that there should yet be found a man so hardened in selfishness, so steed against shame, as to lift up his voice in defence of that blight on every harvest which grows for Englishmen! that Egyptian seven years of scarcity, rendered by act of parliament perpetual; that doubling of the primeval curse by the edict of men, the corn laws! A scarcity of the first necessary of life, established by act of parliament; by the votes of the guardians of the welfare of the community! Is it not monstrous? Twenty-five millions of the people consuming only bread sufficient for eighteen millions; the deficiency not equally divided, but falling wholly on one class, that class the creators of plenty, the industrious poor. The class who voted for the monopoly, who benefit by the monopoly, and who, therefore, can afford to pay the monopoly price, enjoying, in the midst of this dearth of their own creating, 'bread

enough, and to spare.' And not for their personal sustenance only, but also for the use, in the most wasteful profusion, of numerous non-productive establishments, consisting of all creatures or things, that can in any way contribute to their luxury, or to their vanity. 'The horses will not be fit to be seen in the carriage, unless they get their full complement of corn,' says the rich man's coachman. But who cares how wretched the double-worked, half-fed operative looks! And yet, it is our boast that we are a Christian nation; and those very animals whose sleek appearance ostentation renders more important in our eyes, than the lives and comforts of our fellow-men, are employed to draw us to the house of God, the God of equal justice, flowing from good will to all!

"Great Britain has been compared to a ship at sea, short of provisions, and not allowed to touch at any port where provisions may be had. But her case is even worse than this, for though her crew are kept on short allowance, her wardroom officers are feasting sumptuously every day, while those very officers are they who will not allow her to touch at any port where plenty may be had, because the majority of them are pursers, and have themselves the selling of the short allowance to the crew—all the dearer for being short!

"The Saviour of mankind, in setting us an example that we should follow his steps, blessed a few small loaves, and by his divine mandate made them sufficient to feed five thousand people. The parliament of Christian England follows this example—How?

"By cursing the bread of twenty-five millions of people, and changing, by their word, each poor labourer's portion into half of that which his Creator has furnished him with the natural means of obtaining for himself.

"Surely as much food as a man can buy, with as much wages as a man can get, for as much work as a man can do, is not more than the natural, unalienable birthright of every man whom God has created with strength to labour, and with hands to work. Is it, or is it not, an infringement of this right, to compel our labourers, by Act of Parliament, by law, to give as much money for half a sack of wheat, as they could purchase a whole sack of wheat for, did no such Act of Parliament, no such abuse of brief authority, no such breach of the principle of equal justice flowing from good-will to all, no such law exist? That law, too, made law by the votes of those who put the difference into their own pockets. As Lord Fitzwilliam justly, yet in his own

too temperate language, says: "The mere circumstance of our being the most extensive proprietors, is no argument for bestowing upon as any peculiar protection. It is probably the cause of our having obtained it; but may it not have been conceded to our influence, rather than to our arguments?"—p. 127—130.

"The pastoral poets, indeed, of our agricultural meetings, sometimes remind us, in sylvan strains, that corn fields, agricultural labourers, and sheaves of wheat, are much prettier, and more picturesque objects than factories, steam-engines, and spinning-jennies.—Granted freely! But we have not the choice. It was not the will of heaven to cast our lot on a great continent, with tracts of unappropriated territory in our rear, to fall back upon, and cultivate, in proportion as we multiply. It is only, therefore, by keeping ahead of the rest of the world in manufacturing skill and industry, and obtaining from foreign soils, in exchange for our manufactured goods, unlimited supplies of cheap food, and cheap raw material, that we can rise above our natural deficiency of surface, and become, though but a little island, the capital of great continents. Should we choose to follow a contrary policy, we must give up the vain and painful struggle, at the crisis of which we have now arrived; emigrate as fast as we increase, and content ourselves with being, what nature intended for us, a speck among the great nations of the earth.

"But we cannot eat gold, or silver, or printed calicoes, or Birmingham hardware, say the landowners; it is agricultural labour therefore, which should be encouraged; modes of making land productive, which should be thought of.

"The following, then, is a receipt for making one acre of land, produce more quarters of wheat, than ever grew on the greatest and best managed farm in the world.

"First, Abolish the Corn Laws.

"Then, take an acre of ground, (let it be the worst acre of ground in England,) and erect upon it an extensive factory. What, on an average, will be the amount of the wages each year, of all the hands employed within the walls of this factory? What, on an average, the amount of the clear yearly profits of the master of the factory?

"How many quarters of wheat will these immense sums purchase in the Amsterdam or Havre market? or in Russia, America, or Poland?

"Let the money, then, or rather goods to that amount, be sent to any of these places, and the quarters of wheat brought

back and laid down, (if you will, to make conviction stronger,) at the very door of the factory.

"Are not these quarters of wheat, then, the harvest which, in one year, this one acre of the worst land has produced? Yes, as effectually, and more beneficially produced, than had every wheat ear found its way through the floor of the factory, and flourished among the wheels of the machinery, and the feet of the workmen. What prolific powers of nature could yield, what improvements of direct agriculture, or outlay of an equally great capital, in fertilizing manures, could draw from one acre of land a return of food for labour equal to that which, on the most moderate computation, would be produced by the process of indirect agriculture here described. Or should our supposed factory be so extensive as to require five or ten acres of ground on which to stand, the profits, and consequently the indirect harvest annually produced, would only be the more amazingly immense."—p. 171—174.

"On the present system, no man in England is working for himself (with the exception of members of the legislature, when throwing out honest measures). The rest of the nation is labouring hard, not only for the accommodation, but literally for the pecuniary benefit of the aristocracy or property union; the farmer is selling on commission for the landowners; the labourer toiling to buy dear bread with low wages, that the farmer, by paying him as little as possible, and getting as much as possible for his grain, may be enabled to pay as high a rent as possible to the landowners. While the manufacturer is striving hard that he may pay double for first necessities, still for the benefit of the landowner, and one and all are rowing against the stream to pay exorbitant taxes, for the purpose of making provisions for the younger sons and brothers of the same landowners or property-union, and discharging the interest of the debt incurred by their corrupt practices."—p. 190, 191.—Note.

"Whenever freedom, from every unjust restriction, shall permit trade, wealth, and population, to progress with a daily and rapid increase, the land alone, under these favourable circumstances, continuing to be limited, must, as it becomes relatively scarce, rise to an enormous value.

"Yet, the first necessities of life, and the raw material for manufactures, being imported in abundance, and at low prices, the new and honest, because natural monopoly which landlords would then possess, would cause neither serious privations to the labouring classes, nor limitations to trade,

and, therefore, would not produce that reaction upon the land which has been occasioned by the mistaken attempt to obtain an unjust advantage over the rest of the community, by using the authority of a parliament of landowners, to starve the population into the payment of rents, disproportioned to the existing state of the prosperity of the country. Nay, should it so happen that under a system of free trade, the whole land not occupied by buildings should, one time or other, come to be required for purposes of luxury, so that the possession of a small portion of ornamental pleasure ground should confer distinction, and fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, &c., become what hot-house grapes and pines are now, the fare only of the very rich, though such an excess of competition, even for luxuries, would be very far from desirable, still, while the labouring classes found the fruit of their labour to be abundance of bread, on terms that did not oblige them to labour beyond their strength, it would be to them matter of comparative indifference, whether that bread fell from the heavens, like the manna of the Israelites; rose from the earth, responsive to their own labours; or crossed the sea in floating granaries, to supply the deficiency from geographical position, of an island empire which, from overgrown prosperity, had become almost one town.

"Should such freedom of trade, as equal justice demands, be established in this country, before our manufactures are driven abroad, the future prospects of land-lords will be splendid beyond conception! It has been already shown, that, with a free trade in corn, an unlimited market for our manufactures would open before us, the natural consequences of which must be profitable employment for all the labour of a rapidly increasing population, with a field for, and fair profit upon a daily growing capital; land alone, the while, as has been already remarked, from the single circumstance of our being an island standing still, while all things else were thus rapidly changing their relative proportions to land, not only must the highest possible degree of competition for land yet known arise, but probably, a degree of competition, and a consequent rise in value, as yet

unheard of. The enormous price which building land in and near great towns already brings, may give some idea of the state of things which must arise in this country, were trade allowed to prosper unmolested.

"Families change from towns to the country, or from towns of more trade or fashion, to towns of less trade or fashion, to obtain, on more moderate terms, a house, with or without, according to their plan of life, a garden, or a few acres of pleasure or accommodation ground; but the price of land must be exorbitant indeed, before people who had realized comfortable competencies would become exiles to avoid paying a high rent for their house and garden; particularly in a country in which they enjoyed the advantage of first necessities, and general prices being reasonable.*

"It will probably be asked, in ironical triumph, if it be meant that the whole of every estate in the kingdom would be required for building land. This is not exactly the meaning intended; but it is meant to be asserted that, at no very distant period, old towns and villages would stretch, and new towns and villages arise, upon, or in the vicinity of every, or almost every estate in the kingdom; and that thus, every, or almost every landowner, by obtaining building or accommodation price or rent for a part of his property, would find the average value of the whole much increased. This would be the case, even though the actual rents of houses and gardens should not exceed what they are at present; the very lowest price of building or accommodation land being already so much higher than the very highest price of agricultural land. Indeed, so great is the difference, that the landowner who could find such a market for a very small part of an agricultural estate, would be repaid, although he should turn the remainder into beautiful parks and pleasure grounds for his own gratification.

* But house rent would not, probably, rise; for however high ground rent might be, the proposed repeal of all taxes and monopoly-creating restrictions on timber, bricks and all building materials, would very much lessen the prime cost of erecting houses."

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CORN LAWS.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE WORKS* OF

COL. T. PERRONET THOMPSON,

AUTHOR OF THE "CATECHISM ON THE CORN LAWS."

Selected and Classified by R. Cobden, Esq., M.P., and published with the consent of the Author.

A PROPHECY.—"So long as the necessities of the state can be supplied without any remarkable alteration in the present mode of collection, the Corn Laws may have a chance to stand. But the first necessity for any change, will probably bring them in ruins upon the heads of the monopolists. For instance, the first proposal of a Property Tax—which is a thing already whispered as possible—would set all who have property, on the discovery, that the Property Tax was only a subscription to maintain the landlords in an unjust gain. It is in fact totally incredible that any nation would acquiesce in the imposition of a Property Tax, when the whole necessity and demand for such an infliction arose out of the determination of the dominant party to lay restraints upon the industry of the community."—Vol. I., p. 94. *Westminster Review*, 1 July, 1829.

ANOTHER PREDICTION.—"Yes,—the tithe is to be commuted, not into a permanent payment in money, but into a permanent payment of so many quarters of corn or the value thereof. And what is the effect of this? Manifestly to attach the interests of the clergy for ever and for ever to the conservation of the Corn Laws. A clergyman is to receive annually the value of, say 100 quarters of corn. If corn is at 8s. a quarter, he is to have £400 a-year; and if at 30s., he is to have £100. But perhaps somebody will say, this is only making the substantial value of the clergy-

man's income permanent, or the same under all variations of the price of corn. No, simpleton, it is not; it is giving him a great deal more when corn is dear, and a great deal less when it is cheap. It makes it all the same to him, *with respect to that portion of his income which he expends on corn*; but with respect to all the rest, it makes him partake in the great plot to pillage every industry in the country for the benefit of the owners of the rent of land. If the clergyman when he has £400 a-year spends £100 of it upon bread or agricultural produce, he gets exactly the same bread which he would for £25 when corn was a quarter the price and his income £100. But for the remaining £300, does he get no more than he would get under the other circumstances for the £75? Is it not plain that he receives just the same advantage as any other corn lord?—In other words, that he has the same interest in keeping up the pillage of the commercial and manufacturing community. Do the wages of industry and the price of manufactured goods rise fourfold when corn rises fourfold? If they did, what temptation would there be to the landlords to maintain the Corn Laws? It is because they do *not* rise in the same proportion, that the landlords persist in their iniquity, and that Hull must be half a Hull, till we can muster sense, and spirit, and union, to bring them to a composition."—Vol. IV., p. 68. *Letters of a Representative*, 10 Feb., 1836.

* Exercises, Political and others, by Lieut. Colonel T. Perronet Thompson, in 6 volumes. Edingham Wilson, London.

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POLITICAL ECONOMY.

"The proper business of every man and every hour, is to know as much as he can of political economy. Not but it may also be desirable that he should learn something of arithmetic and book-keeping by double entry, be acquainted with the properties of the lever and inclined plane, and have a portion of information touching the nature of the planetary motions and the divisions of the surface of the terraqueous globe. But all these acquirements may only render him a useful slave; and the other is the education which must enable him to keep the benefit of his labours for himself. It has indeed long been defined to be the science of preventing our betters from defrauding us; which is sufficient to account for its being eagerly pursued on one hand, and vilified on the other."—Vol. II., p. 167. *W. R.*, 1 July, 1832.

"Political economy might not unreasonably be defined, the art of preventing ourselves from being plundered by our betters. It is the grand expositor of the peccadilloes of those who volunteer to benefit mankind by governing; its professors form the great Antifelon Association of modern times. It picks up swindlers of all calibres, as the *Roc* does elephants; and is a very ferret to the vermin that nestle in our barns and manufactories."—Vol. II., p. 15. *W. R.*, 1 Jan., 1832.

"Object of the science which has been known by the title of Political Economy.—First, what it is not. It does *not* mean a politic economizing at the expense of the poor. Next then, what it is.

"*Economy* means 'keeping a house in order.'

"*Political* is that which 'relates to the many.'

"Mrs. Marcet's then, was the best definition of Political Economy. What domestic economy is to a family, that Political Economy is to a nation.

"*National Economy*,' after the Germans, is a better term. If it had been always used, the ideas of the public would have been much clearer on the subject than they are.

"National Economy has for its object the best means of obtaining and distributing *wealth*. But what is *wealth*?

"*Wealth* is well-being. 'In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our *wealth*.'

"National Economy then, applies to the raising up of the greatest quantity of happiness, through the instrumentality of the products of industry. And what good thing is there that is not affected from this cause?

"National Economy therefore is the proper business of every man and every hour. We all practise it, either good or bad; like Molière's man, who without knowing it, had all his life been speaking prose.

"It is the science, in fact, of preventing our being defrauded by our betters."—Vol. IV., p. 370. *Lectures*, Dec., 1836.

THE POOR RATES.—"The Poor Rates are God and nature's judgment on the dishonesty of the landed interest in shutting up the industry of the country by Act of Parliament; '*the eighteen-penny children are eating them up*.' Every poor man, agricultural or other, that is brought upon the poor-rates for relief, is brought there by the immediate act of the men who lord it over him at quarter sessions and parish vestries, as much as if they had made an Act of Parliament saying, 'Be it enacted, that Hob Carter and Giles Ploughman, shall never have a shilling in their pockets without the squire of the parish, taking sixpence of it to keep his coach-horses.' The rural population will be long before they see this; but all things are found out in time. The object of the squirearchy now, is to preserve the wrong and get rid of the penalty. The whole system of Poor Rate economizing, *if not combined with taking off the restrictions that create the poor*, is only improving the machinery for making the poor die quietly, and with the least disturbance to those who live sumptuously by grinding them down."—Vol. III., p. 69. *Progr. to W. R.*, 1 April, 1834.

WAGES AND FOOD.—"It is not true that when corn rises, the labourers will obtain the same real wages as before. For corn can only rise in consequence of its being scarce; and to say the labourers get the same real wages when food is scarce as when it is plentiful, is to say they get as much food when it is not there as when it is. If the rise in the price of food is permanent, their numbers *will not* be kept up."—Vol. IV., p. 489. *Catechism on the Laws*.

MASTERS AND MEN.

"There will always be working men desiring to have more than they get, and masters desiring to pay less than they do; and between these there may always be a sort of contest going on, and it is very likely that no way will ever be hit upon, for reducing the matter to a settled rule which shall equally satisfy all parties. But this is no excuse for anybody's overlooking the truth, that there are great and common interests

in seeing the general concern go on with as much of success as it is possible to give it. The working men may be always interested in receiving a shilling more, and the master in paying a shilling less, and yet this not at all affect the fact, that the prosperity of the concern at large is what all must stand by, and that this is the thing which will settle all disputes, by making the master as glad to pay higher wages, as he now is to pay smaller. If any man says, the master is a keen hand, and will never pay the higher wages if the smaller ones will do; answer, that it is just because the smaller will not do, that he will pay the higher. An improved trade brings better profits, and more of them to the master; and the first thing this puts him upon, is bidding for more and better hands, for the sake of what he shall get by it; and so he serves out one portion of his increased profits in increased wages, to secure the other."—Vol. V., p. 234.

"The strength of the oppressors of industry at the present hour, lies in the tendency of men to look for what the Spanish proverb calls 'better bread than is made of wheat.' They are gazing after some great change they expect from the heavens, and all the time the little earthly pickpockets are ridding them of their substance. To have good trade where it can be got, and with it good wages and good profits, is really all there is in trade, and ever will be.—Vol. V., p. 452.

POPULATION.

"It is a cruel joke to talk about the evils of an increasing population, when that population is cut off by law from the power of selling the produce of its labour, for the interest of a robber caste; who tell us plainly, that like the French *noblesse*, they will pay no taxes, unless they may have liberty to take the amount again from other people, and who, if speedy change of mind be not vouchsafed them, will come to the same rough end."—Vol. II., p. 269. *W. R.*, 1 Oct., 1832.

"The time is not far off when the public will discover, that the true criterion of the general happiness, the real measure of a humane statesman's talent, is in the degree in which he provides for the honest gratification of the master passion, the tyrant instinct, which alone sustains the tragedy of life, and prevents its comedy from being contemptible. To put the proposition in mathematical terms, *the fluxion of the population* is the measure of the public happiness. What a hateful world would this have

been, if in addition to all the other ills of life, it had been really true, that man was sent here only to wink and nod at lovely woman through the grate of the preventive check. For moderate prudence, decent foresight, there must under all possible states of society be an incessant call. But the blunder that plays into the hands of squire-made law, and cuts off all the poetry and all the charities of life, to gratify the public enemy with wealth which after all turns only to dust and ashes in his grasp,—can last no longer than till warm hearts and cool heads apply themselves to crush the public feud by showing to all classes the folly of the whole."—Vol. III., p. 164. *W. R.*, 1 Jan., 1835.

"The plenty of food leads to population, and the power of populating is the measure, the gauge, of public happiness. It so happens that populating is the very first thing men like to expend their competence upon. The public in fact, takes out its happiness in population. It is true that this populating tends directly to reduce its own materials; and so does eating, a pudding. But the eating is the happiness. There are those who counsel, there should be no pudding, because, they say, eating will reduce it. The best of puddings, they are prepared to prove a temporary blessing; whence they infer, that the whole race is naught. This is not an unfair representation, of some arguments afloat on corn."—Vol. II., p. 396. *W. R.*, 1 April, 1833.

"The strength of the country must depend upon food, population, and manufactures; or upon some or other of them. And all these must be cut down together, by having two bushels of corn instead of four.

"A country which permits a legal limit to be drawn about its quantity of food, and is surrounded with rival countries which either are not confined by similar enactments, or have not reached the point where such enactments are severely felt, must decline from day to day in relative importance;—because it cuts off by its own act, the means of preserving its position in the race. Neither France nor America needs be anxious to keep down the power of Great Britain, as long as its landlords can decide that it shall not be permitted to advance."—Vol. IV., p. 485. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"If Noah had shut himself up in his ark, and let his family eat nothing but what could be grown upon his decks, he would soon have had an outcry against population, and an Emigration Committee; and Shem,

Ham, and Japhet would have been 'distressed manufacturers.' And instead of reading lectures on not multiplying, his remedy would have been to let in foreign corn.

"A Commercial and manufacturing nation has or ought to have, like Noah, no limit but the world. What he was to do by digging, it can do by spinning and inducing other men to dig. The steppes of Tartary and prairies of America, are so many pledges that it need be yet but in the youth of its existence. What is to come next, when the world is filled up, it does not seem necessary to determine in this present parliament. What is clear is, that the felicity of the existing generation depends upon progression, as it did with Noah. It can make no difference, except in the size of the experiment, whether men are confined to the corn of an ark or of an island.

"There is no doubt of the general truth, that men may multiply faster than the means of support. But they have a right to demand a fair field for finding their support. They are not bound to exercise the *Malthusian* continence, upon an artificial limitation to please the landlords."

"Mr. Malthus has described to a hair's breadth the consequences of a population increasing beyond the limits of its food; and no man has been able to gainsay a word of his discoveries. He has demonstrated everything relating to the caged birds, except one thing—*why there should be a cage*. He has omitted to point out, that when God said 'Increase and multiply,' it was not added 'And let there be landlords upon the earth, to make corn laws for them that dwell therein;'—that manufactures and commerce are God's solution of the difficulty, and were given to be a dispensing and equalizing power, whereby the inhabitants of old countries should be partakers in His design of universal replenishment, with as much comfort as the more immediate actors in the process. And truly a fearful thing it is, that any men or set of men should be allowed to stand between us and God's mercies, saying to us and to God, 'Hitherto shall ye go, and no further; and here shall ye be stayed for our unjust gain.'"

"All the evils produced among us by the pressure of population, are of Corn-Law formation. The landlords said Be, and it was so."—Vol. IV., p. 565. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"Suppose the case of an island newly peopled. At first, probably, the occupation of cultivator and manufacturer will be, to a great extent, combined; but as numbers in-

crease, there will be a division of labour, and the man that makes shoes, will buy with them a portion of his neighbour's corn. In the beginning, as is found to be generally the case in new countries, these artisans will be well paid, that is, they will get a copious supply of corn in return for their day's work. But if the numbers on the island increase till they begin to press against the food which the soil can supply, they must bid one against another, and so get less and less. What will in fact be given for corn, will be just so much as will induce the people who are to eat it, to agree about the division of it. This, and this only, will be the measure of the price of corn. The price of corn, therefore, will rise; and as this increase of price has no dependence on the cost of cultivating the land, the price for which the corn will sell will soon be more than the cost of production, and the difference will be *rent*. But to make this rent, the manufacturers give more hours' work for the same quantity of corn.

"This increase of toil to the manufacturing classes in the island, will be greatly and substantially alleviated, if after the population has begun to press on the limits of the supply of food, there are other islands from which food can be procured in exchange for manufactured goods. But suppose the landowners have the power to prohibit foreign exchanges for food. The consequences will be the same in kind, as if a town should shut its gates, and resolve to allow no food but such as was grown within the walls. Estimate the consequences; try all objections and proposals by this parallel.

"Suppose it were urged to you, that it would make the landowners rich within the walls, and what was good for one class must be good for another.

"Suppose it was argued, as an objection to opening the gates, that the growers of corn within the walls would be obliged to take to manufacturing pursuits, and this would ruin you by reducing wages.

"Suppose you were offered a protection a-piece in turn, as a bribe for allowing the gates to be kept shut.

"Would not each and every of these fallacies be answered by you on the spot?

"Note too, how certain it is that the landowners within the walls, and their labourers, must be brought to the grindstone in the end. When you had multiplied till you bid against one another to starvation point, would not the agricultural labourers have done the same? Had the gates been open, and you been allowed to buy food

with your manufactures outside, the children of the agriculturists might have found employment by joining in your ranks. But this is made impossible. They can, therefore, in the end, be no better off than you. There may have been a single flush of advantage to their trade at the time the gates were shut; but when that is over, they will only find they are five instead of four, and that the five are worse off than the four, and without chance of mending their condition.

"To the landowners the evil must in time extend, through the impossibility of finding maintenance for their children except by subdividing their estates. And this none of them can escape, except such as are either to have no children, or to have some way of keeping them at the public expense."—Vol. IV., p. 379. *Lectures, Dec., 1836.*

"If it should be urged, that there must always come a time when population will press against food, and therefore there is no use in attempting to escape it; this would be like urging, that there is no use in a man's escaping from being murdered now, because he will not be immortal afterwards. There is all the difference in the world, between enduring an evil by the will of Providence, and by the act of man. Human life in the whole, is but the procrastination of death; but that is no reason why men should be killed just now, for other men's convenience. There may come a time when there will be no coal to burn, no iron to make tools, and perhaps no salt left in the sea; but this is no reason why something should not be made of the interval which must intervene. The time when population will press irremediably against food, must, to a great manufacturing and naval people, be almost as remote as the time when there will be no salt left in the sea. And come when it may, it must always come gradually; which is by itself no small diminution of the mischief. The maximum of contingent evil in prospect, is only equal to what it is proposed to bring on at once now; and all the world must be cleared and peopled, before the evil can arrive."—Vol. IV., p. 477. *Catechism on the Corn Laws. Feb., 1827.*

"When Prussia wants no more manufactures, we must try Tartary; and so on till the world is filled up. As to what may take place then, it is like saying to Noah, 'Never think of going out of your ark. You have no notion how soon the world will be filled up. Show some prudence and economy, and stay where you are.'"—Vol. IV., p. 566. *Catechism on the Corn Laws.*

THE CAGED RATS.

"Suppose now, that a hundred rats, instead of being mercifully killed in five minutes by the celebrated dog Billy, were caged up and supplied with a limited quantity of food, and encouraged to multiply till they starved each other by the subdivision of the allowance;—and say whether this picture, ugly and disgusting as it is, is not a representation of the condition in which the country has been placed by the influence of the monopolists. Imagine next a well-dressed man, with all the ensigns of respectability and good-fellowship about him, declaiming on the misery of the sufferers with the remains of a tartlet in his mouth, and pointing out to the spectators the different forms and aspects of the process. 'See that individual of the softer sex, with thirteen helpless young ones dependent on it for support. Their whole allowance is but fifteen grains a day; and there are people who would ruin the whole rat-trap by letting in foreign corn. Observe the 'father of the cottage,' with his ribs clinging together and no fur upon his back, brooding over the fate of his suffering family, over whom his heart is yearning and breaking. That poor creature with his ear bitten off, is from Congleton. The insurrectionary cock-tail in the middle is from Macclesfield. The Coventry rats are in a corner by themselves. From Rochdale, Manchester, and Barnsley, they are all alike; there is not a pin to chuse. Would to God my voice could reach them and be listened to [here quote sundry texts of Scripture and swallow the remains of the tartlet]. Why do not they agitate for bread? Why do not they turn tooth and nail upon the wretches who would murder them by letting in foreign produce?' The application may not be complimentary; but till it is shown in what way a starving people are to be fed by shutting out supplies and taking from each other, it is an exact representation of the politics of the monopolists."—Vol. I., p. 206. *W. R., 1 Jan. 1830.*

"When a great oppression is to be maintained, the most effectual way of doing it, whether by design or not, is to get up an outcry of another oppression somewhere else. If the rats in a cage were stocking-makers, the best thing that could be done for keeping them from resisting the master oppression which sets them all starving upon a limited quantity of food, would be to persuade the workmen rats it was all the fault of the master rats, and so put them on trying their teeth on one another, instead of the cage which is the foundation of the mischief."—Vol. VI., p. 281. *Leicestershire Mer*

EMIGRATION.

"The palliative proposed at present, is to colonize; in other words, to force the people of England to breed, as is done by the negroes in some of the West-Indian islands, for exportation. To which the direct answer is, that nobody has a right to make laws which shall force the people of England to transport themselves. They love their own country; and will not have it made uninhabitable, to please the aristocracy. The plan of the landed aristocracy is this; that England shall have no more corn than *they* shall sell, and then the competition for it will insure high prices; but to diminish the danger of resistance that might ensue, the people shall be taxed to pay for sending one another abroad. The transportation is to be the landlord's *valve*; which shall prevent the machine from blowing up, but leave the owners as much pressure as without danger can be enjoyed."—Vol. I., p. 368. *Westminster Review*, 1 Jan., 1831.

"To pay a million for preventing the people from keeping themselves, and a million more for carrying part of them away, is paying twice for poverty.

"Emigration may have a tendency to let off the evil at a certain point; but there can be no right to inflict the evil till men ask for transportation as a relief. Emigration is a valve; the pains of transportation the weight upon it; and the landlords have the benefit of the high pressure.

"Every English manufacturer, therefore, who is driven to emigrate, is an innocent man condemned to transportation for the interest of the landlords."—Vol. IV., p. 506. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"When a man is found dying by strangulation, people do not say 'Help him to emigrate,' but 'Take away the rope that is choking him.' If the individuals of known humanity who declare themselves friendly to emigration, saw the thing in its true light, they would say to the suffering classes, 'Do not emigrate. Stay at home and ask for the removal of the Corn Laws. Do not do the very thing your enemies wish you to do. Things will mend. It is no more likely that there will be Corn Laws a few years hence, than that there will be a Slave Trade. The country would be worth staying in, if industry was free; and it will have freedom by and by. Do not give up everything you love, because there is a majority in parliament this year, which may be a minority the next. Every day is opening men's eyes; and the wealthier classes, who have more power and more means of removing a mis-

chief than you have, are coming over to you, and finding out that your interests and theirs coincide. And they are not all so insensible to better motives as you may think. They remember the time when they climbed into the same apple-tree, and swam in the same brook; and they would think it a sin and a shame, knowing you were wronged, not to move to your assistance. Be patient, if you can; and we will all draw together. A time will come when a poor man may sell the labour of his hands and buy bread; and then you will be better. If you must go, you must; for a man must not be starved while he can get away. But if you can contrive to hold out, stand by the old house a little longer. Let your children be born where you were born yourselves; and see if you do not get access to that fine green world of corn-fields you are now shut out from. Be persuaded of one thing, that your opponents have just as much right to ask to have you shut out from it, as you have to ask that they shall grow no corn here;—that they have just as much right to request to have you prevented from selling the produce of your industry for corn, as you have to request to be allowed to take their parks and corn-fields because it might be convenient to you. Do not go away; the thing cannot last;—it is by many degrees too bad."—Vol. IV., p. 572. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

COST OF THE CORN LAW.

"It occurs to me that the magnitude of the loss arising from the Bread Tax, is a thing scarcely capable of being reduced to numerical calculation. What would be the numerical amount of the loss arising to a man from cutting off his four limbs in his infancy? Who can tell? It must depend upon knowing what he could have earned, and what he could have done if he had been let alone. The smallest part of the evil of the Corn Laws, is what is measured by the extra price given for the bread eaten and the tax paid; the grand loss, to which the other is as nothing, is of the bread that is never eaten and never earned. The only substantial approach to a measure of the evil, seems to be this. It is the difference between the value of the whole industrial produce of the country in a free market, and the value of the agricultural by itself. Or it is the difference between the value of the estates of those whose wealth lies beneath the soil or on the water, and of those whose estates lie on the surface which grows corn. All the difference, is confiscated at the command of the owners of the soil, and a fraction of it applied to their own gain: while

the remainder, being the difference between what the landlords facetiously call the 'home trade' and the trade of the world at large which is cut off, is thrown into the sea for the good of nobody. Every man who has either formed industrial establishments for himself, or received them from his predecessors, suffers confiscation; and tamely allows the plunderers to run about applying the same term to anything that threatens the loss of their iniquity."—Vol. VI., p. 57. *Leicester Wire Mercury*.

"Our commercial policy is a mass of confluent frauds; by which everybody robs everybody, and throws half the booty into the sea. But they all yield in individual importance to the master pustule, which is the Corn fraud. By this, a gross sum of twelve millions and a half per annum is thrown away, in order that a certain other sum, amounting probably to five millions, may be taken from the men who work for it, and given to the landlords whose first principle of law, physic, and divinity, is not to work at all. In other words, *seventeen millions* a-year are torn from the mouths of the suffering manufacturer and his starving children. In order that *five* millions of it may find their way into the pockets of a dishonest and tyrannical class who have got a law that nobody but a landowner shall be in parliament. When pressed upon the point, they bully and appeal to their humanity and charity. The charity is easily defined;—they take with a bucket and give with a spoon. They take seventeen millions a-year out of the pockets of the industrious and the poor, and urge in return that they sometimes give a crown to an old woman at Christmas."—Vol. II., p. 398. *W. R.*, 1 April, 1833.

THE DANGER OF THE CORN LAW.

"There certainly has been no instance in history, where two-thirds of a population, not avowedly slaves and under physical restraint accordingly, have submitted to such an infiction, to please the remaining third. The process will be brief, and ought to be. Either the fundholders and the church will join with the commercial interests and the rest of the public in putting down the enormity by legislation; or their possessions will be taken in the first instance either by the operation of legislation or otherwise, and afterwards will begin the attack on all property, hard enough upon the innocent, but the inevitable consequence of the prodigious provocation. The outrageous injustice of the landlords is the key to the public danger, the spigot that confines the fermenting

contents of the national beer-barrel, which must speedily burst if not relieved. If this were taken away, not all at once but by a moderately rapid progression, the debt and taxation would be made a flea-bite, not by removing them, but by increasing the ability to bear them, which comes to the same thing. The public irritation would fall, as the fierceness of a den of hungry savages might be lulled by the application of joints of meat; and there would be a great calm. It seems impossible that before the mischief goes much further, a government should not arise, possessing about as much prudence and decision as might be competent to the regulation of a regimental hospital, and, by speaking the truth and rallying the parties concerned, cut off the progress of the evil by cutting off its source."—Vol. II., p. 274, *W. R.*, 1 Oct., 1832.

JACOBINISM OF THE RICH.

"The origin and foundation of property, is labour. The proposal to keep up rent by restrictions virtually includes the essence of personal slavery; which consists in obliging one man to labour for the benefit of another without an equivalent. The landlords may have a property in their honest rent; but they have not a property in the power of adding to it by violence."—Vol. IV., p. 514. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"The poor ought to have corn at the cheapest for which it can be got; and if they have not, they are to blame if they are satisfied.

"If the poor were to tell the rich, that they ought to have a 'reasonable' income, as, for instance, one or two hundred a year, and if they had this they ought to be satisfied,—and they, the poor, would take the difference; it would be pronounced to be clean *jacobinism* and spoliation. The poor have as much right to do this, as the rich man has to tell the poor that sixty shillings is a 'reasonable' price for his quarter of corn, and therefore the rich will take the difference. Much has been said of the *jacobinism* of the poor against the rich, but very little of the *jacobinism* of the rich against the poor;—though one is only matter of speculation and alarm, and the other meets every man three times a-day when he sits down to eat."—Vol. IV., p. 527. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

PROTECTION.—"Protection' is forcing people to buy the work of a man with one arm. It is saying to other people, 'You shall not have the thing in the way you may have it best and cheapest, but it

shall be artificially produced in some way that is worse. I am a man with one arm, in comparison of others you might have it from; and you shall pay me for working with one arm; and if we had one arm all round it would be so much the better for us all."—Vol. II., p. 362. *W. R.*, 1 Jan., 1833.

BANKRUPTCY.—"Bankruptcy is the check to the indefinite multiplication of traders, as the evils arising from diminished food are the check to that of the inferior classes of labourers. Both take place where they do, in consequence of the limitation of commerce; and the engine of the limitation is the Corn laws. He that was in the *Gazette* yesterday, came there by the Corn Laws."—*Ibid.*

STARVATION.—"It is certain the weakest will fail; but whether they were weak or not, somebody must fail. The case is like that of a hundred prisoners, among whom there should be thrown half enough for their daily food. The weakest will be those who starve; but whether they were weak or not, somebody must starve."—*Ibid.*

HYPOCRISY OF THE FACTORY CRY.

"The appeal to 'humane and Christian feeling,' and all the tropes therewith connected, may be disposed of by the statement that the appellants created, and at this hour sustain, the evils they complain of. They have interdicted the industry of the poor; and then attach the consequences to those who oppose the attempt to relieve one sufferer by the privation of another. If a shipmaster had conveyed his crew and passengers to a month's sail from any land, with a week's provision left on board, and then instead of steering towards any port, should 'do the pathetic' on the sorrows of one part of his inmates and the cruelty of not assisting them by taking from the portions of some other,—he would present the express image of such humanity and such Christianity. It would not be that there was not suffering, and that humanity did not desire to relieve it; but that the mode proposed was, like the Factory Bill, a fraud got up by the authors of the general misery, having in view the preservation and increase of that misery, through the instrumentality of the dupes who should be induced to cry out for the removal of the minor evil to the perpetuation of the greater."—Vol. II., p. 472. *W. R.*, 1 Oct., 1833.

"One word of advice may be not unreasonable. Take care not to be deceived by

the stratagems of the enemy. Let no man, for instance, unless he has a tail or some other asinine appendage, be taken in by such a raw jest as the Factory Bill. A Tory club have cut us off from our trade,—made laws that we shall not sell the labour of our hands,—reduced us and ours to the bare possibility of keeping soul and body together by labour the most excessive and to the most extravagant; and these very men shall come forward and tell us, *that if we will send them to parliament* to support all this abuse,—to maintain the Corn Laws, and keep down all chance of being allowed to sell our goods abroad,—they will do, *what?*—pass a bill to prevent us from working our own children more than ten hours a-day. This is kind; this is benevolent; this is worth a man's going on his knees in the mud to thank them for. Get liberty to buy and sell, ye Issachars, ye asses couching between two burdens; and then your children may live by your labour, without leave from those who starve you. If negro slaves did anything so absurd, the world would say, how debasing the effects of slavery! Feel every man for a tail, who talks of such a thing. Time was, a Yorkshireman might walk abroad, with some consciousness of being supposed as knowing as his neighbours. If fooleries of this kind go on, Gotham will be put in Schedule A, and the representation of unreason transferred into the West Riding."—Vol. II., p. 236. *W. R.*, 1 July, 1832.

"The truth is that we must wait till hunger brings our people to their colours, and some time or other we shall have a fair stand-up fight to know whether we are to continue to be the born thralls of the owners of the soil or not. Our Saxon ancestors wore it written on a ring about their necks; we wear it in an Act of Parliament. But we are a long way from the time yet; there must be thousands more of bankruptcies, and myriads of the wives and children of the working classes must die of hunger or over-work in factories, that a greater quantity of the produce of their industry may be given to the landlords for a bushel of corn. We are in the state of raising statues to any Tory man who will offer to limit our working hours if we on our parts will assist him to keep up the oppression that creates the inducement to over-work; and half our people might be persuaded to turn against the individual who should tell them it was an invention of the enemy. But this will mend; misery and the progress of information will alter it. I look to the last, however, most. The working classes, at

least in these southern parts, have proved themselves unequal to the question. It will be when the capitalists and employers find out where they are hurt, that the real resistance will begin."—Vol. IV., p. 288. *Letters of a Representative*, 1 July, 1837.

THE WATER-LORDS—A SIMILE.

"Suppose, for argument's sake, that corn could be obtained for positively nothing, like water. There would be no more reason why the price of corn should be kept up for the advantage of the landlords, than why the price of water should be kept up for the advantage of men calling themselves water-lords,—by prohibiting streams and rivers, and forcing the public to buy the water of wells, from which, by dint of digging, water was obtained for half as many people as there otherwise might have been. If such an abuse was in existence, there might be reasons why it should be reduced gradually, but none why a fragment of it should finally be left.

"All the fallacies advanced in the case of corn might be repeated in such a case of water. The diligence of the water-lords to grub for the last pint, they would call improvement and zeal for the multiplication of water. They would descant on the capital they employed, and the industry they set in motion; and be pathetic on the fate of the well-digging population, if the government should restore the liberty of drink. They would assert that it was clear the country had been supplied; and if any complained that they were dying from want of water, they would tell them they were a superabundant population, and ought not to exist. They would declare that it would all be easy, if it was not for taxation; but as long as taxes were to be paid, it was impossible that water should be free."—Vol. IV., p. 515. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"So far as the improvements in agriculture were the consequence of restrictions upon importation, they were only like the capital, skill, and perseverance which might be applied to digging wells, in consequence of prohibiting the water of rivers."—Vol. IV., p. 550. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

RECIPROCITY FALLACY.

"Reciprocity is having two good things, instead of one. But if we cannot have both the good things, it is no reason why we should reject the one we may have. The fraud of 'reciprocity,' therefore, is like saying, 'Don't take the half-crown you may, unless somebody will give you another for taking it.'

"The first government that will fearlessly announce that it is not to be fooled by the fallacy of 'reciprocity,' will pull down commercial restrictions all over the world."—Vol. IV., p. 495. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"When the draper buys bread, it may be very well if he can persuade the baker to buy clothes from him in turn. But if he cannot, it would be great folly to fancy he must be ruined unless he refuses to buy bread.

"The Americans make a foolish tariff by which they allow one half of their people to rob the other, with a general loss equal to the difference in question besides. But that is no reason why England should do an equally foolish thing in reply. If an American chuses to put out one of his eyes, there is no necessity for an Englishman's doing the same for reciprocity."—Vol. IV., p. 495. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

EXCHANGE.

"Two things are necessary to the completion of an act of commerce; first, that we should have what others want; secondly, that we should be at liberty to receive what they can afford to pay in, and it will be worth our while to take.

"A merchant in the actual state of things can afford to sell a piece of Leeds or Manchester goods in Prussia or Poland for a hundred crowns. If he could afford to take eighty, he might sell two pieces where he now sells one. If he was allowed to lay out the eighty crowns in corn, and bring it to England to a free market, he could sell the corn for as much as would give him a profit on the whole; and consequently he would accept the eighty crowns, and sell two pieces instead of one, and get two profits for himself, and give two profits to the manufacturers. He is restrained from selling the corn; and therefore he is restrained from doing all the rest."—Vol. IV., p. 523. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"When a manufacturer produces goods and exchanges them abroad for corn, he may as truly be said to produce the corn, as if it came out of his loom or his fluting-mill. And if he is prohibited from doing this, it is his production that in reality is stopped."—Vol. IV., p. 481. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

HOME MARKET.—"I hold to my advice, to beware of talking nonsense about a 'home market.' The good market is the market

that gives most. Get the value of twenty shillings for your Leeds cloth abroad, and you are directly to be asked, what you have done with the market that would have given you fifteen at home. If the home market is to be the best, let it prove it."—Vol. V., p. 20. *Leeds Times*.

MACHINERY.

"On the subject of Machinery, it may be sufficient here to say, that if a prize had been proposed to the inventor of the surest, most constantly and universally acting encouragement to the multiplication of machinery, it must have been awarded to the man who devised the Corn Laws.

"Every master manufacturer who has a chance of selling his goods abroad, has a bale of his goods set before him and is told, 'You shall not compete with the foreigner, without paying a tax to the landlords first. If you grumble, take it out of the wages of your operatives.' And when you cannot do that any longer, sit down and invent machinery.' Thus the landlords hold out a premium on machinery, and the operatives appear to like to have it so. The master manufacturer is driven into a corner between the loss of his trade, and inventing machinery to help to pay the demands of the landlords; and the operative is driven into a corner between starving, and making any improvement in the powers of machinery which he can get a few pounds or shillings by selling; and by the combination of the two, machinery is carried to the highest pitch that necessity, which is the mother of invention, can devise. Surely there wants no further asking, where machinery comes from; and small hope there is of its receiving any check, while the law is thus directed to force its employment, with the power of a perpetual screw, into every corner capable of receiving it.

"But the practical question for the operatives after all, appears to be, whether because they consider themselves injured by machinery, they will try to mend it by prohibiting the sale of the things made. Their complaint is, that too many things are made and too easily; if the demand could be caused to keep pace with the increase of things produced, they would be where they were, but it does not. The conclusion therefore come to, is that they will stop such demand as there is. Or if it is not this, it is the next thing to it; which is, that they will not bestir themselves to oppose."—Vol. VI., p. 57. *Leicestershire Mercury*.

"There would be no suffering from machinery, if the trade in food was free; but

on the contrary great benefit. The cause of the suffering, therefore, is not machinery, but the refusal to allow the produce to be exchanged for food.

"That the use of machinery is detrimental in the long run to the manufacturing labourers, is an error which they ought to out-grow. Compare, for example, the extent of the stocking trade in the time of Queen Elizabeth,—when silk stockings were made with men's fingers and sold for their weight in gold,—with its present state; and ask the five thousand labouring silk stocking weavers, whether they would wish to see the trade reduced to what it was then. All the difference has been caused by machinery.

"Experience has proved, that when the production of any commodity is facilitated by machinery, the increase of consumption consequent on the reduction of price, in a state of freedom and under the existing circumstances of the world in respect of the desire to consume, is such as in the end to increase the demand for labour in the production of that particular commodity. If power looms could bring down the price of broad cloth to a shilling a yard, and the corn of foreigners might be taken from them in return,—so many people in different parts of the world would wear broad cloth who now do not, that there would be more employment for makers of broad cloth in the end than ever. If men cannot exchange the cloth because the agriculturists will not let them, the case is certainly altered. But then the fault is not in the machinery."—Vol. IV., p. 508. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"The English manufacturer has a right to have the advantage of his machinery, and all the advantage. Instead of which, the agriculturist thinks he is doing a gracious act, if he leaves the manufacturer enough to place him on what the agriculturist is pleased to consider equal terms with foreigners, and puts the rest into his own pocket."—Vol. IV., p. 569. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"Machinery then, like the rain of heaven, is a present blessing to all concerned, provided it comes down by drops, and not by tons together; and anything which prevents its free and expanded operation, has an effect of the same kind as would be produced if the rain should be collected into water-spouts. It remains therefore to be seen, what laws and human institutions have done towards securing the free diffusion of the advantages derivable from God's gift of ingenuity to man. And here the first thing apparent in our own

country is, that the aristocracy have made a law, that no use shall be derived from it at all. They have determined by Act of Parliament, that men may invent as many machines as they think proper, but shall not be allowed to sell the produce; or which comes to the same thing, shall not be allowed to sell for what is wanted in return. The whole misery about machinery,—every atom and fragment of suffering, alarm, and wretchedness directly or indirectly consequent thereon,—is the pure and necessary result of the gross fraud and half-witted idiotic cruelty perpetrated by the majority of the landlords upon the rest of their own order and of the community.”—Vol. I., p. 356. *Westminster Review*, 1 Jan., 1831.

MANUFACTURERS.—“A common charge against manufactures is, that they contract the faculties of the labourer. One equally useful when occasion suits, is that the manufacturing labourers are too knowing. The manufacturers are the Helotes of society; but their day will some time come.”—Vol. II., p. 23. *W. R.*, 1 Jan., 1832.

—“The sufferings of the manufacturers show themselves by fits, like an ague. But an ague may be a permanent evil, and have a permanent cause.”—Vol. IV., p. 509. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

MUTUAL DEPENDENCE.

“Does any mystery of nature conceal the fact, that different countries have been created under such circumstances as make it practically impossible, that a partial failure in the harvests of one should not be remediable by communication with the others, if man, in the wisdom of his absurdity, could be persuaded not to stand by to prevent? And is it not plain, that the suffering to one country, would be balanced by a corresponding profit to the other; and thus, as nature presented the cup of suffering and of profit to each by turns, the movement of the great machine would be kept up with the least practicable aggregate of human evil?”—Vol. II., p. 160. *W. R.*, 1 April, 1832.

“Experience proves, that it is not the improved and manufacturing nation, but the growers of rude produce, that are the dependents. Thus England can do without the trade with Russia, better than Russia without the trade with England. When the Czar attempted to stop the supply of naval stores, he was off his throne in an instant. And ten years afterwards, the inability of the Russian government to enforce the execution of a treaty in opposition to the com-

mercial dependence of Russia upon England, was the cause of the ruin of Napoleon.”—Vol. IV., p. 564. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

“There is no more evidence that nature intended every man to be fed by the land he lives on, when she has made provision for his being fed better by the produce of some other,—than that she intended every man to use no iron but what was dug in his own back garden. It is a baseless effort to cut men off from mutual assistance and the division of labour, for the advantage of a few monopolists.”—Vol. IV., p. 574. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

ROBBING ONE ANOTHER.

“What the landowners really say, is, ‘Let us rob you all, and then you shall rob one another.’ This is the bargain they offer; and the manufacturers swallow it open-mouthed.

“Of all the petitioners upon this subject, the men of Stroud appear to be the wisest; for they petitioned, that all the monopolies of the manufacturers might be taken away, on condition that the great monopoly of all went along with them. How the men of Stroud came by their wisdom, those who know them can best tell; but it is clear they are wise in their generation.

“The amusing part of the proposed fraud is, that we are all to get rich by robbing one another. The leader of the administration himself does not pretend to believe it. He knows full well, that the plan is as stupid as it would be to attempt to double the strength of an army by doubling each battalion in turn by drafts from the others. Nobody believes it but idiots. Rogues pretend to believe it, that they may feather their own nests.”—Vol. IV., p. 496. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*. (This part was written during the administration of the Duke of Wellington.

THE CORN LAW A QUESTION OF RENT.

“The landlords, by the exercise of their power in the legislature, lay a tax to keep out foreign corn. Their undisguised object in this is to raise their rents; for whether there be reason in the various excuses they offer for it or not, they do not deny that they do it to raise their rents. And their rents are raised accordingly; that is to say, in the contracts which they offer to the competition of the farmers, the bidders, knowing that more money will come in, offer more for the contract. If the tolls on a given road were made twopence for a horse in-

stead of a penny, and other things in proportion on the same principle, the turnpike-men would increase their biddings. The landlords then, having got out of the farmers by competition the highest biddings they can afford, next set the farmers to cry out, that they want nothing but what will enable them to pay. In the same manner if there were a proposal for lowering the tolls on a turnpike-road, the turnpike-men might be set to cry out, that they wanted nothing but what would enable them to pay, and nobody could be so hard-hearted as to refuse the twopence for his horse.

"If the turnpike-men set up this plea, they would be told immediately they must go and amend their contracts;—that their having jobbed the road, might be a reason for giving them a fair time to renew, but if they should have been absurd enough to enter into contracts for seven years or for ninety-nine, this would form no reason why the tolls should go on without diminution to pleasure them. A case might even possibly arise, for legislative interference between the contractors and the lessors of the road; but the last thing any man could make out of the matter, would be a reason why the high tolls should be continued.

"In the same manner the farmers must not be allowed to be pushed forward, as the people whom we must support at the expense of paying a high price of corn because they bargained for it. Like the turnpike-men, they must go and bargain for less. Or if by their own incaution they have hampered themselves with leases, they must take it for their pains. Nobody has a right to lease out the public wrong, and expect the wrong to be continued in consequence of his contract. The landlord pockets all that the farmers can by competition be induced to spare; and he would do just the same, if the price were carried to any imaginable height. If the monopoly of corn were enforced and men multiplied, till they were glad to pay for growing corn upon flag-stones, and of course the rent upon all that was better than flag-stones was of enormous height,—the landlords would as much as ever be found sending the farmers round with the begging-box, on the plea that they wanted nothing but a remunerating price,—that is to say the price which would pay them for growing corn upon flag-stones, they having at the same time bargained with the landowners for making over all the excess that should accrue upon the better lands, in the shape of rent. Rent is the difference between the total value of the produce of land, and what the farmer

can cultivate it for with a living profit. If, therefore, there is land of all sorts of qualities, as in most countries is the case, the worst land cultivated will be that which will give the farmer's profit but no more, and in all the better lands the excess above this will be the rent. Hence the pretence that the farmer only wants what will pay him, is an ever-growing claim,—a claim which if corn were raised to a guinea a peck, would be as strong as ever in favour of its being two,—a claim which like the shoe to a waggon-wheel, is dragged along with the wheel, and is just as much there as ever, whatever progress may have been made.

The farmers are beginning to understand this, and to know that, with the exception of a portion of trouble they might have about their leases, they have no direct interest in keeping corn at a monopoly price; for the simple reason, that it is the landlords, and not they, that take the difference."—Vol. V., p. 413. *Suffolk Chronicle*.

THE FAIR PRICE OF CORN.

"The price of corn ought to be, what men will voluntarily give for it in the absence of restrictions. No trader has a right to say his goods shall be bought from him at a certain price whether the buyer wants them or not. If one trader has the right, another has; and where would be the end?

"A fair remunerating price is what other men will voluntarily give. It is the dealer's business to see that the supply is accommodated to the demand; not to use violence to make the demand equal to the supply."—Vol. IV. p. 527. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

"The landlords' theory of remunerating price is a bottomless pit. When they talk of their barely obtaining a remunerating price, they mean on the worst land on which the present price makes it practicable to grow corn. Hence they would equally be found talking of a remunerating price, if corn had risen to its weight in gold.

"Since, then, in every imaginable state of the supply there must be some land or other that is paying a barely remunerating price, this proves nothing with respect to the market being plentifully supplied, or the propriety of prohibiting foreign corn.

"They want to be paid with a profit, for growing corn on the sand above high-water mark if it suits them; and to have an equal price for all they grow elsewhere besides."—Vol. IV., p. 526. *Catechism on the Corn Laws*.

THE LANDLORDS' CASE.—"To say that the removal of restrictions would *reduce* the incomes of the land-owners, is at most only saying it would take away from them what they ought never to have had. And there still remains the question, of whether they would be any real losers in the end. *Is this clear enough to them, to go to war with the rest of the community?* It may be very possible for them to draw money from the public loss, and be no gainers after all; just as a pond may draw water from another pond, and lose more at some other end than it takes in. And this other end, is found in the impossibility of finding profitable employments for their sons, or marrying their daughters to the sons of other people who can do the same. A landlord is no gainer, though in spite of poor rates, he has £600 a year instead of £500, if the consequence is that he has eight sons and as many daughters to keep as miserable annuitants. This reason therefore applies to all except those who calculate on quartering their children on the public."—Vol. IV., p. 543. *Catechism on the Corn Laws.*

THE FARMERS' CASE.—"The Corn Laws got up a spirit of prosperity for farmers at their neighbours' expense, in the same manner as a spirit of prosperity for linen-draperies might be got up by an Act of Parliament that should prohibit the wearing of woollen coats. But that was seventeen years ago. The only consequence now left is, that there are perhaps five farmers where there would have been four, and that the five are much worse off than the four. If the five were as well off as the four, the farmers might plead that it would be all clear loss to go back again. But they are not; they suffer under all the difference that arises from the general state of the country being incomparably worse than formerly. Their children cannot all be farmers; and the Corn Laws have brought on a state of things where they can be nothing else. So sure as there is a Providence above, is it written that there shall be always ways in which those who wrong and defraud their neighbours shall in the end find out that they have made a rueful bargain."—Vol. II., p. 319. *W. R.*, 1 Oct., 1832.

FARMERS AND LABOURERS.—"The lamentable circumstance for the supporters of the corn law is, that little by little all their friends will be picked away from under them. The most feasible thing in the world, when information has taken a very few strides more, will be to convince the farmers and agricultural labourers, or an efficient portion of them, that they have

at all events no urgent interest in the continuance of the public wrong. They gained for a season when the mischief was brought on, but their share in the general suffering has long since eaten up the benefits. By the converse of the case, it may be undeniable that the return to justice will be attended with some present exacerbation of their condition, but with the prospect of overpowering improvement at no very remote period. This is not the most favourable position imaginable to invite men to resort to; but it is a position which there is no reason to despair of inducing a great number of intelligent individuals to resort to in the end. There will be a desertion, or at least a slackness, first among the farmers and agricultural labourers, next among those descriptions of landlords who are obliged to provide for their children in the world themselves, and have no hopes of quartering them on the public purse; and the end will be, that the remaining class of landlords with their few adherents, will have the honour of going to the bottom in a minority together."—Vol. II., p. 191. *W. R.*, 1 July, 1832.

MISTAKES OF THE MULTITUDE.—"Every man who chuses to run in the teeth of common justice and make himself the enemy of the multitudinous classes, must make up his mind to take the chance not only of what they may do right, but of what they may do wrong. There is no use in banditti being pathetic on the way in which they are sometimes treated when overpowered by the country-side, and getting up a tragedy upon the sufferings of *deloused* on their backs in carts, and considerably over-twitched about the wrists by the premature application of a halter. A humane *brigadier* will hinder it when he can; but he will not see in the possibility that he may not always be able to hinder it, the smallest reason why the country should be given up to the heroes with high crowns and cross garters. It is by no means certain that the oppressed classes in England *will* be moderate, if the concession of justice be put off till the hour when it can no longer be withheld. But their friends and leaders are not therefore the frank asses that should exhort them to sit down in sufferance for fear their enemies should be hart. Let all sides take care of themselves; our business is to put you down, at all events till you show something like a flag of truce. That the operatives are at present not going right;—that they are going the way which threatens more evil than is necessary to their enemies, without accomplishing the good they desire to themselves;

—may be what any man has a right to hold, who is enough of an engineer to know that to try to scramble over the walls is not always the nearest way to take the town. But because the Lord's host is going wrong, is not a reason why a man should abandon the Lord's host; still less why it should be agreed and settled, that the good cause is a thing to be delivered up into the hands of its enemies."—Vol. III., p. 75. *W. R.*, 1 April, 1834.

NO COMPROMISE.—"No man ever got anything by giving up his just right where he had power to enforce it. To give up a part to save the rest, is a perfectly different question; but the people have no occasion to give up a little here. They have only to understand the thing, and use the means; and first or last, their enemies must be at their feet. And whenever that happens, they will overturn the most cruel, dishonest, and insulting structure of human wrong, that with the exception of the West-Indian tyranny, has sullied the page of history. The landowners will call this, setting one part of society against another. Is not the New Police, setting one part of society against another? There is no use in mincing phrases; the people are trampled on by the rank and gross oppressions of an insolent order, who push their injustice to the cottage of the starving man and the bed-side of the dying, and feed their hounds on the blood and sinews of the industrious population. Two points are their law and their gospel; one, that they will not pay taxes and other people shall; the other, that fortunes shall be made for them at the expense of other people. All this they consider as their birth-right; and they turn like hunted wild beasts upon anybody who talks of taking it from them. The people have the legal and parliamentary means of relieving themselves, if they have union and sense."—Vol. II., p. 399. *W. R.*, 1 April, 1833.

HOW THE MONOPOLISTS BEHAVED FIVE YEARS AGO.

"On Thursday (18th March, 1837) Mr. Clay brought on his motion for an alteration in the Corn Laws. As soon as Mr. Clay had finished speaking, an agricultural member (Mr. Cayley) rose with the second-order, and endeavoured to stop proceedings by counting out the House. The number was found above forty, and the second-order went on. Their first movement having thus failed, the landowners mustered kin and clan, and finally came down to the number of above two hundred. The ordinary routine of a thousand-times-answered fallacies

was put forward, and received as might be expected in an assembly where every man had made oath that he had a pecuniary interest in the question before him. At the instance of friends about me, I made repeated attempts to offer reply, as also to explain my reasons for not voting upon the actual question; but was unable to gain a hearing. Thank God, I have many better places! If I had been a jobber in a railroad or a dabbler in some monopoly, wishing to make a similar explanation, I should have been heard with reverential sympathy, to the extent that human organs could supply. Sir William Molesworth entered upon a demonstration of the mode of operation of the competition generated by the limitation of food, which was perfect in its way, but confined to a portion of the field. Mr. Hume was received with groans and hideous laughs when he attempted to open the case of that part of the community who have not three hundred pounds a year in land; and when he proceeded to connect the question with the New Poor Law, the sounds that issued from the landed benches had a touch of the New-Zealander.—Vol. VI., p. 227. *Letters of a Representative.*

AN IMAGINARY PICTURE OF THE STATE OF A COUNTRY UNDER A CORN LAW, DRAWN IN 1827, AND SINCE REALISED IN ENGLAND.

"In such a country there would be seen crowds of youths of the middle classes, attempting to maintain themselves in credit by industry, and only dispersing the accumulation of their fathers by a fatality that nothing could ward off; families lamenting the ruin of their hopes, and men looking on the faces of their children as pledges of coming sorrow instead of aid. In such a country there would be campaigns against starving manufacturers; and men who had fought nations' quarrels, would be called upon to finish the sufferings of dying artisans. There would be a law to determine that every legislator should be a landowner, and a class of laws to make the poor die quietly, and without disturbing the higher orders by their efforts to escape. To be found houseless would be made a crime; because he that has parted with his house, has manifestly not starved when he ought. To be detected with horse-flesh in a bag, would be punished with fine or imprisonment; because a man who descends to such disgusting methods to save life, is evidently making efforts unfair upon his fellows. In such a country there would be troops of

juvenile offenders in the towns; and regiments of poachers in the fields, living desperately on pheasant, because men are not permitted to buy bread. There would be 'distressed manufacturers,' and 'commercial crises,' and 'a general glut,' and 'depravity of the lower orders,' and 'apprehensions for property,' and 'fears for establishments,' and 'danger to social order,' and every man asking his neighbour how these evils had arisen. On one side would be seen the rich few, enjoying with trembling; and on the other, industrious and able-bodied men, dying because working would not support existence as it ought to do; women and children trodden down in the mass of suffering, and retiring into corners to die without resistance, as is their nature;—woe, and want, and wretchedness, and wrong,—and all this, that the squire's bitch hound might whelp in safety. If any legislators ever had a heavy responsibility, it would be those who tolerated such a state of things an hour after they had power to remove it. If any ever had a claim to the support of a grateful people, it would be those who ventured power and place, by resisting the demands of the encroaching order, and putting themselves upon their country for their deliverance.—Vol. IV., p. 476. *Introduction to Catechism on the Corn Laws, first published in 1827.*

THE NATURAL AND UNNATURAL SUFFERINGS OF THE PEOPLE.—DISTINCTION BETWEEN THEM.

"To the Editors of the Sheffield Iris.

"Sirs,—Too much can never be done, to impress in season and out of season, the images and feelings conveyed in the extract from your co-labourer of the *Leeds Times* in your paper of the 6th. But always weigh heaviest upon this point,—that the distress, the agony, the woe, are the results not of the natural concomitants of human life, but of a distinct organization of law to that effect made and provided, as the means of placing a greater portion of the labour of the poor at the command of the sworn interested law-makers.

"When we view the spectacles of misery so forcibly described, let us always summon the reflection, that these are not the consequences of the primæval curse which destined man to toil or worse suffering during his residence on earth; nor are they contained in the most undeniable of all assumptions, that 'the poor we shall have always with us.' They bear precisely the relation to these facts, which murder, wholesale or retail, does to the truth so gravely

cited by Justice Shallow, that 'death is certain to all.' There is a natural suffering, and there is an unnatural; there is one sorrow at the hands of Almighty God, and another sorrow of the landlords, and the proportions between the two are almost in the inverse ratio of the magnitude of the willers.

"To go over it again,—we are not grieving over the fact that every man, woman, and child, must at some time or other be brought with pain and lamentation to the grave. We are not rending our garments nor our hearts, because among the chances and changes of this mortal life, there must always be some who either through defect of conduct or of fortune, will find themselves disappointed in their plans for honest success, and be bound to submit to the ills of poverty, or the still greater ones of dependence on the charity of their fellows. But we are bowed to the earth with the thought, that in this country so full of piety which is of no use, and of knowledge which settles the anise and cummin of Greek accents and omits the weightier matters of the law, there should be a distinct organization by legislative enactment, regular, long-debated, premeditated, for raising and 'killing-off' a population of the poor, in order that as they come in succession like the grains of coffee to the grinders in the coffee-mill, a pleasant flavour from their destruction, like that which saluted the nostrils of Jupiter from a sacrifice, may meet the organs of the tyrants of the soil, in the shape of increased rents created out of the oppression of industry and commerce.

"It is not that such things are; it is that such things are done on purpose. It is that we have them done by regular human organization. God willed it not; the Devil did not think of it, or at all events there are no traces of it in his history. The mixture of darkness and evil which made up the intermediate thing called man, was the only hot-bed in which could be concocted such a fungus, as a legislative assembly administering an oath to an interest against the public, and being quietly allowed in the possession of its prey.

"London, April 10th, 1841."

—Vol. VI., p. 287.

"As an old dealer in these subjects, I would suggest to the Operatives at large, that the points on which clear views are most wanted among their class, and to which consequently their efforts should be directed, are the following:—

"1. That whenever anything is bought at a dearer market when it could have been

bought at a cheaper, the difference of price is lost to the consumer as if it was thrown into the sea, and without any the smallest gain or increase of employment or wages to working-men in the aggregate. The workman who is employed in the home monopoly may gain; but he takes it all out of the pocket, not only of the consumer, but of some other workman besides, whom the consumer would have employed by the expenditure of the difference.

"2. That this principle tells with horrible effect, when the consumer is *the working man*, and the article to be consumed is what he cannot live without, food.

"3. That the consequence of such a system is that there must be a perpetual *killing-off* of the population of the working classes, from the moment their numbers have begun to press against the food produced at home. If only a certain number are allowed to be fed, all the rest must be brought to the grinder in succession, like the grains of coffee in a coffee-mill. And the New Poor Law will be that mill.

"4. That for wages not to decrease under such a system, is a thing impossible; and he that says so, ought only to be laughed at, for he in fact says, that many people shall be fed out of the same food that would keep a few. Still more ought he who should say, that to remove present prohibitions on food would cause wages to fall; for it is saying that less shall be eaten out of much than out of a little.

"5. That the agricultural labourers are in the end brought to suffer, as much as the manufacturing. For as they have the same tendency to multiply, it is impossible they should not bid against each other for a limited quantity of food like the rest.

"6. That the mischief comes, by a process more or less roundabout, not only to all

who are engaged in the various professions and occupations of life which have no immediately apparent connexion with either agriculture or manufactures, but to the farmers, and even to the owners of land, with the exception of such as either are to have no children, like the Fellows of Colleges, or who have some patent for keeping them out of the public stock.

"*London, April 17th, 1841.*"

—Vol. VI., p. 304. *Sheffield Iris.*

"MERCHANTS OF HULL!"

"Why are there bankruptcies and failures among you?"

"Is it not because the trade to be divided is limited by law, while your numbers increase?"

"The trade is to be limited to what can be carried on in exchange for a given quantity of corn. Hence merchants bid against one another for taking lower profits, as the operatives for taking lower wages; and the weakest go to the wall.

"The country may possess commercial capabilities for the maintenance of ten times the merchants, and ten times the population of every kind. But all shall be cut down to the tenth; the population in the poor-house, and the merchants in the *Gazette*.

"Suppose that in old time, Tyre, Venice, or Genoa, had declared they would eat no corn but what was grown in their own territory. Where would the "MERCHANT QUEENS" of the Mediterranean have been?

"You are told not to have trade, lest at some time it should be cut off. Would it not be as well not to have legs, for the same reason?"

"*Hull, June 23, 1841.*"

—Vol. VI., p. 386. *Election Proceedings.*

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DIALOGUE

THE CORN LAWS,

ON

BETWEEN A

GENTLEMAN AND A FARMER.

The following conversation, nearly verbatim, took place on board a Steam-Boat, between a Gentleman and a Farmer :

Gentleman : Good morning, Sir, I see you have the *Mark Lane Express* in your hand; how do they quote the price of corn to day ?

Farmer : Wheat, Sir, I am sorry to say, is lower.

Gentleman : Last year I heard several of my agricultural friends complaining of the price being *too high*; how was that ?

Farmer : Prices then were too high, and the effect was to enhance the value of rents, which is injurious to the farmer.

Gentleman : But I thought that your Corn Bill was to remedy these evils.

Farmer : It does not prevent the fluctuation of high and low prices, certainly. What we want is a steady remunerating price about 60s. per quarter.

Gentleman : And this the Corn Law cannot secure to you.

Farmer : No.

Gentleman : Then why not petition for its repeal ?

Farmer : Because we should be worse off then than we are now.

Gentleman : How so? You admit that it does not protect you from the evils you wish to avoid; neither does it secure to you the good you desire to obtain.

Farmer : We must have some protection.

Gentleman : Why protection? Why should farmers expect to be secured from risks in their business more than others? Is it that they are less competent to manage them, or that farming is a losing concern? I should

say that a farmer has already many advantages; certainly more than the manufacturer has.

Farmer : How so; I should like to know how you make that out?

Gentleman : I will prove it to you: you grow corn, do you not? You sell it all in our *home market*, and have no occasion to export any.

Farmer : Certainly.

Gentleman : A manufacturer, on the other hand, makes (we will say for example) *cottons*, and as the demand for them in the home market is not equal to the supply, he has to send the surplus abroad.

Farmer : Very well.

Gentleman : Thus you see, Sir, you have a double advantage over the manufacturer; first, as *seller* of your own corn to him, in which case you *ADD* the *import charges*; and secondly, as *buyer* of his cottons, off which you *DEDUCT* the *export charges*; this leaves you a gainer upon each transaction. Now, if an impartial person was asked which of the two parties was most entitled to protection, yourself or the manufacturer, surely he must say the latter.

Farmer : Sir, I admit these to be advantages.

Gentleman : Then why not be content with them without exacting more? why desire a Corn Law to enable you to obtain a yet higher price for which you have not a shadow of a claim?

Farmer ; It is the foreigner we want to be protected against.

Gentleman : But you have always this advantage over the foreigner, that you sell on the spot, and he has to convey his corn 500 to 1,000 miles, and pay all the costs of transit, before he can compete with you in your own market. Now, whatever the amount of these charges may be, whether 10s., 15s., or 20s. per quarter, it is so much protection in your favour, and you add this sum to the price of your corn at the time you sell it, although you have been at neither cost nor trouble in the matter. In other words, you add to every quarter of wheat you sell the amount of the import charges, although you sell it in the home market.— This, Sir, I take to be a great advantage which you have over the manufacturer. It is a natural one which your position gives you ; you are entitled to it ; and no one complains of the gain you make. Do you see it ?

Farmer : I think I do. It never struck me so before : but we get none too much. But, Sir, I would just ask you, how can the English farmer, who is burdened with high taxes, compete with the foreigner who is scarcely taxed at all ?

Gentleman : I have already shown you one great advantage you have over the foreigner, and two which you have over the manufacturer ; and I am quite sure that many a high-minded land proprietor, if he could be brought to perceive the relative positions in which the agriculturist, the manufacturer, and the foreigner are placed, in regard to each other, would be the first to denounce the *protective system* as oppressive and unjust.

Farmer : But, Sir, you must be aware that the greatest burden of taxes falls upon the land.

Gentleman : Indeed I am not, Sir.

Farmer : Why, everything, in fact, comes out of the land, we are more heavily taxed than any other class, and are consequently entitled to greater protection.

Gentleman : Will you be kind enough to state in what respect you are taxed so much beyond the rest of the community ?

Farmer : Sir, I consider *tithes* to be a burden that fall almost exclusively on the land ; the *highway rates* do the same, and the *poor rates* press heavier on the farmer than any one else.

Gentleman : Well, Sir, these are very fair objections to make. Now let us examine them, and see what amount of benefit on each you are entitled to. Ecclesiastical tithe, properly speaking, is a civil tax levied for an

ecclesiastical purpose ; it was never the property of either landowners or farmers. A landlord cannot claim benefit for what he never bought, or a tenant for what he never hired. The latter, for instance, wishes to engage a farm, say of 200 acres ; the full value of the land is £250, but it is subject to the annual payment by the tenant of £50 for tithe. He hires it accordingly, paying £200 as rent to his landlord, and the £50 as tithe to the parson ; but he would not give £250, the value of the rent and tithe together, and then pay the tithe afterwards. In paying tithe, therefore, a farmer cannot be said to pay it out of his own capital, or out of his landlord's rent. Neither have the least claim for protection on account of tithe.

Farmer : Sir, you have stated the case very clearly, and I certainly see it in a somewhat different point of view to what I did before. A tenant who holds a *titheable farm*, pays no more than a tenant who occupies one that is *tithe free*.

Gentleman : Just so.

Farmer : Now, Sir, what have you to say on the Highway Rates.

Gentleman : The more numerous the roads are, and the better their condition, the greater is the advantage to those persons who own or occupy the surface of country over which they pass. Turnpike tolls form the great exchequer, out of which the main highways of the kingdom are kept up ; lines diverge from these, by which the value of land in numerous and extensive districts has been greatly enhanced ; and if in the remoter parishes the repair of the *by-ways* fall more especially on the farmer, it is because he is more largely benefited by their use. I live in a parish not more than two miles from a market town, and have to pay toll at a turnpike every time I go to it ; my neighbour, a farmer, who holds most of the land around me, and who lives half a mile further back, reaches the same town by a parallel road near his residence, and pays no turnpike at all. We both contribute to the *highway rates*, but I keep but one horse, and he keeps fourteen or fifteen, besides 500 sheep and other cattle, and his carts and waggons are constantly passing to and fro upon our parish roads between the several parts of his farm. Beyond him resides another tenant, who holds four similar occupations with corresponding advantages. I fear that the plea for *protection* on the ground of *highway rates* will turn out to be untenable, particularly when it is recollected that all farmers are exempted by Act of Parliament from the payment of tolls when carrying manure, and engaged in the work of their several occupations ; and further, that towns have their own streets to maintain, over which the carts and

horses of the farmers pass without paying any toll.

Farmer: Well, Sir, I should now like to hear your observations on the *Poor Law*.

Gentleman: You shall have them; only let me here premise one general remark, that whatever I may say, though *pointedly* addressed to you, is not intended *personally*, but against the *protective system* of which you are the advocate.

Farmer: I perfectly understand it so, and beg you will be quite free in expressing yourself. I shall not be offended.

Gentleman: Of the *Poor Law*, or rather the *Poor Rates* (for the latter I presume, are meant), I would say that the manufacturing and agricultural interests are, perhaps, upon a par. The poor generally exist in proportion to the amount of population; their number is smaller in thinly peopled rural districts, than in the larger towns. But here again, by living in the country, I have noticed some strange anomalies. I have seen, for instance, twenty able-bodied men in a parish out of employ, and the land in that parish suffering from the want of their labour: the farmers preferring to maintain them in idleness, rather than furnish them with the work that would turn to their own profit. And before the enactment of the *Poor Law*, I have known farmers, friends of my own, intelligent men, and highly respectable, who, when they wanted hands, and labourers have applied to them for work, have refused to engage them, and have hinted at the same time the propriety of their applying to the parish; the poor fellows through necessity have done so; and the same farmers, under the plea of benefitting the parish, have then consented to give 6s. per week for their services, knowing well that they were worth 10s. to them; and the parish had to make up the difference. Thus were the poor pauperised; and thus had the country to pay the wages of the farmers' labourers! And what is the object of the present *Poor Law*? Is it not to compel every able-bodied man, whether he has been thus pauperised or not, to depend upon his own labour for support? And does not the *Corn Law* deprive him of the right to exchange the produce of that labour with those who would give him food in plenty in return for it? How, then, can a poor man succeed under such circumstances? Or how can the principle of the *Poor Law* Bill be carried out? The two laws are incompatible.

Farmer: Sir, I acknowledge the charges to be too true; I also admit the inconsistency of such a mode of legislation.

Gentleman: Your plea for a *Corn Law* on the ground of *Tithes*, *Highway Rates*, and *Poor Rates*, I think is a failure. Can you advance any other reasons why the agricul-

turists should be especially protected? Or can you show in what respect they are more heavily taxed than others?

Farmer: I do not recollect just now, but I always considered that we had the worst of it.

Gentleman: If you cannot, then, prove to me that you pay *more* in proportion than others, will you allow me to prove to you that in truth you pay *less*.

Farmer: I like to hear you talk, and yet I don't like to hear you, if you can make *that* out. I like your *manner* but I don't like your *doctrine*.

Gentleman: The sting of a remark sometimes lies in the truth of it.

Farmer: I suppose so. But you were going to show me how the Farmer pays *less taxes* than any other people.

Gentleman: Very well. How many horses do you keep?

Farmer: Twelve, Sir.

Gentleman: What tax do you pay a year for each?

Farmer: Tax! tax; I don't pay anything for them.

Gentleman: Then other people do for theirs; and the relief afforded to the agriculturists by the repeal of the tax on their horses is about £500,000 per annum; *this sum*, therefore, you pay *less*; and here let me remark, that if a given sum is required annually for the exigencies of the State, (say fifty millions), and one class of the community is excused the payment of their portion, then that portion must fall upon the rest to pay, and such being the case in the present instance, the public are taxed £500,000 a-year for the farmer's benefit.

Farmer: Well, Sir, you may be right; I certainly do not pay any tax for my horses.

Gentleman: The *Window Tax*, again. Are you charged for any window in your farmhouse?

Farmer: No, Sir.

Gentleman: All farm houses under a rental of £200 a-year, the tenants deriving a fixed income from no other source, are exempt. Thus, here is £50,000 a-year you are relieved from, and which the public has to pay for you. And as a further specimen of the protective favour you enjoy, let me remind you that a deficiency has just been declared in the public revenue, and fresh taxes are required; and how do you suppose they are to be raised? by taxing such of the farmers' windows as pay nothing? No, but by an additional tax of ten per cent. on those who are already paying twice as much as they ought; and should the people come

plain of this act of injustice, they would be stigmatised as factious and revolutionary by the very parties to whom the boon of exemption is granted.

Farmer: Go on, you'll make something out of us in time.

Gentleman: I am afraid but little. I presume you employ as many servants of all kinds as you please, and pay no tax for any of them.

Farmer: Certainly.

Gentleman: Other persons, if they employ grooms, gardeners, stable boys, or what not, are charged for each; and this has been another saving to you of about £50,000 a-year.

Farmer: For one, I wish for nothing but what is fair, and certainly think that farmers ought not to require that others should be taxed for their benefit.

Gentleman: I think with you, but, unhappily for the country, the reverse is the case. Let me here ask you, do you pay any direct tax at all?

Farmer: No, I do not.

Gentleman: I thought so. Well, there is another singular boon you have lately received, which (since concessions are so common) may not have struck you.

Farmer: Gently, Sir, if you please.

Gentleman: I allude to your exemption from the payment of all duty on the *insurance of farming stock*. Now, if I insure my stock in trade, I must pay a tax to Government in proportion to the amount I insure; this effects a saving to the agricultural interests of more than £80,000 a-year. I could mention other taxes expressly repealed for the farmer's benefit, and which the public has consequently to pay. I observe, for instance, that farming stock is very frequently sold by auction—does it pay any auction duty to Government?

Farmer: No, Sir.

Gentleman: But the manufacturer's or tradesman's goods, when sold by auction, bear a duty of five per cent. to the Government. So you see here is another special exemption.

Farmer: You have mentioned enough.

Gentleman: Well, it can do us no harm to look at these things, and to talk over them pleasantly.

Farmer: Certainly, as I said before, I like to hear, only, to tell you the truth, I don't want to be convinced; it goes against my interest.

Gentleman: You think so, but depend upon it your interest consists in knowing the truth; it will be the first sure step to-

wards bettering your condition, which needs improvement.

Farmer: Ah! *there* I fully agree with you; it does need improvement.

Gentleman: It strikes me that the position in which the landed interest stands in reference to itself and the country, requires to be more clearly understood; and this is one object which I have had in view in mentioning these things.

Farmer: Sir, I am obliged to you; I quite think that you intend the farmers no harm, although you seem to state truths that I am sure they would not relish. Have you any other objections to make?

Gentleman: Yes: I think there is something very partial and very unjust in that law which allows a large landed proprietor to leave his estates to whom he pleases, without paying a single farthing for either *probate or legacy duty*, whilst others, who are not rich enough to hold land, and possess only *personal property*, have to pay both. A poor man who dies worth only twenty guineas, if he *wills* it to a neighbour or friend, who is not a relation, the latter, before he can touch it, must *prove the will*, and pay 10s. besides costs; and then he cannot appropriate the money to his own use till he has paid a further sum for *legacy duty*, of *two pounds*, to Government! A landed proprietor, on the other hand, may leave an estate in land worth £20,000, or any amount, to whom he pleases, without being charged one farthing. To exhibit the working of this law in favour of land yet more clearly, let us suppose a nobleman who dies possessed of *real estate* to the value of £100,000; he leaves it to whom he pleases, and no cost is incurred. A merchant or manufacturer dies possessed of *personal estate*, of the same value; he pays as under:—

Amount of probate duty.....	£1,500	0	0
Legacy duty, 10 per cent.....	10,000	0	0
(Not being left to a relation.)			

Total.....£11,500 0 0

And if the same rate of duty was levied upon real estate as is now levied upon personal, it would amount to from *two and a half to three millions* annually! Is this mode of taxation just?

Farmer: Most assuredly not.

Gentleman: Well, this is the way in which the people are oppressed; can we wonder then that there should be dissatisfaction?

Farmer: The law is very unfair and ought to be altered, but how comes it that we get such unequal laws?

Gentleman: Because the *landed aristocracy* have hitherto had the making of the laws, and they have always taken care of themselves.

This is exemplified by reference to the subject of Land Tax, in proportion to the amount of other taxes in this country, and the different countries in Europe. In most of the latter the Land Tax yields more than all their other taxes, whereas in Britain the Land Tax produces only *One Million odd*, and the other taxes about *Fifty Millions*. The legislature has ever descended to the minutest matters to exempt the landed interest; even the shepherd's dog is liable to no duty, while the tradesman's yard dog must pay. A fresh example of partial legislation in favour of the farmers may be seen in our new Income Tax. They are to be exempt from the inquisitorial examination of their profits! All occupiers of farms under a rental of £300 per annum to pay nothing? Those above that amount are to be assessed at only half their rentals, whilst other persons with incomes of £150 a year or upwards are obliged to disclose the full particulars of their profits and pay upon the whole amount.

Farmer : But there is another very important point which occurs to me just now, and which I should like to have cleared up; I allude to the national debt. Now, how is the interest of this to be paid, if the farmer is not protected?

Gentleman : Precisely in the same way as it is now paid by others who have no protection. By protection you mean that a monopoly price should be given you for your corn, to enable you the better to bear your share of the general taxation. Now, what right has the farmer, by virtue of a Corn Law, to lay a surcharge on the consumer to enable him to do this? That is not paying the taxes; that is not bearing his share of the interest of the national debt; it is shifting the burden from his own shoulders upon the shoulders of his neighbour. You may very fairly ask how the interest on the national debt is to be paid, seeing that the people, in addition to the taxes levied by the state, have to pay the taxes levied on them by the LAND. If one of your teams of horses could scarcely draw your wagon, because it was loaded, would you lay on more to make them draw the better?

Farmer : It is quite evident that we do not see eye to eye. The very points which I considered our strongest ones, you regard as our weakest. I still think that the Corn Law is not the disadvantage to the country many suppose; because, allowing that it secures to the farmer better prices, these are afterwards laid out again with the manufacturer—he becomes a better customer to the latter in proportion.

Gentleman : My dear Sir, excuse me, this is a part and parcel of the wretched reason-

ing with which the Corn Law advocates have ever attempted to bewilder the country. If I give you a sum of money for your goods beyond what they are intrinsically worth, to enable you to be a better customer to me in return, what do I get by it? If you merely lay out with me what I have given you in the first instance, why might I not as well have retained the money in my pocket? Unfortunately the mischief does not end here; the effect of the Corn Law is to destroy manufactures and commerce, and thus to deprive the nation of the very means by which all taxes are paid. When will the people be wise or their rulers be just?

Farmer : But, Sir, you must surely admit that the agricultural labourer is better off when the price of corn is high than when it is low; his wages are always raised in proportion.

Gentleman : I by no means admit this; to be better off his wages ought to be more than raised in proportion. Pray what may be considered the average price of wheat at the present moment?

Farmer : 38s. per coomb.

Gentleman : And what wages per week do you pay your workmen?

Farmer : 10s. per week.

Gentleman : What is the lowest average price you have known wheat to sell at?

Farmer : I have known it sold as low as 21s. per coomb.

Gentleman : And what was the rate of wages then?

Farmer : I should say 8s. to 9s. per week.

Gentleman : Then, Sir, you have upset your own argument.

Farmer : How so.

Gentleman : Why, if a labourer earned 8s. a week when wheat was 21s. per coomb, he could procure with his money about six pecks; whereas, the man who earns 10s. a week, wheat being at 38s. per coomb, can procure only about four pecks; in other words, you ought to give your workman, according to the present price of corn, 14s. a week instead of 10s. His condition, therefore, according to your own showing, is deteriorated instead of improved. But this is not all; the sudden fluctuations in the price of corn, to which the agricultural poor are subject, is a serious disadvantage to them. The Corn Law in the rural districts operates as a disturbing force on wages, but not as a regulating one. Between the price of corn and the price of wages, a principle of self interest on the part of the employer interposes and acts inversely upon them, keeping corn up to the maximum price, and wages down to the minimum. And you will please also to recollect that there is

still a large class of persons whose wages, though affected by the price of corn, are regulated by the demand and supply of labour in the market; I allude to the manufacturing labourers, the mechanics, artizans, and workmen in other trades; on these a greater injury is often inflicted, for it happens, and not unfrequently, that when the price of their labour is *unusually low*, the price of corn is *unusually high*, and then we have, as a consequence, one of those popular outbreaks, for which the *people* are blamed, and the *government* is in fault.

Farmer: Oh, I give up the argument as respects the manufacturing operatives.

Gentleman: Let us next turn our eye upon the Polish husbandman, clad in his dress of sheep skins. He grows corn sufficient for his wants, and would be glad to exchange it for the cottons of the Manchester weaver; each is ready to supply the needs of the other to their mutual advantage; but again the cupidity of the Corn Law interferes with its protecting duty, and both are brought to a stand still. Wide prospects are sometimes seen through small openings. Reverse the picture, and suppose these men left at liberty to exchange the products of their respective industry, an impulse would immediately be given to foreign agriculture, distant markets would be opened to our manufactures, commerce would increase, and all would participate in the general benefit.

Farmer: I am afraid not the farmer; his prices would fall, and his trade would be ruined.

Gentleman: If so, it only proves the unsound and artificial position in which he stands, and which wants a remedy. The natural result of the change would be this; the demand for foreign corn would enhance its price; the price would augment the value of land abroad; an improved system of culture would be introduced, better implements be required, more labourers wanted, and higher wages paid; these, and other concomitant circumstances, so far from tending to lower our home prices of corn, would carry the foreign price up. And when to this we add the new demand for our manufactures, with the consequent stimulus that would be given to British industry, instead of the thousands and tens of thousands now emigrating for want of employ, and the numerous manufacturing establishments formed and forming, in self defence, in nearly all the European states, we should be glad of our population at home at fair wages, and these would form so many additional customers to the British farmer, and again INCREASE rather than diminish both the price and consumption of his corn. But leaving the question of price to adjust itself, as it soon naturally would, what

have we to do with the profit and loss of the landed interest, or the manufacturing interest, or the commercial interest, or indeed any other interest in its separate character? This officious management on the part of government of men's affairs, in their private instead of their public capacities, has been, and ever will be, a fruitful source of discontent and mischief. The people have a right to enjoy peaceably the fruits of their labour, and if the agriculturists attempt to deprive them of it, they have a just cause to complain.

Farmer: But, Sir, you would surely not have this country depend on foreign countries for the supply of corn. What should we do, if this was the case, in times of war or scarcity?

Gentleman: In time of war we should probably do as we are now doing with the article of *tea*, continue to buy it as if no war existed; albeit there would yet be this difference, that *tea* is grown only in China, whereas *corn* is grown in every country; and we are surely not intending to make a quarrel with all the world at the same time. Indeed it is well known that *during the war with France* we were to a great extent supplied with corn from that country, at a period of great scarcity, owing to the failure of our crops. Besides, as to a war, all good men must deplore it, and no public measure like *free trade* is so calculated to prevent its occurrence. It is no advantage to either individuals or nations to quarrel with their customers; for this reason, it behoves alike the statesman, the Christian, and the philanthropist, to endeavour to do away with the present system of monopoly for one of free trade. As to a *scarcity*, seeing that every country is liable to it, it is surely better not to confine our dependance to *one*, even though that one be our own; for, in the event of a scarcity, I think yourself must admit that it would be desirable to have other markets to go to. Depend upon it, the wider the surface from whence we draw our supply of corn the better, and the less is its fluctuation in price; and if that surface be the world instead of England, our risks of failure from the seasons is diminished, and our security increased.

Farmer: You seem determined, Sir, not to allow us farmers one argument to defend ourselves.

Gentleman: I allow you to advance all the arguments you please, but I think you ought to have recourse to sounder ones.

Farmer: If you could only show us that we should obtain as good a price for our corn, when the law is repealed, as we do now that we are protected, we would directly give it up.

Gentleman: Before I do this, you are

bound to prove to me that you are entitled to a Corn Law, and that you would be losers by its repeal, neither of which you have yet done. However, whether conviction be produced in your mind or not, it is very evident to those who watch the signs of the times that a strong feeling is growing in the public mind in favour of the repeal of the Corn Laws; and if to this we add the consideration of a remarkable physical fact, that whilst the land of England remains in extent the same, our population is increasing at the rate of 1,000 a-day! it would seem as if the change could not be far distant. How much wiser, then, would it be to meet the case in a time of tranquillity, than to defer it to a time of commotion; to concede with a grace what *may* be extorted by clamour! With respect to your remark that it would be well to show farmers that they would be no losers by the repeal of the Corn Laws, I may say that I think they would be gainers by it, certainly in the following respects:—

Farming, it must be admitted, is a pursuit rendered sufficiently hazardous by the changes of the seasons, failures of the crops, &c., without being subjected to the sudden fluctuations in price which are produced by the Corn Law. The latter converts the operation of farming into a lottery, with the chances against the tenant; for in taking a farm, he hires it not at its *natural value*, so as to benefit by any advantage which the times might subsequently confer upon him, but he hires it at a *Corn Bill* or *monopoly price*, which has the effect of transferring all the advantage to his landlord, in the shape of rent; whilst, should prices decline, the loss falls on *himself*. In this dilemma, we have had weekly announcements in the papers of the generosity of Lord A—, or the munificence of Lord B—, in returning 5, 10, or 20 per cent., at the rent audits of their tenantry; in plain English, surrendering their claims to arrears they could never get, and which in most cases they should never have attempted to exact. Liberality is a gem that ought to shine in the lease, and not in the landlord's judgment.

By this act of apparent generosity, the tenant is placed under a perpetual obligation to his landlord, and is thereby deprived of that independence of speech and action in political affairs which is enjoyed by the humblest mechanic; a position very unfavourable to the tenant, and which the landlord knows too well how to turn to account when fitting occasions offer. Nevertheless, the latter is not solely in fault; some blame attaches to the tenant, who too readily suffers himself to be placed in this state of dependence.

In times of *scarcity*, when the price of corn rises, it generally happens that the

greater portion of small farmers have little or no stocks to sell; indeed, the scarcity of the article it is that occasions the advance; thus they are not only shut out from the benefit of increased profit arising from the advanced prices, but, in addition to high rents, many other things have a tendency to rise, and this when the farmer is least able to bear it.

On the other hand, in times of *abundance*, whether arising from unusually large harvests, or extensive importation, or probably both causes, the *price declines*, and they are again debarred from profit; and the consumers being supplied, no reduction in price can increase the demand, save only such a ruinous reduction as will induce speculators to buy a perishable article which they do not want, with the view of hoarding it up against they do. Thus the farmer suffers in both cases.

The Corn Laws are a cause of the farmer's uncertainty and perplexity, when he ought to be fairly and securely reckoning on regular gains.

They are a great occasion of the farmer's instability of position, sometimes deluding him with false hopes, and sometimes depressing him below his just level, and extorting from him the unavailing cry to the legislature of agricultural distress.

They are a cause of the farmer's alienation from the industrial portion of the community, connecting his advantages with their sufferings, and his losses with their gains, and thus infusing into society a bitterness of spirit unfavourable to the landed interest.

Farmer: Well, but I presume you don't go the length of advocating total repeal all at once

Gentleman: Yes, and for this reason, that as no other settlement can be final, and as it is for the interest of the farmer to have the question set at rest, I would therefore abolish the Corn Law at once and for ever.

Farmer: Why not put on a low fixed duty instead of the sliding scale?

Gentleman: Because, for the reasons I have already given you, there is no just ground for imposing any duty whatever upon foreign corn, for the protection of the landed interest of this country. The manufacturers disclaim all desire for protection, and denounce it as a mischievous delusion. Recollect, too, that all the agitation that is now going on is against a fixed duty. The cry everywhere is, "No bread tax!" and, judging from the manner in which public opinion is every day becoming more and more opposed to any duty upon corn, I am convinced that total repeal is inevitable in the end.

Farmer: But you would not be so unrea-

sonable, I should think, as to refuse to give us time; you would agree to a duty of 8s. or 10s. to begin with, going off a shilling every year?

Gentleman: In my opinion, *that* would be the very worst plan of all for the farmers, for then the landlord would put off the adjustment of rent from year to year, and in the end, probably throw the whole of the loss, if there was any, upon the tenant; but I will explain the matter in this way. The steward would say, "Well, Farmer So-and-so, we'll see how this new Corn Law works for a year; in the meantime you must bestir yourself, and next year we'll talk the matter of rent over." The next year the tenant pays the full rent, and the steward says, "You must set to work and improve your cultivation; there are great improvements going on, and my lord (meaning his landlord) is anxious that you should not be behind your neighbours." The third year the full rent is paid, and the steward recommends the Scotch system of two-horse ploughs, under-draining, &c. The fourth year the same rent is paid, and the steward compliments the tenant upon his improved method of farming. The fifth, sixth, and seventh years pass over in the same way; the farmer exerting all his energies to increase his produce and diminish his expenses, in order to meet the rent day. The duty has now dropped to 3s. a quarter. "Well, Farmer So-and-so," says the steward, "we seem to have been more frightened than hurt by this Corn Law; there does not seem to be much to fear from foreign competition after all." In the mean time, however, whilst the old rent is continued, the foreigner has been putting more land under cultivation, to be ready to take advantage of the low duty, and the importing merchant has been holding back his corn in bond, to pour it upon the market at the same time; and thus the English farmer finds his market swamped, all of a sudden, just as he does now by the

sliding scale. On the contrary, if the Corn Law were immediately abolished, there would be an instant adjustment of rents all over the kingdom, there would be no stock of corn ready abroad to throw upon the market, the farmer would take his farm upon a long lease, most likely at a *corn rent*, before he began his improvements, and then he, and not the landlord, would reap all the benefit of his exertions. I shall only add that I have thought much upon this matter, and am convinced that the best thing for the farmers, under all the circumstances of the times, would be, *the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws*.

Farmer: There is a good deal of reason in what you say; and, at all events, I am sure you are giving me your sincere opinion. I must confess that I thought we were more burdened than we appear to be, and I was not before aware that we had so many special exemptions as you have acquainted me with. The fact that the land tax is so much heavier upon the land of the other European countries than upon our own land, is, I must admit, a very striking fact; but what goes farthest towards removing my fears for the consequences of the abolition of the Corn Laws, is the advantages we should have, and, as you say, always must have, over the foreigner, in the circumstance that, while we produce the corn where it is consumed, he must be at the expense of freight, insurance, and shipping charges; and I am almost inclined to think this would secure to us a steady and fair remunerating price.

Here the conversation between the Gentleman and the Farmer was interrupted by the termination of the voyage; to what extent it might otherwise have been carried, it is difficult to say. Both parties separated in the most friendly manner; and I have recorded their dialogue in the hope that it may be useful to others, and throw some additional light on the state of the Corn Laws.

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Manchester.

FACTS FOR FARMERS.

WE are continually told by Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Buckingham, Sir James Graham, the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Cayley, and others, that the corn laws benefit the *farmers* and the *agricultural labourers*: the *landlords* who passed these laws in 1816, with the parliament houses surrounded by soldiers to keep off the enraged mob, assure us that their only aim was to put money into the pockets of the *tenants* and *labourers*,—that they derive no benefit themselves from the corn laws. One thing is certain, these laws do put a great deal of money into somebody's pockets. The difference between the price of the corn sold every year in England, and the price at which the same quantity could be bought on the continent of Europe, amounts to many millions of pounds sterling. This immense sum of money is paid by the labourer, the artizan, the widow, the orphan, the old man, and the babe, for all oat bread, or oatmeal, or barley cakes. But who pockets all this gold? The Duke of Buckingham tells us that the *farmers* and *labourers* get every farthing of it. But let us hear what Earl Fitzwilliam says on the other side of the question.

His lordship, who is himself one of the greatest landowners in the kingdom, has published three *addresses* to the landowners of England. The first appeared in February, 1831. The next came out in April, 1835. And the third and last was published in January, 1839. These three *addresses* are now printed in a cheap form, stitched together, and all may be bought of Ridgway, the publisher, Piccadilly, London, or ordered through a bookseller in any country town, at 6d. Every farmer or labourer who wishes to know the truth of this question, about which all the country is now agitated, will buy 'Lord Fitzwilliam's first, second, and third Addresses to the Landowners of England on the

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Corn Laws." We have given the title of the work to prevent mistakes; and now we shall give a few short extracts, in order that our readers may judge of the sack by the quality of the sample.

His lordship begins with an inquiry into the operations of the corn laws, upon the most numerous body of agriculturists. We give his own words:—

"First of all, let us examine the case of the labourer in husbandry.

"Look at his habits and circumstances, consider how large a portion of his slender income is expended in the purchase of bread and flour, and can any of you arrive at the conclusion that he is benefited by enhancing the price of corn? So far is this from being the case that, probably, there is hardly a class of labourers more interested in having corn cheap than those who are engaged in husbandry; because there is none that spends so much, comparatively, upon the necessaries, and so little upon the comforts, or the luxuries of life."

His lordship now appeals to experience, and every man above the age of fifty can tell whether the following statement of facts be true:—

"Did the period of the so-called agricultural prosperity, which is supposed to have reached its highest pitch in 1810, really bring comfort into the cottage of the labourer? Did it give him a greater command over the first necessary of life? Did it enable him to obtain something beyond the necessaries of life, and thus to raise himself in the scale of society? To those landowners who took advantage of the times, and to those tenants whose landlords did not, I know well that it brought wealth; but whether it brought comfort to the labourer except in districts where enclosures or other im-

improvements which cannot be repeated, were in actual progress, is a very different question. It is, nevertheless, a question which must be solved before we can determine whether agricultural prosperity can be truly predicated of that period of our history. Summon, therefore, into your presence, the men who are old enough to remember those times, and who are both able and willing to give you an account of their condition. Let these inquiries be made in various situations. Make them in districts of old enclosure—make them in districts of open field—make them in the north, and in the middle, and in the south of England, excluding only those particular spots where such improvements were in actual progress, as when once finished cannot be repeated. If your inquiries are so conducted, I am much mistaken if you will not conclude that the boasted period of agricultural prosperity was, to the labourer, a season of distress—and one during which he began to fall from his former station, to that lower condition to which we now see him reduced in many parts of England."

Lord Fitzwilliam tells us that a labourer, his wife, and three children, consume every week about five gallons and a half of wheat, or say two thirds of a bushel. Now the way in which we must judge of the condition of the labourers, in different years is, by first looking at the price of wheat, next at the rate of wages for the same time, and thus learning how much there is to spare over and above the money laid out for bread and flour. His lordship gives as a table of the rate of wages, the price of two-thirds of a bushel of corn, and the difference over and above the money required for bread in a labourer's family of five persons, for a period of thirty-three years. He says that from 1803 to 1810, the labourer's wages in May, were steady at ten shillings per week. During these seven years, wheat rose steadily in price, and the five gallons and a half of wheat, which cost the labourer four shillings and eightpence in 1803, cost him eight shillings and tenpence in 1810: so that whilst he had five shillings and fourpence to spare for clothing and other comforts in 1803, he had only one shilling and twopence in 1810. The following is the table furnished by Lord Fitzwilliam. Let every reader who happens to be an old man, with a good memory study it, and explain to younger men how far it agrees with experience:—

TABLE

Showing the wages in May, in each of the following years, and the difference between Wages and the price of two-thirds of a Bushel of Wheat:—

Year	Wages a Week.	Price of two-thirds of a bushel of wheat.		Difference between wages and price being money to spare for clothing and other comforts.	
	s. d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1797	7 0	4	4	2	8
1798	7 0	4	2	2	10
1799	7 0	5	9	1	3
1800	7 0	9	5	2	5*
1801	10 0	9	10	0	2
1802	7 0	5	7	3	5
1803	10 0	4	8	5	4
1804	10 0	5	0	5	0
1805	10 0	7	3	2	9
1806	10 0	6	7	3	5
1807	10 0	6	0	4	0
1808	10 0	6	6	3	6
1809	10 0	8	0	2	0
1810	10 0	8	10	1	2
1811	12 0	7	10	4	2
1812	14 0	10	6	3	6
1813	14 0	9	1	4	11
1814	14 0	6	1	7	11
1815	12 0	5	4	6	8
1816	11 0	6	3	4	9
1817	12 0	7	9	4	3
1818	12 0	7	0	5	0
1819	12 0	6	1	5	11
1820	12 0	5	6	6	6
1821	10 0	4	6	5	6
1822	10 0	3	8	6	4
1823	9 0	4	5½	4	6½
1824	10 0	5	4	4	8
1825	11 0	5	8	5	4
1826	11 0	4	10	6	2
1827	11 0	4	8	6	4
1828	11 0	5	0	6	0
1829	11 0	5	6	5	6

* This is 2s. 5d. less than the money required to purchase bread alone.

If this table be correct, then it is clear that the labourer's comforts have always been greatest when the price of wheat was the lowest, and that he had the least to spare when the price of wheat was highest. What then becomes of the assertions of Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Buckingham, Sir James Graham, the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Cayley, and others, who tell us that the high price of corn is good for the labourer? It is plain from this table that Lord Fitzwilliam speaks the honest truth when he tells the world that the corn laws are "a system from which the agricultural labourer is suffering more than any other part of the community." Let it not be forgotten that, as Lord Fitzwilliam very justly observes "the pressure of the poor rates increases with the rise in the price of corn; and if you examine the parliamentary returns, you will find that a high price of corn is imme-

mediately followed by an increase in these rates."

It is quite clear, then, that the *labourers* do not pocket the many millions of pounds sterling gained by somebody from the corn laws. Let us next see what Earl Fitzwilliam says about the *farmers*.

"Having considered the effect of high prices upon the great mass of the agricultural population, consisting of *labourers*, let me now call your attention to the situation in which your *tenantry*, the owners of farming stock, have been placed by, or, at least, notwithstanding the successive corn bills which were passed since the peace. The object of the law of 1815 was to keep the average price of wheat at, or as near as possible to 80s. the quarter, below which it was stated by the witnesses, and admitted by the committee of the House of Commons, in 1814, that wheat, (supposing the existing rents to be continued) could not be produced in England. To this bill I gave my assent; and of all the important questions upon which I voted, in the course of the twenty-five years during which, with one short interval, I have sat in parliament, it is the only one upon which I regret the part that I took. I am, and have been for many years, satisfied that that measure was founded on the most erroneous principles, and that it has been attended with the most disastrous consequences. In this place allow me to draw your attention solely to the effects which it produced upon our tenants. Relying upon the wisdom and power of the legislature, they were induced by it to expect those prices for their produce which the law, and the proceedings which led to its enactment, held out as the prices of grain to be maintained. They entered upon, and continued upon, farms, the rents of which were founded upon prices held out to them by act of parliament. If the prices rose to an extravagant height, as they did in 1817, in consequence of the deficient harvest, of 1816, the expectations of the *farmers* and *land valuers* were raised still higher; while, on the other hand, if they fell below the parliamentary standard, the fall was attributed to some accidental and transient cause, and was disregarded in fixing rents, by both the *landlord*, the *valuer*, and the *tenant*.

"During the interval from 1815 to 1822, the *farmer* experienced the most extraordinary fluctuations in the price of his merchandise, fluctuations arising from the variations of the seasons,

but aggravated by the state of the law, which either rigorously prohibited, or indiscriminately admitted, foreign corn. What, however, I am particularly anxious to direct your attention to is, the utter inefficiency of the law to effect either of its two objects, that of protecting the *farmer* from too low, or the consumer from too high a price. In the spring of 1817, wheat sold at 120s. a quarter; in the winter of 1821-2, it sold at less than 40s. a quarter; the average of the year 1817, being 94s., and that of 1822, being 43s. The highest price in Oxford at Lady-Day, 1817, was 148s.; at Michaelmas, 1820, 66s.; at Michaelmas, 1822, 52s. a quarter. The consequence of this state of things cannot have escaped your recollection. Great difficulties had been felt by the *farmers* in 1814-15 and 1816; but the difficulties of all former years were surpassed by the distress of the winter of 1821-2. The insolvency of tenants, at this period, was unparalleled in the history of agricultural classes, and the inefficiency of the act of 1815, was so universally acknowledged, that an alteration in the law was made in the session of 1822! but the alteration being contingent upon circumstances which never occurred, no permanent or practical change took place till the year 1828, when the present system was adopted. During the period, therefore, from 1815 to 1828, the prohibitory system of 1815 was in virtual operation. How far it secured you from a diminution of rental, your tenants from insolvency, every landlord in England can testify. I am here, however, principally entreating your consideration of the effects produced upon the agricultural capital of the country. Year after year the value of the *farmer's* produce had been diminishing, till it fell to little more than half the price at which parliament considered that he could be remunerated for his industry. Year after year he was deluded by fallacious hopes, excited by the law itself; his rent was paid out of his capital, and not out of his profits, till that capital became insufficient for the proper cultivation of the land, and then you yourselves began to feel the calamity by which many of your tenantry had been already overwhelmed. Compare, then, the situation of that tenantry, under the protection of the Corn Law of 1815, with what it probably would have been, had the trade been avowedly free; or if you had been contented with the protection afforded by the law of 1804 under which it would have been practically free

extravagant hopes would have been excited, no such erroneous calculations would have been made: rents would have fallen to a value corresponding to the price of grain, the agricultural capital of the country would have been unimpaired, and the land would have remained in a better state of cultivation. Your nominal rentals might have been diminished, but your rents would have been collected with facility, and you would not have been driven, time after time, to the wretched expedient of returning a per centage to your tenants at each successive audit, in order to induce them to remain on their farms, an expedient that proclaims to your fellow-citizens that those who resort to it are in the habit of demanding from their tenants a larger rent than they are capable of paying. Nothing, I must confess, is more distressing to me, than to witness these half-yearly annunciations of the mis-called liberality of certain portions of the landed interest. Has it never struck you, fellow-citizens, that this is no evidence of liberality, but rather of extortion; that the return of part of the rent may be proper, when called for by temporary calamity, by the effects of flood, or storm, or by some accidental misfortune, overwhelming a particular tenant, or class of tenants; but that, when resorted to habitually, it is not to be justified; that it convicts those who have recourse to it, of continued attempts to extract from their tenantry a rent not warranted by the value of agricultural produce; and that so far from proving the liberality of the *landlord*, it affords testimony of a very different quality?"

Thus plainly does Earl Fitzwilliam also show that the *farmers'* profit as little as the *labourers* by the Corn Laws. He proves that these laws have been so many snares, to mislead and ruin

the tenants with the delusive bait of high act-of-parliament prices. So far from their profiting by the Corn Laws, he has shown that *farmer* and *labourer* have been equally injured by the legislation that was pretended to be for their exclusive advantage; and at last, his lordship comes to the candid admission, that "whichever effect we consider, whichever branch of the dilemma we take, the Corn Law is guilty."

The noble author here falls into a form of expression that does not properly express his meaning. The Corn Law cannot be guilty. *The law makers are guilty.* If we search a little further, we shall, however, find that he tells us very plainly who the guilty persons are, who have made these laws, and why they have been made. "*The painful confession must be made,*" says his lordship, "*that our own benefit is the true object for which this obnoxious code is established.*" His lordship tells his brother *landlords* that they (the *landlords*) pocket every farthing of the profit derived from the Corn Laws, a profit amounting, as we have before said, to many millions of pounds sterling every year. As a *landlord*, Earl Fitzwilliam tells his brother *landlords* that they are guilty of all the evils, crimes, miseries, and physical and moral deterioration which are inflicted upon the people by the Corn Laws. He could not have heaped upon the consciences of a body of men a more terrible responsibility than this. He tells them, moreover, in solemn warning, that the hour of retribution is certain to arrive. We shall close our notice of his lordship's labours, by quoting the most consoling passage in the pamphlets: "Laws, based as the Corn Law is, on injustice and partiality, can never be of long endurance. They are only fit for fair weather, they cannot resist the storm."

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE, NEWALL'S-BUILDINGS,
MANCHESTER.

AN

ADDRESS TO FARMERS,

ON THE WAY IN WHICH

THEIR FAMILIES ARE TO BE PROVIDED FOR.

COUNTRYMEN AND FRIENDS,

I am the son of a farmer, whose father, grandfather, great grandfather, and great great grandfather had occupied land on the same estate from the time of Queen Elizabeth; all my relatives in the last generation were employed in agriculture; I should have been so employed myself had I been permitted to follow the bent of my own inclination; and throughout the thirty-five years of business toil in which I have been engaged, I have never ceased to cherish the hope that I should be enabled to terminate an active life on a piece of land of my own, where I could follow out the employment which had so many charms for me in youth. You may, therefore, suppose that I should regret to see you suffer any injustice from the legislature; and that my conviction that the Corn Law is injurious to your interest, arises from no prejudice against the class of men from whom I have sprung, and with whom I hope again to be associated ere I descend to the grave.

I have said that I was not allowed to follow the bent of my own inclination. My father told us that he could make no more than one son a farmer. "One of you," he used to say, "will succeed me in the farm, and the rest shall have such an education as will enable them to shift for themselves. I cannot stock four farms for you; and if I could I would not send

[J. GADSBY, PRINTER, MANCHESTER.]

three of you out to bid against my neighbours, and to raise their rents or displace them." And thus at seventeen, when I had begun to pride myself in ploughing a furrow as straight as a mathematical line, and when the possession of a horse and gun, and the enjoyment of field sports, and the pleasant alternation of amusement and toil, were most relished, was I compelled to the solitude of a great town, and to a tiresome gin-horse drudgery, which for one whole year was almost unendurable. And it was not until I came deliberately to reflect on my father's observations that I was fully reconciled to my occupation. I was then convinced that his was the wise course; and I have ever since been convinced that farmers took a very mistaken view of their own interest if they thought it could be promoted at the expense of trade, in which a great portion of their families would have to seek for employment. It is this view of the relations between agriculture and trade to which I wish now to direct your attention.

If farmers were not too much accustomed to receive their opinions from landlords, they would very soon discover that, even if the Corn Law was advantageous to them *individually*, (which I deny,) it is most injurious to them as *heads of families*. What does any man labour for? Not merely that he, singly

and without any ties of affinity, may obtain a subsistence, but that he may be able to secure comfort and respectability for his family. There may be exceptions to the rule, but they are exceedingly rare. The farmer can bring up one son only to his own occupation, if the son be intended to hold the same station as the father, which he could not do if the farm was to be divided. For the rest of his sons he must find other employment. The church, the law, and medicine are open to them; but in these professions a protracted and expensive education is a necessary preliminary. Trade, therefore, becomes the resource of the surplus population of the farm. If the farmer have two sons, he has, so far as their settlement in life is concerned, an equal interest in agriculture and in trade. If he have three, he has twice as much interest in trade as in agriculture. If he have five or six, he may find it advantageous to him (and I know several such instances) to give up farming altogether, and remove into a town, in order to push them *all* forward in trade. It is to enforce this view that I proceed to lay before you the history of twelve families personally known to me.

I have taken families in which all the sons have arrived at man's estate, and after they have chosen the occupations which are likely to be followed throughout life. In like manner I have chosen, in all the cases, to include only families where the daughters have attained, or gone beyond, the usual marriageable age.

1. *Four Sons*.—One an engineer, emigrated to Kentucky, two, farmers, who also emigrated, and one a manufacturer in Glasgow. *Five Daughters*; two married emigrants, two married farmers, and one married a person employed in iron works.

2. *Six Sons*.—One a manufacturer in Glasgow, one a banker in Lancashire, one a farmer, and three emigrated to Canada. *Six Daughters*; two married Glasgow manufacturers, one a town clergyman, and three are unmarried.

3. *Four Sons*.—Two emigrated to the United States, one a grocer in Edinburgh, and one a farmer. *Two Daughters*; one married an emigrant, and one is unmarried.

4. *Six Sons*.—Two merchants in Glasgow, one a merchant in London, one a drysalter in London, and two unmarried assistants to their father. *One Daughter* unmarried.

5. *Five Sons*.—All merchants in Manchester. *Three Daughters*; two married to manufacturers, and one to a merchant in Manchester.

6. *Four Sons*.—Calico printers in Manchester. *One Daughter* unmarried.

7. *Two Sons*.—One a merchant in Liverpool, and one a brewer in Birmingham. *Two Daughters* unmarried.

8. *Three Sons*.—One a surgeon in India, one a merchant in Edinburgh. *Two Daughters*; one married to a mechanic, and one unmarried.

9. *Five Sons*.—All employed in Glasgow. *Three Daughters*; married to Glasgow tradesmen.

10. *Two Sons*.—One a manufacturer and one a farmer. *Two Daughters*; married to farmers.

11. *One Son*.—A dyer. *Three Daughters* unmarried.

12. *Five Sons and Two Daughters*.—All emigrated to the United States with their parents.

In these twelve families there were *forty-seven* sons who all arrived at man's estate, and only *four* of them are farmers. There were *thirty-two* daughters, the youngest of them of a marriageable age, only *four* of whom married farmers. Thus, of the whole *seventy-nine* only *eight* have any direct interest in agriculture, for the unmarried are annuitants. Of the *thirty-two* daughters not fewer than *twelve* remain unmarried; a proof that if farmers find it difficult to settle their sons around them, it is still more difficult to find suitable matches for their daughters.

In all these instances the heads of the families, with one exception, held rather extensive farms, and the sons, by emigration, or by trade at home, have sustained their fathers' station in society, and some have risen considerably beyond it. But the children of the smaller farmers, of those who held from 30 to 100 acres of land, have sunk to the class immediately below that of their fathers. Their sons have become farm labourers, masons, joiners, smiths, weavers, &c., and the daughters have married into the same

class. This has been almost invariably the case where the father has not been able to confer education upon them, for without the elevating sentiments derived from knowledge, there is seldom any spirit of enterprize. In a parish which I have particularly in view while writing, if the father was a *reading* man it might safely have been predicted that his family would emigrate, or betake themselves to trade or to professions. If the father was uneducated and took no means to have his children well instructed, it might, with equal safety, have been predicted that they would sink into the class of mere labourers.

The landowner—the gentleman of easy or moderate fortune, has a wider range in the way of providing for his family. He can afford to educate one son for the BAR, to whom, if he possesses ability, a splendid career, with the woollack in ultimate prospect, is open; he can afford to educate one son for the CHURCH, and is able to procure preferment for him; he can send one into the NAVY, with patronage to secure promotion; he can purchase for another a commission in the ARMY; and there are thousands of openings in our COLONIES and numerous dependencies to all who can command aristocratic influence. From all these various sources of profitable and honourable employment *your sons*—the sons of humble farmers—are almost entirely shut out. And yet, possessing all these modes of provision and advancement, the sons of landowners often find themselves compelled to descend to trade, and their daughters would often remain single if they were too proud to receive the addresses of tradesmen. Here is the history of one family belonging to what is called the Gentry:

W. D. married S. G., (his property in land reached about £1200 per annum,) and had by her one son and nine daughters. The son married, and had three sons and six daughters; one son is an emigrant in Australia; two have commissions in the Company's army; one daughter married an officer in the Company's army; the rest are unmarried. The first daughter married the eldest son of a neighbouring gentleman of landed property, who found it necessary, although

the heir, to accept of a government appointment in the West Indies. To him she had three sons; one entered the Company's civil service; one obtained a commission in the army; the third obtained an appointment in the India House. Her husband had by a second wife one son, who obtained a commission in the Company's army; and by a third one son, who is an officer in the Queen's army, and two daughters, one of whom married an officer; the second is unmarried. The second daughter married a London merchant, and had to him two sons; the first of whom succeeded his father in business; the second obtained a commission in the Company's army. Her husband had by a second wife two sons, both of whom have commissions in the Queen's army. The third daughter married the son of a gentleman of landed property, to whom she had one son, a barrister. To a second husband, a man of large estate, she had a son, now a merchant in Liverpool. The fourth daughter married a clergyman, but had no family. The fifth died unmarried. The sixth married a gentleman of landed property, to whom she had three sons and seven daughters. One son tried the law and failed; tried trade and failed; married a rich merchant's daughter, and bought back the paternal acres with her portion. The second is an emigrant in Canada; the third is now in the mercantile navy. One daughter married a manufacturer; the rest are unmarried. The seventh daughter married a "bull-frog farmer," of good connexions, a dashing fellow, with a local militia commission. To him she had two sons and three daughters. One son got an appointment on a sugar estate in Jamaica, and one became a "linen draper bold." One daughter died unmarried; one married a bookseller, and one a surgeon. The eighth married a schoolmaster, to whom she had two sons and one daughter. One son had a commission in the Company's army; one is an artist; and the daughter is unmarried. The ninth daughter married a farmer, to whom she bore one son, who died young. Six males in the Company's army, and one female married to an officer of that army, one male in the Company's civil service, and one in the

India House, is tolerable quartering on India for one family, but scarcely above the average of gentlemen's families in the neighbourhood.

If thus the families of the gentry become expatriated, and we see such persons as the Hon. W. Petre and the brother of Sir William Molesworth seeking for a settlement in New Zealand, while half-pay majors, captains, and lieutenants are glad to "locate" themselves in the woods and swamps of Canada; if thus the necessities of the inferior branches of the aristocracy, with all the openings made for them at the Bar, in the Church, in the Army, in the Navy, in Colonial offices, and in Government offices at home, how are you, the Farmers of Great Britain and Ireland, to find employment for your sons? Humble Excisemen they may be, starving, like Robert Burns, on less than the salary of a valet; humble Curates they may be, like the author of "The Sabbath," with little other reward than the consciousness of discharging their sacred duties; Post-office Clerks, Stamp-office Clerks they may be, with such remuneration as was offered to John Critchley Prince, and refused by the Poet as pay not equal to that of a Manchester porter; but while TRADE is depressed, while the capital employed in it yields little or no return, and while the labour and skill exercised in it receives no ade-

quate reward, *farmer's families must either sink into poverty, or tear themselves from all they have held dear, and seek for independence in foreign lands.*

I trust that what I have said will induce you dispassionately to consider how unrestricted commerce would affect your interests. Leave out of view for a moment the nest from whence the birds are to fly, and look to the way in which they are to find food when they are able to take wing. I know not what the conviction may be of the man who has only one son and one daughter to put "forward in the world;" but of this I am certain, that there is not an individual amongst you, having a large family to provide for, who, thinking honestly, and but for a few minutes, can deny that the chances of his family being adequately provided for, would be largely increased by a prosperous state of trade.

I have taken the subject into consideration only as it affects the provision for farmers' families. Earl Fitzwilliam, one of the largest landowners in the kingdom, declares his decided opinion that, *even as farmers*, you are injured by the operation of the Corn Law; and you will find a valuable portion of his arguments and statements in the small tract "Facts for Farmers," which I earnestly recommend to your perusal.

A FARMER'S SON.

Issued by the National Anti-Corn-Law League, Newall's Buildings, Manchester.

PRINTED BY J. GADSBY, MARKET-STREET, MANCHESTER.

CORN LAWS.

THE EVIDENCE
OF
JAMES DEACON HUME, ESQ.
LATE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE,
UPON THE
CORN LAW,
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE
IMPORT DUTIES IN 1839.

"I find that Mr. Deacon Hume, a gentleman whose loss I am sure we must all sincerely deplore, states the consumption of this country to be one quarter of wheat for each person annually.—*Sir Robert Peel's Speech on the introduction of his alteration of the Corn Law, Feb. 9, 1843.*

"I beg to remind the house of the memorable dictum of Mr. Deacon Hume, who 'observed' that we had abundance of untaxed coal and iron, and that we only wanted abundance of untaxed 'wood in order to be provided cheaply with the three great primary raw materials of employment' and of necessary consumption."—*Sir Robert Peel's Speech, May 10th, 1843.*

"I wish to claim for her Majesty's government no undue share of credit for the proposals they now make, and I am bound to admit that the last occasion when the serious attention of parliament was called to this subject (the Tariff) was by the Committee which sat on the import duties in '1839.'—*Sir Robert Peel's Speech on the introduction of the New Tariff, May 10, 1843.*

Chairman: How many years have you been in the Customs and Board of Trade departments?—I was 38 years in the Customs, and nearly 11 years afterwards at the Board of Trade.

You have retired within the last year?—Within these few months.

Mr. Villiers: What do you understand by the principle of protection, is it to support an existing interest that cannot support itself?—Yes; it is of no use unless the trade is naturally a losing trade.

And it cannot support itself when the community can get the article cheaper elsewhere?—Certainly not, if the protection was wanted.

Then it is always at the expense of the consumer that the protection is imposed?—I think that is manifest.

You have always considered it to have that effect?—I have always considered that the increase of price, in consequence of protection, amounted to a tax. If I am made to pay 1s. 6d. by law for an article which, in the absence of that law, I could buy for a shilling, I consider the sixpence a tax, and I pay it with regret, because it does not go to the revenue of the country; and therefore I do not, in return,

share the benefit of that payment as a contribution to the revenue. I must be taxed a second time for the state.

Chairman: Then it is your opinion that every protection of a commodity operates as a tax to the community at large?—Yes; most decidedly.

Mr. Villiers: And, further, as a misdirection of capital and labour?—Yes; it is tempting parties to embark in a trade by fictitious support, which in the end may prove a fallacious one. I have often wondered how any rulers could consent to incur the responsibility of such a policy.

Chairman: Do not all such protective duties and monopolies occasion very considerable fluctuations in that particular branch, from time to time?—I think that every trade thrown out of its natural course by protection is more subject to fluctuations than those which are left to their natural operation.

Mr. Tufnell: Then you cannot conceive any circumstances under which a protective duty can confer a permanent and general benefit upon the community?—I think not. While it operates in favour of the party intended to be protected, it is a tax upon the community, and there is always the

risk of its not being able to support itself by its own natural strength; and the protection may some day fail of keeping it up. The real question at issue is, do we propose to serve the nation or to serve particular individuals.

Mr. Villiers: Has it ever fallen within your experience to know that one protection has been made the ground of others?—I believe that has been pretty much the argument of the landed interest; they have, upon numerous occasions, treated what they consider the protection upon manufactures as a reason for protection upon corn. But the cases are as different as possible, agricultural produce never being exported, and the foreign market being the great ground of prosperity to our manufactures.

Is it not the plea with some interests that their protection should be continued, because they are so highly taxed, or pay so highly for the necessities of life, that they cannot compete with their foreign rivals?—I have heard that argument used; but I think it not only groundless, but that the opposite is the true proposition. A highly taxed people cannot afford to give protection; an individual whose necessary expenses are great, cannot be generous.

Would it not afford a ground for not removing the system of protection in one interest, or for removing all protections?—Yes, I think it would furnish a reason for universal protection, until, in attempting to protect everybody from taxation, you protected nobody.

Chairman: Are you not aware that foreign countries, in the duties they have imposed, have very often been led by our example in England to impose protective duties?—I believe that to be a very strong impression in all foreign countries; they imagine that we have risen to our present state of prosperity through the system of protections, and that they have only to adopt the same system in order to succeed as we have done.

When you speak of giving an example to Europe, do you believe that if England would remove those which are protective duties to cotton or to any other manufacture, that might induce the other nations of Europe to adopt a more liberal system of trade, and consequently lead to the admission of a larger portion of British manufactures?—I think it very probable that even such partial removals would have that effect; but I feel the strongest confidence that if we were to give up our protective system altogether, it would be impossible

for other countries to retain theirs much longer.

Would you remove our own protection without any foreign country removing theirs?—Most certainly, and without even asking them. I dislike treating with foreign countries upon any subject except navigation, and that for this reason, that there would be waste in the matter of carriage between different countries; it would end in the ship always going empty one way on both sides; this would be a dreadful waste, from which every country would suffer in its commerce. And again, a ship in one place is a ship in another; there is no difficulty in the comparison, but there is a difficulty in comparing one description of goods which one country makes with a totally different description made in another, and equal terms can hardly be made; but I feel quite confident if we were entirely to drop our system of protection, in a very little time it would be a race with other countries which should be first, or rather, which should avoid to be last, to come in for the benefit of that trade which we would then open.

Mr. Villiers: Do you not consider a retaliatory duty as most adding to the injury which the duty imposed by the foreign country occasions in this country?—I have always thought so; I have disliked all treating in the matter; I would take what I wanted and leave them to find the value of our custom.

Chairman: Then that principle you would apply generally to the commercial transactions of this country?—Entirely so; I should make our laws according to what I deemed best, which would certainly be to give the freest possible introduction of the goods of other nations into our country, and I should leave others to take advantage of it or not as they thought fit. There can be no doubt that if we imported from any country any considerable quantity of goods, and the manufactures of that country were protected, the producers of those goods which we took would very soon find the great difficulty they had in getting their returns; and instead of our soliciting the governments of those countries to admit our goods, our advocates for that admission would be in the country itself; they would arise from the exports of the goods which we received.

Mr. Chapman: Is it your opinion that the trade of this country would flourish more without the intervention of commercial treaties with other nations?—I think that we should settle our commerce better by ourselves than by attempting to make arrangements with other countries. We make pro-

posals to them: they do not agree to those. We then after that feel a repugnance to doing that which we ought perhaps in the first instance to have done of our own accord; and I go upon the principle that it is impossible for us to import too much, that we may be quite sure that the export will follow in some form or other, and that the making of the articles to be so exported will be an employment infinitely more beneficial to this country than that which may be thus superseded.

Chairman: Do you consider that those principles which you have laid down ought to apply equally to articles of food of this country, a great portion of which are now excluded?—I conceive myself, if I were compelled to choose, that food is the last thing upon which I would attempt to place any protection.

That is the first thing upon which you would remove the prohibition and protective duties?—Yes. It is very clear that this country stands in need of a vast deal of agricultural produce beyond its production, which is not to be measured merely by the quantity of corn which we occasionally import, because we habitually import very largely of those articles that are the produce of land, and suited to be raised in this country, besides corn, and which shows that the power of supply is very much strained. Although we view it chiefly in the article of corn, we import a very large quantity of other commodities, commonly and habitually, such as are the produce of our own soil, or fit to be so; and this proves clearly that we want more than we can produce. The exclusion of supply in such a case is cruel privation.

You are of opinion that all those protective duties are in fact a direct tax upon the community, by raising the price of every one of those articles to the consumer?—Most decidedly. I cannot analyze the charge which I pay in any other way than that part of it is the price of the commodity, and part is a duty though it goes out of my private pocket into another private pocket, instead of into that of the public.

Does that, in your opinion, add to the wealth of the country, or does it check the general industry which is applied in our manufactures?—I think it cannot add to the wealth of the country, because it is clear that we consume commodities at a greater price than is the necessary price; and consequently we waste labour and capital in the production, and waste can never ultimately do good, at least to a nation, although some individuals may thrive upon it.

Do you consider the wealth of England

to be caused and maintained by her commercial and manufacturing industry?—Certainly; if meant as in contradistinction from the produce of the soil: it is only necessary to look round the world, and see what countries there are of much richer soil that are in a state of comparative poverty; and also to look back to our own history, of no long period, to see that with the same quantity of land we have now, we were a poor country, compared with what we are; therefore having always had the land, but not the trade, I must conceive that the increase of our riches arises from the trade and not from the land.

Has not the wealth of the country arisen from the great increased prosperity of our manufacturing and commercial relations?—I conceive that it can be traced to no other source. The only difference that I can see in the present state of the country and the country a century ago, is, that by commerce and manufactures we have acquired riches, and raised up a population which are not only able to consume, but also able to pay good prices for the produce of our land. If the same population had been raised by other means they would have been a burthen to the land instead of an advantage.

Does not every limitation in the importation of food, and every rise in the price of food, tend to undermine the manufactures of the country, upon which we depend?—I conceive that it must do so, because we place ourselves at the risk of being surpassed by the manufactures in other countries; and as soon as it happens, if ever the day should arrive, that we should be put to a severe trial as to our manufacturing power, I can hardly doubt that the prosperity of this country will recede much faster than it has gone forward.

Do you mean whenever England shall be unable to compete with foreign markets, in her principal staples with other countries which are less burthened, and have cheaper food than ourselves, that then the prosperity of this country must begin to wane?—Whenever foreign countries can compete with us, from whatever cause, conceive that our prosperity must decline, but I cannot help believing that there can be no other cause for that than other countries having cheaper food.

Is not the increased price of food in this country one of the principal ingredients of an increased cost of our manufactures, so as to prevent our competing with other countries?—I conceive that, in the long run, it must be so; it either must be so, or the manufacturers and labourers must suffer great privations. Wages would first

be lowered as far as possible; and as many masters would be withdrawing from their trade, it is possible that the supply of labour would be so much greater than the demand, that the reduction might go to the limits of starving or of riots; but it is not merely that, it is the diverting of other countries from manufactures, and inducing them to take to agriculture instead, and also producing an interchange of goods, and creating markets for returns for our goods, as well as finding markets for them to go to. Altogether, I conceive that the reduction in the price of food, and particularly the admission of it from abroad, must tend to prevent other countries from being able to surpass us in manufactures.

You have often heard it stated that the people of England, being higher taxed than they are in any other country, would be unable, as regards the price of food, to compete with other countries if the corn laws were taken off?—I have heard that argument, but have always been surprised at it, because it appears to me that the very circumstance of our being so highly taxed for the good of the state is a reason why we should not be taxed between ourselves.

You consider that a fallacy?—The greatest fallacy I can conceive; it is the very opposite of the true proposition.

Mr. Villiers: Do you not consider that we have greater advantages in production than any other country in the world, as regards capital and skill?—I think that is the only thing that has kept us up, but I do not think that the advantages are such that we can rely upon them for ever.

We are losing markets for our goods in return for corn, and we are compelling those countries to establish interests to rival us in other countries?—I have always thought that when the great change in this world took place after the French war, before which time the foreigners had not attempted manufactures to any material extent, and when they had been greatly encouraged in agricultural pursuits, because through the war we had been great importers,—if from that time we had thrown open our ports for raw produce, and removed protections, we should have had our manufactures in a most secure position, for the other countries who are now attempting to rival us would not have attempted it; but it would be difficult now to get back to the point at which we then were: starting at that point we were then the only manufacturers.

Chairman: As we lost that favourable opportunity of placing the manufactures of this country on the highest and best

foundation, ought we not now to be most anxious to retrace our steps, and would not the removal of protecting duties, and lowering the duties on imports generally, be one of the steps towards that end?—I did not mean to say that it is not right to do it now, because we have lost the best time for doing it; I only meant to say that the way in which we have acted, instead of being beneficial, has been injurious.

Mr. Villiers: If the prices of the continent were equal to those of this country, we still have great advantages from the skill we employ in our manufactures?—I think that other countries have not made such an advance but that we may still very well support ourselves. I do not think we have gone so far as to make the case hopeless, though I lament that we should not have taken the step at the right time.

Is there not a tendency in our capital to leave this country and establish itself on the continent?—From the low rate of interest in this country, and the degree in which money has gone abroad for various purposes, it is very evident that the capitalist here is not altogether content with this as the place of its employment; if this is very much the case as a mere question of the investment of money, it must be doubly so in the case of manufacturing employment of it.

What the people on the continent want most is large capital, is it not?—I believe it is; and I believe they are every year obtaining very considerable capital as well as artisans from this country, and even master manufacturers.

Then the tendency of the present system is to drive this large amount of capital to those countries which are engaged in rivalry with us?—That is the direct tendency; and one wonders that the trading part of the community have not taken this view of the matter earlier; and I can only account for it on this supposition, that the most influential and the most advanced have believed and felt confident that the shifting of the trade was a matter of slow operation, and that it would last their time. I think that this makes the great difference between the former supineness of our manufacturers on the subject of the corn laws, and their recent activity on that subject. The day of trial is not now so distant, in the view of the present parties, as it was in that of their predecessors, or even of themselves some years ago.

So far as the duties are imposed with a view to protect native industry and to induce capital to be employed in this

country, they have the opposite tendency?—Yes, speaking of national industry as a whole.

Do you believe the high cost of living induced by those protective duties on food also drives other people not engaged in trade to live on the continent?—I have generally understood that the number of persons residing abroad do go there with a view to enjoying life with a moderate income, which they cannot do here.

Do not you suppose that that must injure the home trade?—Certainly, it transfers the customers from this country to another.

Then are we not by this system undermining the very means by which public taxation and public revenue are supported?—I think that we not only check the collection of the revenue immediately, but that we are also undermining our resources. I cannot help often looking at the consequences with considerable alarm. I think the country cannot stand such a system as this for a long period.

Mr. Villiers: Would it not have been the natural course of things in this country for revenue to have greatly increased, considering how the taxes are imposed?—I have not a doubt that if there were no protecting duties, the revenue would flow in with a very great increase and great ease.

Owing to the increase of population and the increase of wealth?—The increase of population, and the greater ability of men to pay the state taxes, being relieved from paying taxes to individuals.

If the protective system were altogether removed, the effect would be to produce a large population, and a well-employed population?—Yes.

The tendency, as we find, of the present corn laws, and other protective duties, is to throw the people out of work, and to diminish their employment?—Most clearly, that is the tendency; but even taking the population as it is, and its property as it is, if they were relieved from that additional price on the goods which we pay on account of their being protected, the people of this country would be able, and would, in effect, in the expenditure of their incomes, pay a larger proportion to the revenue.

Chairman: Do not the fluctuations in the employment of industry also tend very much to lessen the productive power of the country?—Yes, I conceive they do.

Produced mainly by the present system? Yes; because it is artificial.

Mr. Villiers: You consider it can mat-

ter little to the consumer whether he pays so much more for his food as a tax to the revenue, or whether he pays so much more for his food as a tax for protection?—The enhanced price, from whatever cause, is just the same; I would suppose that, instead of protecting land by a duty on foreign corn, the country was left to get corn at the cheapest rate, and then that a revenue was raised for the express purpose of being applied to the support of the land. It would be too palpable, and could not be borne; but I conceive the effect of the present system upon the consumer to be the same. It would be even better and perhaps cheaper to pay directly than indirectly, because trade would then be free.

Supposing a tax was imposed upon flour ground at the mill, every person then would pay that; do you not suppose that that would afford a large revenue?—Yes, it would, according to the rate.

The people might feel it even less than the present protecting duty?—It would be less noxious.

It is quite possible that a large revenue might be collected by that means?—Yes, and the public pay the same price that they now do.

A large revenue might be collected, and the public pay even less for bread?—Yes, because it would be only a charge, and not also an impediment to trade.

I presume in my questions a perfectly free trade, and a tax upon all flour ground at the mill?—Yes, an internal duty, and importation free.

The community would not suffer so much as they do at present, and a large revenue might be collected by that means?—I conceive that, if the duty charged at the mill was only about the same amount as that which the public now pay for the purpose of protection, not only the revenue would derive a large supply but that it would be less injurious to the people.

Certainly less injurious to trade?—Certainly, even if it were so high as to keep bread at its present price, notwithstanding the free importation of wheat.

Chairman: Have you ever made a calculation as to the amount of taxation which the community pay in consequence of the increased price of wheat and butchers' meat, which is occasioned by the monopoly now held by land?—I think that a tolerable calculation may be made of that increased charge. It is generally calculated that each person, upon the average, consumes a quarter of wheat a year. Assuming, then, the amount of duty that this wheat paid, or the

price enhanced by protection, whatever that is, as far as bread goes, to be 10s., it would be that amount upon the whole population. Then you could hardly say less than, perhaps, double that for butchers' meat and other matters; so that if we were to say that the corn is enhanced by 10s. a quarter, there would be that 10s. and 20s. more as the increase of the price of meat and other agricultural productions, including hay and oats for horses, barley for beer, as well as butter and cheese. That would be £36,000,000 a year, and the public are in fact paying that as effectually out of their pockets as if it did go the revenue in the form of direct taxes.

And, consequently, are less able to pay any taxes that the state may require for its support?—Certainly; I conceive that having paid the private taxes they are the less able to pay the public taxes.

Is not the effect of that also to cripple and limit the industry of the country?—I conceive the great evil lies in that branch of the question; it is not so calculable, but if they could have the trade which I believe they would have if all those protections were taken away, I think they could pay 30s. a head easily, compared with what they can now do.

So that the burden of this protective system generally exceeds the whole amount of taxation paid to the state?—I conceive so, taking the cost and the evil consequences together, if that evil was equally subject to computation. It is the case with many duties such as some of the excise duties, which are more injurious in their regulations than they are in the sum taken from the people, though you cannot estimate the injurious effect. I conceive the actual money paid, and the evil effect computed in money, would be more than the whole revenue of the country.

Mr. Williams: Upon what principle could you recommend a general change of the system in levying the import duties upon articles, by the introduction of which at a less duty the manufactures of this country would be seriously affected?—Upon the principle of general national benefit. The question is, whether we mean the nation, or whether we mean to serve particular individuals; I speak, whether from habit, from my own turn of mind, or from official circumstances, in behalf of the nation, or of the country at large.

In the general change you contemplate, you contemplate that a great reduction of the taxation should take place which now so heavily presses upon the working men of this country, and so disproportionately, as compared with the working men of other

countries, who are producing articles to compete with the produce of their industry?

—If, by the question, are meant taxes upon a particular commodity, I conceive certainly those taxes must be countervailed by at least equal taxes on the rival article imported from abroad. But if the question means the general taxation of the country falling on the subsistence and expenditure of the people, then I must beg to submit in the strongest terms in which I can possibly give any opinion, that the general taxation of the country is no ground whatever for protection; any attempt to relieve any interest from any portion of that general taxation by raising arbitrarily the price of the article which they make, is only a violent manner of shifting their share of the burthen to other shoulders. If on account of the general taxes upon subsistence paid by any class of people, you forcibly raise to the consumer the price of the article which that class produces, you then relieve them from taxation, supposing you measure the matter fairly and correctly; and I have never been able to see the least ground why any one class of the people should be relieved from taxation, and why the other parts should be compelled to pay their proportion for them as well as their own.

Sir H. Parnell: Will you explain what you mean in your last answer by general taxation and special taxation?—I will illustrate my opinion by speaking of particular articles. We pay in this country an internal tax upon soap and upon vinegar; it would be very wrong, I conceive, to suffer soap or vinegar to be imported without also being charged with an import duty equal to those taxes; but the taxes borne by the makers of vinegar and soap in the articles of their consumption, and the consumption of their families, their food, their liquors, their sugar, their tea, or anything else; the taxes they pay in that shape upon the articles of their consumption are of a very different nature, and those are the taxes with regard to which I mean to express my opinion that there is no ground whatever for a protecting duty, in order that they may be better able to compete with the foreigner, for it is impossible to do that without causing some other party to pay more taxes than they, otherwise would do. The whole community bear their share of those taxes without any assistance; of course by the whole community I mean the consumers of vinegar and the consumers of soap.

Then general taxation does not add to prices?—That may be a very difficult question, and there are so many elements in

price that one can hardly give a positive opinion; I think myself that price must always be determined by supply and demand.

But the cheapest manufactures we have are subject to the whole general taxation of the country?—The manufactures that are so cheap that we export them in large quantities have no protection; the parties who make them decidedly pay all their taxes of consumption; but this shows a power of supply and a foreign demand.

Chairman: Do you mean the manufacture of cotton and other articles, of which we export large quantities?—It may truly be said so of cottons, because, though there is a duty upon foreign cottons, having the character of a protective duty, I believe it to be inoperative, particularly when we consider how much is exported; and as I consider that duty to be of no service to the people concerned in the cotton manufacture, I conceive that they pay, out of their produce and their labour, all the taxes upon all they consume in this country.

Then the only import duty which they require on the cotton manufactures would be a duty equal to that imposed on the raw material which they import?—Yes, or any other ingredient which they may use in the manufacture, such as their dyes and gums.

Mr. Williams: If it can be proved that one-half of the wages of the working men in this country are taken from them in taxes, and that a very small amount of taxation, comparatively, is taken from the wages of the working men in other countries, who compete with our working men in the production of certain articles, is it your opinion, in such a case, that if the foreigner can produce an article cheaper by his paying less taxes, that the production of his labour should be admitted into this country, and that the trade should be entirely lost to our manufacturers?—The comparison which I should draw is not between the taxes which would be paid by the manufacturer of the goods alluded to here, and the taxes paid by the manufacturers abroad, which must vary greatly. I should consider what taxes fall properly upon that class of manufacturers in this country, and those which fall upon the other operatives who cannot be protected in any way. I conceive that every person in this country must pay, out of his own sources, the taxes which fall upon the quantity of taxable commodities which he consumes, and that there is no question as to relieving him of those taxes than can ever afford the slightest ground for throwing them

upon other people by protection against the foreign article of the same nature as that which he makes.

Then is it your opinion that the working men of this country, so large a portion of whose wages are taken from them in taxes, ought not to have any protection at all against the cheaper productions of the working men of countries that comparatively pay no taxes?—Certainly, that is my decided opinion; I think the small amount of taxes paid by persons abroad is no ground for giving protection to the commodity here, for this reason, that it is only in such a case shifting the taxes from the party intended to be relieved to others here who are to be the consumers of those commodities. You cannot throw the tax on the foreigner, but only on other British subjects.

In the case of a working man in a foreign country receiving wages of 6s. per week, with which he can get as many of the necessities of life as the working man of this country with 10s. a week; if the skill of those two workmen is equal, would you say that the production of the labour of the foreign workman should entirely supersede the labour of the English workman, or that the English workman must come down from 10s. a week to 6s. a week, so as to be upon an equality in point of production of the article he manufactures with the foreign workman?—I should not consider the taxes or the wages paid or received in this and the foreign country as one of the elements of my calculation. If there is any commodity made in this country that stands really in the predicament supposed in the question, then I must conclude that that is one of those things which we should cease to make here; we do not make every thing, but we do know that we make an enormous quantity of things, and that we export a great quantity of articles; and therefore I must suppose that we can very safely and properly leave the interests of parties to determine what they shall make and what they shall not make in this country; and without enabling some of them to live tax-free.

You are aware that but for the protective duties, the silk trade of this country, and the stocking trade of this country, and some other important branches of trade, would be entirely lost on account of the ability of the foreign manufacturers to produce the article cheaper than they can in this country; would you in that case say that the great interests, both as to the master manufacturers and the working men that are now employed in those trades, should be annihilated, which would

be the natural consequence of allowing silks, stockings, and the other articles I have alluded to, to be imported into this country free of duty?—I do not conceive that it is so clear a case that those trades would be annihilated if the protection was taken from them as a part of a general system of relinquishing all protection, but I am far from supposing that a change to a totally free system would not make many changes in the employment of the industry of this country, and it is possible that that change might lead to the relinquishing of some branches of the silk, and even of cotton manufactures. But with the reliance that I have upon the effect of a general system of free trade, I cannot bring my mind to believe that we should not make stockings, or manufacture silk very largely in this country, if all protection were removed, provided that the system was general, so that the expense of living of the labourers in those cases which the several questions have so particularly pointed at, should be reduced to the natural amount. That must certainly be understood to mean that the corn trade should be free, that meat, that every article of consumption should for the future be free, and were that the case, no change being made in the revenue, I can scarcely believe that the natural effect would not be to raise the product of the revenue a fourth, or perhaps a third greater than it is, without laying on a single additional duty; and in that case we clearly see how easy it would be to relieve those parties who are now much pressed by competition from those taxes, which were considered to oppress them to the greatest degree, and to place them on a fairer footing with the foreign competitors than they now are. I believe the necessity of protection is occasioned almost entirely by protection itself.

Then I understand you, in the opinion you have given, to contemplate placing the working men of this country upon the same, or nearly the same footing as the workmen of other countries?—I would place them on the same footing.

Chairman: Do you mean by placing them on the same footing, that you would abolish all those monopolies as regards food in this country, and which are the cause of that great difference between the condition of the labouring people here and abroad?—Most certainly; I should never think of exposing trades situated in the manner which is contemplated in the previous question, to an open competition

with foreigners, while I left them burdened,—not with taxes, I beg to be understood, but with the operation of protections in other cases, and for the emolument of other parties.

Mr. Villiers: I understand you to say, that if there is any difference in the cost of living in this country and in other countries, or that we are under disadvantage in competition with them, it chiefly arises from the protective system?—That is my opinion; with our great command of trade, our navigation, our capital, and our geographical position, if trade in this country was perfectly free, and we were enabled to obtain in the cheapest markets, upon even terms, all the commodities we want, I can see no reason why this should not be one of the cheapest countries to live in that any civilized populous country can be. There are many matters in which density of population leads to cheapness.

Then when you speak of competition from cheaper labour abroad, you mean when the people here being heavily taxed to the state, their burdens are increased by taxes to support particular interests?—Exactly; I conceive protection to be a positive increase of taxes, not less positive than if an additional tax were put upon the commodity itself; whatever the compulsory amount is that you pay more than the natural amount, it is to the consumer as effectual a tax as if it were collected by the tax-gatherer, the custom-house officer, or the excise.

You did not mean to say that general taxation did not affect prices, but that it afforded no excuse for protection?—Certainly; what I mean is, that the general taxation is not a ground for taking the burden off one portion of the community, and laying it, as it must be borne by some one, on another portion, that second portion paying double, the other paying none. If I might illustrate this, I would take the article of corn; supposing the taxes paid by the landed interest in their personal and domestic expenditure should amount to 10s. a quarter upon the corn raised upon their lands, and you put 10s. upon foreign corn, while you habitually import it and pay that 10s., thus raising the price of all that is produced at home by 10s., I conceive that 10s. to be a burden thrown upon the other parts of the community, and that the landed proprietor literally lives in this country without paying any tax at all.

You observed, in a former part of your evidence, that one protection was constantly

a ground for claiming another?—It furnishes a plea always to parties who are ever seeking pleas for asking for protection; it is particularly and everlastingly, as far as my own observation goes, alluded to by the landed interest.

And it frequently occurs that when one interest has thus got itself exempt from taxation, it has re-imposed the tax upon itself by having to pay it as a protection upon other productions?—Whatever the proportion may be between the protected goods produced by the party, and his expenditure in the general articles of consumption, he gives and receives in that proportion; if they are equal, then he certainly does, in my opinion, restore the money back again to the other protected parties. I will suppose that there are 100 trades and 100 commodities, and that you give a certain measure of protection to every one of them, well measured as far as the nature of the goods will admit, then I conceive that those 100 parties would find all their cases completely neutralized; each would receive from the system a benefit as one, and would pay it away in dribblets to the ninety-nine, and thus they would all be brought to the same position as if none were protected at all.

But if one interest was more powerful than the other 99, it is possible that it might get some advantage over the others?—The great evil of protection is, that it cannot be made just, equal, and equitable. In my illustration just now, I supposed that you could find a way of protecting each in an equal proportion, but that is not possible.

Sir C. Douglas: Is the abolition of the corn laws inseparable from the opinion you entertain that the removal of import duties ought to take place?—Just so; that is the great article, and I conceive that otherwise we should expose our manufactures to the most unfair competition with foreigners, not because of the light taxes which foreigners pay, but because of the general cheapness of living, from having corn and other provisions upon better terms than we have. I think that the first necessities of life should be the first articles to be set free.

Then from that last answer the Committee may understand that you mean a total abolition of the corn laws?—Certainly; and I should prefer the total abolition. I cannot see any ground whatever for any countervailing tax upon corn, I cannot perceive anything in the principle

of protection that is peculiar to corn. British corn does not contribute to the public revenue; there is therefore no charge upon it to be countervailed.

Then you would not even allow a small fixed duty?—My opinion is that there is no ground for any duty; the only ground I can perceive is to countervail charges in the production of corn. I know that there are a great many charges which the landed interest conceive to be peculiarly on them, and to fall upon their productions; but as far as I have been able to investigate those charges, I think they have services in return for them, and they do not go to the public revenue; they are of a local nature, and I think the farmers are so much better off, and so much more enabled to raise the commodity with advantage, by reason of those local charges since they have facilities in return equal to the payment: and I do firmly believe that any country that has not the system of raising funds for the purposes for which those local funds are raised, would be at a great disadvantage in the production of agricultural produce.

Mr. Villiers: You are only alluding to what is just, and not to what it may be wise to do; you are referring to what the landed interest might or might not claim in justice, not to what it might be necessary to concede to them?—To what they claim in justice, and upon that the only thing that can be urged as a plea is the countervailing duty to set against positive taxes paid to the state, not their local rates and charges. It may be sometimes wise to concede what you have not the power to refuse.

Sir C. Douglas: If the corn laws were totally abolished, and consequently that part of our provisions and food were brought in from other countries, do you agree with those who think that a great deal of land would be thrown out of cultivation?—By throwing land out of cultivation I presume is meant converting arable into grass land. It is a wrong term, I think, to use, though I know it is a common term. I believe that much land would be thrown out of arable cultivation, and I believe that one of the great evils of our agriculture is; the misappropriation of the soil; I believe there is a great deal too large a proportion of land under the plough, and too small a portion under grass. The difficulty of raising lean stock in this country for the purpose of fattening is so great, that it is the chief cause of the

high price of meat; and I am quite persuaded that if a very large breadth of that arable land which can scarcely be cultivated to advantage were turned back to grass, the effect would be, to reduce the quantity of corn produced in this country so much as to make it impossible for the foreigner to fill the vacuum at a low price, and that the general result would be, that it would produce a lower price of meat, there being a power of increased consumption in the present state of the country in the article of meat that is almost immeasurable. When we reflect upon the extremely small portion of meat eaten every day by the most robust labourers in the country, who are, of course, by far the most numerous portion of the population, if we were only to suppose them to have every day a fair moderate meal of meat, the increase of demand for meat, and for inferior meat,—for cattle not fattened to the highest pitch of perfection, such as would be suitable to the produce of land of inferior qualities,—would be so great, that there would be no want of good employment for any of the land that we possess within our boundaries.

Do not you suppose that the corn laws have had a tendency to bring the poor lands into cultivation?—I think they have tended to break up land which had better have remained in grass. If the question means waste land, there can be no doubt that the demand for produce has led to the breaking up of commons, and so far that is a great benefit; but it by no means follows that it should be kept permanently under plough when there is a much greater demand for grass. With regard to the effect of the protection on our corn, that can hardly be said to have been the cause of the breaking up of so much land, because I believe it is in the knowledge of most people that the era in which the lands were chiefly broken up was during the period of the war, and that corn was being imported without any restraint whatever through the whole of that period. I believe that many parties have since repented that they have broken up their lands.

Chairman: Were not prices during all that time of increased cultivation very high?—Yes, the prices were the stimulus to the conversion of the grass land into arable land, without the aid of any corn law.

Mr. Villiers: Would not the effect of

population increasing, and commerce and manufactures prospering, be to lead to the breaking up of waste lands, and to a greater demand being created for the soil?—The breaking up of waste land is a process that one would always wish to see going forward; the very idea of land lying waste is repugnant to one's feelings, as long as it can be applied to any use; but that is a very different thing from having in cultivation a disproportion of arable.

But independently of those protective duties, would it not be the tendency of increased population, and the extension of manufactures, to create a greater demand for the use of the soil?—The inducement to break up waste land would not be directly the protection, but the price, and whatever was the cause of a high price would lead to the cultivation of the waste lands, whether it were a state of war, the increase of population, or anything else; as long as there was a good price for the produce of land, parties possessing or having a right to those waste lands would bring them into cultivation.

But looking at the limited extent of this island, should you not suppose that if the manufactures prospered and population increased, the price of land must always be high?—In looking to the increase of the population, which has doubled in the last half century, one does not know how to limit the price of land in this country, provided through no bad policy the increase of that population and its prosperity are not checked.

It is within your experience that the price of land has risen enormously in this country?—That is a matter of general notoriety, without any party being able to know precisely how the matter stands; but as far as the little information I have got upon the matter goes, I believe an exhibition of the rent-rolls of different parts of the country for the last half century would lay before the public eye one of the most astounding accounts that ever was witnessed.

Do you not connect that increase in the price of land with the start in manufactures which we took towards the latter end of the last century?—I cannot attribute it to any other cause; the war led in the first instance to what may be said to have been a wasteful consumption of food a large portion of people who were subsisting at home with the greatest economy, were converted into soldiers and sailors, and were supported at the public expense,

but the great peculiarity of that period was the commencement of the great increase of our manufactures, the bringing to perfection of Mr. Arkwright's system, the introduction of steam power, and the vast improvements of machinery; we were the first to adopt those improvements, and from the circumstance of the rest of the world being so much more disadvantageously placed in the war at that time, they were then unable to follow us, but time and peace have altered the case much, and we cannot expect to reap the same benefits after a certain period from any new discovery, however great it may be, that we did in the earlier stages. The cause of the increase in the value of land was the start in manufactures; but we kept the start the longer by reason of war.

Can you expect any decrease of the value of land from any other cause but the decline of manufactures in this country?—No; that is the only matter to which I look with any apprehension as regards the prosperity of this country.

Mr. Williams; Am I correct in understanding you to express it as your opinion that notwithstanding our heavy taxation we could under a system of free trade compete with foreign countries in our manufactures and the production of corn?—I conceive that it is clearly proved that we could in those manufactures that we are calculated for, conduct them with success, because we are now conducting them successfully, although the people are not only burdened with the taxes alluded to, but according to my opinion also with a large portion of the taxes which properly belong to the protected parties; I therefore think that our best manufactures are burdened by protections, and not assisted by them.

A small portion of the 50,000,000*l.* or 52,000,000*l.* of taxes which are paid by the people of this country, are produced from articles on which the tax is imposed for their protection against foreign manufactures?—I conceive a very small portion, because the very circumstance of the tax being laid for the purpose of preventing importation, implies that little revenue will be received; if much were received, it would cease to be a protection.

Then is it your opinion that with the continuance of the imposition of taxes to the amount of 50,000,000*l.* upon the people of this country, they will be able to compete with all the various productions

of foreign countries where taxation is very small indeed?—They do compete now, and export in the face of those other countries 50,000,000*l.* of the produce of their industry.

At the present time is not a most extraordinary progress being made in different branches of manufacture in Germany, and other parts of the continent, where a few years ago the manufactories were producing comparatively very small quantities?—I believe that that is the case, and it is a subject of great uneasiness, I confess, to my mind. I think I see a change taking place, and that we may find ourselves mistaken in supposing that we can always retain the trade, which having commenced with great advantage in the first instance, we are in the early stages allowed to carry on to a great extent; but it is because I fear this, because I see the power of competition rising abroad, and because I expect those countries will some day drive us out of the foreign market, and thus deprive us of our means of exportation, that I am so anxious to remove what I think are the impediments to an equal power of competition on our part with those foreign countries.

Mr. Villiers: Is not the general taxation less now than it was a few years ago, in this country?—The taxation is considerably less upon every individual. The sum raised is the same, but the taxes which we have repealed since the year 1819, when the general settlement after the war may be said to have been made, I believe in round numbers may be considered at £16,000,000 or £17,000,000 a year; the remaining taxes, in consequence of the increase of population, and what has hitherto been the prosperous state of the country, producing alone a greater amount than they formerly produced, in conjunction with those which have been repealed.

Chairman: In reference to your former answer, will you state what are the "impediments" to British commerce competing in foreign countries with that of the continent?—The impediments are of the nature which has been pointed out in several of the preceding questions, namely, the expense of living in this country. It is true that the portion of that expense which consists of taxes has been expressly mentioned, but I conceive the general expense of living, and the charges upon that living, which are taken out of the pockets of the consumers by the protective system, and do not go into the revenue, are almost as large a portion as that which the revenue itself takes. Another impediment arising out of the pro-

ective system is the checking of commercial intercourse with other countries, and preventing our manufacturers from obtaining their best returns for the goods they can import.

Mr. Williams: Does it not appear to you from the great progress which has been made of very late years indeed, in manufactures in Germany and other countries on the continent, that at no distant time the wages of the labourers and working men of this country must come down to as low a point as the rate of wages in those countries if we are to maintain our trade?—The progress in manufactures which is observably abroad is such, that unless we do take some strong measures in this country, for the purpose of putting our population upon a natural footing, and therefore upon nearly the same footing with their competitors, I do look forward with considerable apprehension to the trade of this country suffering considerably; that is a reason, in my mind, for taking off all protections, and is a very different operation from that which would go to the imposing of protecting duties for the express purpose of reimbursing particular interests for the taxes which they pay in ordinary consumption. The foreign manufacturers have shown that they can make the goods; it requires time to enable them to make enough to supplant us.

Mr. Villiers: Do you consider that the revenue presents any obstacle at all to doing away with the protective system?—No, certainly not; I conceive that the prosperity of the revenue is greatly impeded by the protective system.

But I wish to call your attention to those articles where the duties are levied, and where the operation of the duties is both protective and fiscal?—In those cases, if the protective duty were reduced to a rate which the foreigner could readily pay, a greater quantity of the article would be imported, and the revenue be increased.

Since in your opinion you ought simultaneously to reduce all the protective duties, you consider that the revenue offers no objection, but rather an argument in favour of doing away with those duties?—Certainly; my hesitation applies to the different interests that might be affected in their trade, and not to the revenue. There can be no doubt that the revenue would instantly be increased by removing or sufficiently reducing the protections.

But do you hold that you could not do away with the protection in some cases, without diminishing the revenue?—I am not aware of any case in which the revenue would be injured by removing the protection.

EXTRACTS FROM A SERIES OF LETTERS

BY

MR. DEACON HUME,

WHICH APPEARED ORIGINALLY IN THE *MORNING CHRONICLE*, UNDER THE SIGNATURE OF H. B. T. (*H UME, B OARD, OF T RADE*), AND WHICH WERE AFTERWARDS PUBLISHED AS A PAMPHLET BY HOOPER, PALL MALL EAST, LONDON.

THE EVIL EFFECTS OF RESTRICTIONS ON COMMERCE.

There is scarcely a civilized spot in the globe in which the now impoverished labourer cannot produce, in excess of his own wants, some peculiar commodity with which he could provide himself with those other commodities he so greatly needs, if his right of exchange were not denied by the interposition of some arbitrary power. Mutual supply by means of such exchange is the scheme, and it is the law of nature, loudly proclaimed by the diversities of climate, soil, and capacities—it is the manifest design of a beneficent Providence for the benefit of the human race. But what is the law of man?—an impious prohibition of the law of God. I figure to myself the family of a Manchester or a Birmingham workman contemplating, on a Saturday night, the true exchangeable value of their week's work; and computing how much food, as well as other commodities, it would supply them with, under the free operation of the scheme of Providence and of the law of nature. I also figure to myself the family of the Polish husbandman longing to doff their miserable dresses of sheep-skin, and to exchange their corn for fabrics of the spindle and the loom. A greater offence can hardly be committed than to obstruct the mutual dealings of such parties, except it can be justified as a necessary national sacrifice. I stoutly deny the nationality of the object; the restraint is nothing less than a taking of the necessaries of life from those who have nothing to spare, in order to increase the luxuries of those whose command of them would bear reduction—supposing, but by no means admitting, that any reduction would ensue.

THE CASE OF THE MANUFACTURING AND AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS STATED.

Few people are aware of the relative positions in which our manufacturing interest and our landed interest are practically placed towards each other, by reason of the different proportions which the gross quantities of their respective productions bear to the consumption of the country; and, consequently, few persons perceive the degree in which this natural inequality of advantages is aggravated by the interposition of a law which throws its weight to the side which already preponderated. IF ANY INTERFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO INTERESTS COULD BE JUSTIFIED, A FAR BETTER CASE COULD BE MADE OUT IN FAVOUR OF A BOUNTY TO INCREASE THE IMPORTATION OF CORN, THAN OF A DUTY TO RESTRAIN IT.

My first position is, that the agriculturists have, under any circumstances, the enviable advantage of always selling their goods at home in a market insufficiently supplied.

My second position is, that the manufacturer, when he sells any of his goods at home, always sells them in a glutted market. These are facts which can readily be ascertained by referring to the accounts of imports and exports.

When the landowner is seller, he is enabled in fixing the price of his wheat, to add, to the amount of the foreign price, all the expense which must be incurred in bringing wheat from abroad. He stands firm in the market, and says to the manufacturer—reject my wheat if it please you to do so, and go a thousand miles by water and by land to fetch the cheap wheat you speak of.

But when the landowner changes his position, and becomes the buyer of the manufacturer's cottons, he reverses his calculations, and he deducts from the price which they would fetch in the foreign market all the expenses of sending them thither. Nor is his language less changed, though it is equally peremptory. He now says to the manufacturer—there is my offer, leave it if you like, and carry your cottons half round the world, in quest of that better price which you say will be given for them in other countries.

I am quite sure that many a high-minded land proprietor, if he could be brought to perceive the relative positions in which the agricultural and manufacturing interests are placed, would be the first to denounce the system as the most abominable piece of subtle and refined oppression he had ever met with. Yet so it is; the manufacturer stands over those very goods which are destined for a foreign market, which he knows will go to a foreign market, and for which foreign goods will assuredly be received in return; and yet he is not permitted to send them to the foreign market on his own account, nor to receive in return for them the description of foreign goods he wants for himself. The landowner is both exporter and importer; for the operation of the Corn Act is to give him a right of pre-emption of our manufactures at a maximum price.

HOW TO PRESERVE RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY.

When industry shall have recovered its rights, all jealousies between the rich and the poor—all invidious distinctions between the productive and the non-productive—all cant about the useful and the useless—will cease; and in their place will be revived the older and better sentiment of the sacredness of property, and of respect for superiors. Let property withdraw itself into its proper limits, and relinquish all its usurpations; and let there be nothing factitious in superiority of station, and we shall see physical power and moral power always harmonizing with each other. If the working classes shall be thought to have lost any portion of their accustomed respect for the rights of property, it is solely in consequence of the unintelligible difficulties in which they find themselves placed by the attacks which property makes upon the rights of industry. Their understandings are perplexed and mystified by their situation and

as the blows they receive are inflicted by property, they are almost led to attribute to it an inherent evil quality. But the property of one man cannot, *under equal laws*, operate any injury to another. It can be no injury to me that a particular man is owner of a particular part of my country, as his exclusive estate, provided he be contented with it for its true worth, and leave me in quiet possession of any property which I may happen to own. But if he tell me, that *his* property is of so peculiar a nature that it entitles him to take from me some of *mine*, in order to make his the more valuable; and, above all, if my property consist solely in my labour, then there may be some risk that I may be seduced into an opinion, that property is a sort of noxious matter, and a nuisance which I may fairly endeavour to abate.

THE LANDOWNERS UNMASKED.

The restriction which is imposed on the rights of the workmen by the corn law, has not even the outward show of being intended for the public good; and it is in vain to tell the landowner, that the burthen of the proof that it is so intended lies on him; because we see him, on every occasion, claiming the benefit of it as his peculiar right. It is his own case which he perpetually pleads; and it is upon the merits of the case which he thinks he makes out that he demands an extra twopence of every poor man for his loaf. Nothing can exceed the indignation or resentment with which a thorough-going landlord treats every man who hesitates to admit the justice of their demand; and we occasionally see some of them, of the first rank, travelling to county meetings in splendid equipages to enforce their claim to those twopences. In the *Morning Chronicle* of the 6th instant, there is a report of such a meeting in the county of Suffolk, at which a noble lord felt himself entitled to say, that "a cry for an alteration in the corn laws proceeded from a base, democratic spirit in the country, that wanted cheap bread for its fellows, no matter what injury the agriculturists sustained." I can assure that noble lord that I have not, in my sentiments or inclinations, a particle of that democracy which he thinks is the sole enemy of his rental. So far from it, that what remains to me of my animal strength should be exerted, if necessity arose for it, in the defence of his aristocratic privileges, and of his proprietary rights. But I would remind him, at the same time, that his indignation is warmed up by feelings of a direct, personal, pecuniary interest; while

it does happen, as he must know, that among those who would advocate a greater freedom in the trade of corn, are to be numbered many men of great virtue, talents, and attainments; aye, and some, too, of deep interest in landed property. Look at Lord Grenville's protest—was he a base democrat? As to the affected care of this Suffolk nobleman for the "agriculturists," 'tis sad meanness. Indeed, the Agricultural Report rings, from one end to the other, with evidence of the heartless depredations of the landlords upon the capital of the farmers. The Agriculturist, my good lord, is in no danger, except from his landlord. It is the deduction of the "lion's share" from the gross produce which impoverishes the farmer; and these lamentations over him are only the growl of the lion while making the division. The trade of farming, as a trade, is invulnerable by competition in an importing country; and, if it is not a trade, what is it?—is it an office? The sole cause of the farmer's difficulty lies in an ill-conceived, impotent corn law, and in the obstinate confidence with which the owners of their farms have relied on its efficacy in fixing their rents. But, my good lord, you have got your corn law, and you have got your distress too—what do you say to that? If "democracy" is only to be starved down, and if bread is to be made dear for that purpose, what steps will "aristocracy" take, when bread is cheap, in spite of all the corn bills it can devise and pass? How low is the country to be brought before the landed interest will admit, that their scheme works downwards instead of upwards?

THE LANDOWNERS OUGHT TO BE FREE FROM DEBT.

The great body of landowners ought, at this day, to be the principal stockholders. The two terms should be almost synonymous; and instead of the word "mortgage" being the echo of the word "land," the possession of an estate of "five thousand a year" should imply the accompaniment of "fifty thousand consols." All mortgages ought certainly to have been paid off during the prevalence of "war prices;" but, instead of seizing so fair and unlooked-for an opportunity of clearing their estates, the landowners exhibited their enlarged rentals only as security for more advances; and they became competitors with the state, in the money market, as borrowers, when they ought to have entered it as the principal lenders.

GOOD ADVICE TO OUR ARISTOCRACY.

If our aristocracy think, that, in virtue of some hereditary claims, as lords of the soil, they are to perpetuate their families and their patrimonies by any other means than their own prudent management of their estates, according to their intrinsic values, they may some day be repudiated for sentiments equally inconsistent with the natural rights and the common sense of mankind. They have the good fortune of being placed among a people strongly attached to them by disposition and by habit, and who are sensible of the advantages, while they delight in the splendour, of a high and hereditary nobility; and, therefore, if disagreement ensue, there can be no doubt as to the side on which the fault, as well as the chief suffering, must lie. But the people delight in the splendour of their nobility, only in the contemplation that it is maintained by the intrinsic resources of their own broad possessions. If the people, rich or poor, are made to support that splendour from their own means, they must cease to respect it. The landed interest, to be secure, must not touch either the poor man's loaf or the rich man's consols, neither may they resort to the expedient of clipping and coining.

WE HAVE LONG PASSED THAT POINT UP TO WHICH THE PROSPERITY OF A COUNTRY IS BASED UPON ITS LAND.

We have long passed that point up to which the prosperity of a country is based upon its land. Our trade has outgrown our agriculture, because it has led to an increase of population which the land can neither profitably employ nor plentifully feed. What it is to have a redundant population the landed interest well know: and the more trade is cramped the more redundant will a given population prove to their cost. I know they think, that there is a circle of employment to be found in the HOME TRADE, in which the same internal elements of prosperity may be perpetually revolved and improved—that, as mouths increased in number, bread would get dearer, rents would rise, expenditure enlarge, home trade flourish, and the power of the people to pay for the bread increase with its price. The particular trades, which act as purveyors to the luxuries of the rich, cordially believe in this view of national prosperity; and the country shopkeepers, who, during the "war prices," felt the influence of them in an unusual expenditure of

the farmers' families, pant for the return of dear bread, and imagine; that a price created by Act of Parliament is the same thing as a price created by actual circumstances.

But if the increase of population should not comprise a new body of manufacturers, capable of supplying commodities for the foreign market, besides having mouths enough to consume all the home-grown corn, then, not only would the import trade be lost, but the home trade and the agricultural would languish together, and the country would become little else than one great poor-house.

On the other hand, if the additional population consists chiefly of manufacturers, who produce commodities suitable to foreign markets, and the export of those commodities materially exceed in quantity the corn which had formerly been exported, in return for the imports—the case of the country is thenceforth entirely changed, and its future prosperity will be based upon trade, and not upon land; and no imaginable measure can be so injurious to land as that which may impede the progress of trade.

TITHES.

Of tithes it may be enough to say, that they existed long before that most abstruse and highly theoretical maxim in political economy, called "Protection," was invented by "practical men;" and they have always existed, as a positive charge upon land, unqualified by any right conferred on the owners of land to reimburse themselves from the monies of the rest of the community; except so far as such a charge may, by the operation of trade, under some circumstances, infuse itself into the prices of the productions of land. If, after one-tenth part of the produce of a field has been taken for the tithe, a law is to provide that the value of the nine other parts shall be increased by one ninth, the owner of the field pays no tithe at all: and I believe that no man will say, that it never was intended that the burthen of tithe should be borne by the landowner. A Corn Bill, granted for the purpose of relieving the land from tithes, is a deliberate transfer of a charge from one party, who is liable to pay it, to another, who is under no such liability; and nothing but an in-

crease of population, which has added greatly to the value of the remaining nine parts of the produce of the field, could have enabled the owner of it to execute a device for making the people pay him also for the tenth part, which never was his property.

POOR LAWS.

The Poor Laws are of older date than the importation of corn: they existed through a long term of exportation, when the owners of land neither had, nor could have had, any protection upon the ground of the charges they incurred in supporting their poor. The circumstance of our having passed from the condition of an exporting to that of an importing country, can give them no right to be reimbursed those charges by the trading part of the community, although it supplies them with the machinery for enforcing such a claim: and, indeed, if we reflect on the number of idle persons who were supported by the great landowners out of the produce of their estates, before commerce and refinement had altered the habits of society, by converting squires into gentlemen, and bores into artisans, the poor rates would appear to be little else than a substitute for the former practice, tardily adopted after an interval of great disorder, under which the landowners were the greatest sufferers. There is nothing in the first institution of the poor law, nor in the early practice under it, upon which the landed interest can found a prescriptive or traditional right, to throw upon the rest of the community, directly or indirectly, by any device or contrivance whatever, the charge they incur in maintaining the surplus part of the population of their respective parishes.

COUNTY RATES.

The county rates are another grievance complained of; but the occupiers of lands, and the dwellers in rural situations, are the parties most interested in the purposes for which those rates are chiefly expended. I can see no ground upon which the landed interest should throw their portion of these expenses upon the other members of the community; but this they will do if the price of corn is artificially raised upon the ground of the county rates.

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AUTHORITIES

AGAINST THE CORN LAWS.

"IT WILL BE FOR YOU TO DETERMINE WHETHER THESE LAWS DO NOT AGGRAVATE THE NATURAL FLUCTUATIONS OF SUPPLY, WHETHER THEY DO NOT EMBARRASS TRADE, DERANGE CURRENCY, AND, BY THEIR OPERATION, DIMINISH THE COMFORT AND INCREASE THE PRIVATIONS OF THE GREAT BODY OF THE COMMUNITY."—*Queen Victoria.*

"The most proper method for encouraging the growth of corn at home is to multiply the number of inhabitants and eaters of bread!" "The proper method for encouraging the importation of corn from abroad is to admit the unconditional importation of it at all times and seasons, without any restraint or limitation whatever." "As to the importation of it, it is absurd to suppose that any raw material, and more especially the most momentous of all others, should be prohibited from being brought in, and the uses of it restrained, for the sake of enriching a few monopolisers."—*Dean Tucker.*

"The unlimited, unrestrained freedom of the corn trade, as it is the only effectual preventative of the miseries of a famine, so it is the best palliative of the inconveniences of a dearth."—*Adam Smith.*

"Wherever commerce is known to be always free, and the merchant absolute master of his commodity, as in Holland, there will always be a reasonable supply of corn."—*Benjamin Franklin.*

"Of all things, an indiscreet tampering with the trade of provisions is the most dangerous. My opinion is against an overdoing of any sort of administration, and more especially against this most momentous of all meddling on the part of authority, the meddling with the subsistence of the people."—*Edmund Burke.*

"In England, all other particular interests are overborne and crushed by one great particular interest, named, in the aggregate, the agricultural interest."—*Jeremy Bentham.*

"All classes, except the landlords, will be injured by the increase in the price of corn."—*David Ricardo.*

"Those countries which have depended the most upon foreign countries for their supply of corn have enjoyed beyond all other countries the advantages of a steady and in-

variable market for grain."—*James Mill, author of the History of British India.*

"For the sake of its moral benefit, we know of no achievement more urgently desirable than that of a free corn trade. There is not a more fertile topic of clamour and burning discontent all over the land; and were it but effectually set at rest, we are aware of nothing which might serve more to sweeten the breath of British society."—*Dr. Chalmers.*

"The larger the surface from which a country draws its supplies of food, the less likely is it to be injuriously affected by the varieties in the harvests."—*J. R. McCulloch.*

"Parliament has the power to go at once to the root of the evil, and remove entirely the cause of the disease. Parliament has the power to abolish the Corn Laws. This is that which would relieve the people; no other remedy can eradicate the national disease."—*Colonel Torrens.*

"We cannot persuade ourselves that this law will ever contribute to produce plenty, cheapness, or steadiness of price. So long as it operates at all, its effects must be the opposite of these. *Monopoly is the parent of scarcity, of dearth, and of uncertainty.* To cut off any of the sources of supply can only tend to lessen its abundance; to close against ourselves the cheapest markets for any commodity must enhance the price at which we purchase it; and to confine the consumer of corn to the produce of his own country is to refuse for ourselves that provision which Providence itself has made for equalizing to man the variations of climate and of seasons."—*Protest by Lord Grenville, signed by ten Peers.*

"It is my unalterable conviction that we cannot uphold the corn laws, now in existence, together with the present taxation, and at the same time increase national prosperity

and preserve public contentment."—*Mr. Huskisson's Speech, House of Commons, March 25th, 1830.*

"Food is the last thing upon which I would attempt to place any protection."—*James Deacon Hume, Board of Trade.*

"A FAR BETTER CASE COULD BE MADE OUT IN FAVOUR OF A BOUNTY TO INCREASE THE IMPORTATION OF CORN THAN OF A DUTY TO RESTRAIN IT."—*James Deacon Hume.*

"I consider that the taxation imposed upon the country by our duty on corn, and the provision duties and prohibitions, are far greater, probably much more than double the amount of taxation paid to the treasury."—*Evidence of J. M'Gregor, Esq., Joint Secretary to the Board of Trade.*

"All protection means robbing somebody else."—*Colonel Thompson.*

"The Corn law is an extension of the pension list to the whole of the landed aristocracy of Great Britain."—*London Times.*

"To propose to enrich a nation by forcing a permanent scarcity of corn, and obstructing the natural course of trade, is indeed at variance with common sense."—*Sir James Graham's Pamphlet, "Free Trade in Corn the real Interest of the Landlord and the true Policy of the State."*

"All that has been advanced on this point is a mere excuse for keeping up high rents."—*Speech of Mr Baring (now Lord Ashburton) against the Corn Bill in 1815.*

"No better mode of cheating a nation could be devised than the present corn laws."—*Lord Morpeth.*

"Your device has been to create an artificial scarcity."—*Lord Fitzwilliam's Address to the Landowners.*

"The hon. member for Kilkenny attributes the derangement of the currency and the high rate of interest altogether to the bank. But the present state of the Corn Laws is at the root of the question."—*Mr. Chancellor Spring Rice's retiring Speech.*

"If there is any class of persons whose opinions on this question are entitled to deference and respect, they are undoubtedly political economists, men who have made the sources of national wealth the principal subject of their inquiry; and where shall we find one, from Adam Smith to the present time, who has not reprobated the interference of the legislature with the price of corn?"—*Rev. Robert Hall.*

"If the moral and religious bearings of this question were rightly understood, the room would have been filled with the clergy

and dissenting ministers of London. It is impossible that they could resist such a call upon them, for they could not but feel that the objects of the society were founded in justice and humanity, and tended to the welfare of their fellow-men."—*Doctor Pye Smith's Speech at the late meeting of the Metropolitan Anti-Corn-Law Association.*

"Free trade! the plain duty and plain interest of the human race. To level all barriers to free exchange; to cut up the system of restriction roof and branch; to open every port on earth to every product; this is the office of enlightened humanity. To this a free nation should especially pledge itself. Freedom of the seas; freedom of harbours; an intercourse of nations free as the winds; this is not a dream of philanthropists. We are tending towards it, and let us hasten it."—*Dr. Channing.*

"The dearth of corn may (if such were the case) serve as a stimulus to our manufactures. America and Poland, &c., will take back cotton and hardware in exchange for wheat; and, if the affliction is not by these means taken away, it may be much lightened."—*Bishop Heber.*

"Sir Thomas Robinson, talking of the evils of importation from Ireland,—'Sir Thomas,' said Dr. Johnson, 'you talk the language of a savage. What, sir! would you prevent any people from feeding themselves, if by any honest means they can do it?'"—*Boswell's Life of Johnson.*

"I BELIEVE THAT ON THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF FREE TRADE THERE IS NOW NO GREAT DIFFERENCE IN OPINION, AND THAT ALL AGREE IN THE GENERAL RULE THAT WE SHOULD PURCHASE IN THE CHEAPEST MARKET AND SELL IN THE DEAREST."—*Sir Robert Peel's Speech on the Tariff, May 10th, 1842.*

"An importation of 50,000 head of cattle would produce an import trade of half a million of money, a trade which, in its nature, would lead by a smooth and certain course of operation to an export trade in return of equal amount, which would contribute to an increased demand for labour and employment."—*Mr. Gladstone's Speech, May 23rd, 1842.*

"The Corn Law increases the price of bread."—*Lord Stanley, in answer to Mr. John Brooks, at his last election for North Lancashire.*

"Rents rise with the rise in the price of corn."—*Ibid.*

"Wages do not rise with the rise in the price of bread."—*Ibid.*

THE ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE

AND THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

MY LORD DUKE,

The Anti-Corn-Law Deputies now in London for the purpose of procuring the total and immediate Repeal of the Corn and Provision Laws, have, in compliance with the suggestion of your Grace, prepared a brief statement of their case, which they beg to submit to your Grace's attentive perusal.

The Corn Law is framed to keep up the price of corn at a higher rate in this country than the natural price. The only way in which this can be effected, is by making corn scarcer here than abroad. The Corn Law, therefore, to effect its object, must make food scarce and dear.

The middle and upper classes of society being able to consume the same quantity of bread under any circumstances, the effects of scarcity and high price fall upon the working classes and the poor. Upwards of twenty millions of our population consist of working men and their families; they consume probably three-fourths of all the food produced in this country, so that it is out of their wages that the increased price of food is principally paid.

The House of Commons has repeatedly declared by its votes, and the reports of its Committees, that it is not in the power of Parliament to regulate the wages of labour, yet a law is maintained for securing an artificial price for food out of the earnings of the working classes.

Your Grace is aware that the Corn Law is defended on the ground that wages rise and fall with the price of food. The erroneousness of this statement is shown by the facts—That the rate of wages rose during the cheaper years 1835 and 1836, and has continued to fall rapidly during the last three years of dear food; wages in Ireland are 6d. a day, with wheat at 60s. a quarter; and wages are 4s. a day in America, with wheat at 40s. a quarter.

The Corn Law is said to benefit especially the Agricultural labourers; but their wages are in ordinary times lower than those in the trading and manufacturing districts, as a proof of which we call the attention of your Grace to the fact that there has been a constant migration of labourers from the rural to the manufacturing counties.

It is said that the repeal of the Corn Law would throw lands out of cultivation. The Deputies are of opinion that it would not have such an effect, and they appeal to the

superior practical judgments of Lord Spencer, the late Lord Leicester, Earl Ducie, and other high authorities in support of their views.

It is contended that the British Agriculturist is not able to compete with the foreigner. The BRITISH MANUFACTURER is obliged to compete with foreigners at their own doors abroad, and why should not the agriculturist be able to meet their foreign rivals in this market?

The costs of freight and other charges for bringing wheat from *the place of growth* in Poland or America, to England, is upwards of 15s. a quarter. The expense is a natural protection for our agriculturists, which nothing can deprive them of. If your poorer soils produce about three quarters of wheat per acre, here is a protection against the foreigner of £2 5s. an acre. This natural protection, even under a perfectly free Corn Trade, would place the English manufacturer under a most serious disadvantage.

It is asserted that the manufacturers are protected. The protection is nominal, and not real. The manufacturers have repeatedly petitioned that all protection duties, so called, imposed professedly for their benefit, should be abolished along with the Corn Law.

Some persons seem to believe that the Corn Law keeps up prices generally. This is a grievous error. The Corn Law does not keep up the rate of wages; it keeps up the price of nothing but food; it depresses the value of everything besides. Manufactured goods are cheaper in England than in any other country.

The Corn Law has been defended on the ground that the land of this country bears exclusive burdens—such as tithe, land tax, church rates, poor rates, highway rates, and county rates. The tithe never did belong to the landowner, and therefore he cannot be justly said to pay that which has always been the property of the church. The land tax, which was settled in 1692, and has not been increased to the present day, notwith-

standing that the value of land has increased probably seven-fold, bears a smaller proportion to the whole amount of taxes in this country than in any of the continental states. The trading and manufacturing population pay their own church rates. The cities and towns maintain their own streets and highways—boroughs corporate support their own police and maintain their prisons—towns not incorporate contribute equally with the agriculturists to the county rate. It is, therefore, demonstrable that the towns pay their full share of local rates. But it will be found that the landed interest are exempted from many of the *general* taxes paid by the rest of the community, of which we need only enumerate probate and legacy duties.

It is contended that the repeal of the Corn Law would injure the home trade. It is impossible to separate the home from the foreign trade. A great part of the home trade is carried on in the large manufacturing and trading towns. Manchester is a larger consumer of its own cotton manufactures than the whole county of Bucks. You cannot increase the home trade without increasing your foreign trade, or extend your foreign trade without extending your home trade. They are one and the same thing.

It is alleged by our opponents that the object of the Anti-Corn-Law League is to obtain cheap food, for the purpose of being able to reduce wages. We have frequently declared that we desired not a *reduction* of wages, *which reduction is rapidly going on at the present time*, but the *maintenance* of wages; not to be able to compete with foreigners—that we already do; our object is to *EXCHANGE* our productions for the Corn and Provisions of other countries, and thereby to extend trade, augment the supply of food, and increase the demand for labour.

We are told that if the Corn Laws were repealed, it would be impossible to pay the interest of the national debt. The bulk of the state taxes, for meeting the interest of the national debt, and the other expenses of the government, are paid by excise and custom duties upon tea, coffee, sugar, tobacco, soap, malt, and other articles of general consumption. The tax upon Corn yields no regular revenue to the state. If the trade in corn were free, by which food would be obtained at a more moderate and steady price, the people would have more money to spend upon tea, sugar, &c., and thus the revenue would be benefited. In 1835, when corn was 39s. 4d. per quarter, there was an overflowing Exchequer. During the last

three years, whilst wheat has been upwards of 60s., and population greater by nearly three millions, there has been a deficient revenue. It will be found, as a general rule, that whenever food has been abundant, and consequently cheap, the revenue has flourished, and *vice versa*.

The Corn Law is defended on the ground that it would be dangerous to depend upon foreigners for a supply of food. In 1810, when we were engaged in war with almost every European power, we imported 1,491,000 quarters of wheat, nearly half a million of which were obtained from France alone. In the ten years of war, from 1805 to 1815, during part of which period we were engaged in hostilities with the whole world, we imported upwards of five millions of quarters. No country could prevent the transportation of corn to England, unless by prohibiting exportation altogether; for when once a ship has cleared out of port, even for a coasting voyage, it is beyond the control of the government, and may convey its cargo to any destination.

We would especially call your Grace's attention to the question, as to how the increasing numbers in this country are to be employed and subsisted, unless a free scope be given to our foreign trade? The agricultural population continues to increase, but the land does not offer an increasing field for their employment. They have hitherto found a resource in the towns. If this outlet be stopped, the land must support the people in idleness. The landowners must either allow their increasing population to become their customers in the manufacturing and trading towns, or submit to maintain them as paupers in the place of their birth.

We would also direct the attention of your Grace to the increase of local rates during the scarcity and high price of food, particularly of poor rates. The discontent of the people has also led to an augmentation of the army and of the rural police. The corn law was enacted amidst tumult and bloodshed, and similar scenes have attended the frequent recurrence of scarcity under the operation of the law.

We have argued the question thus far as one of policy and expediency; we finally, and above all, refer our case to the standard of eternal justice, and we appeal from the decision of parliamentary majorities, governments, and ministers, to the God of justice.

Signed on behalf of the Conference,

P. A. TAYLOR, Chairman.
Palace Yard, London, Aug., 1, 1842.