

SELECTIONS

FROM

COBBETT'S POLITICAL WORKS:

BEING

A COMPLETE ABRIDGMENT OF THE 100 VOLUMES WHICH COMPRISE THE
WRITINGS OF "PORCUPINE" AND THE "WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER."

WITH NOTES,

HISTORICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

BY

JOHN M. COBBETT AND JAMES P. COBBETT.

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TO MR. BARING,

ON THE

WORKINGS OF THE TAXING AND THE PAPER-SYSTEMS.

(*Political Register*, May, 1820.)

London, 17th May, 1820.

SIR,

The mind that is calculated to produce effects on other minds, and thus to be of consequence in the world, catches hold of every occurrence that offers an opportunity for its exerting itself. It does not droop under untoward circumstances; but waits patiently for *events* to combat on its side. Amidst calumnies, persecutions, imprisonings, hangings, quarterings, and all the tiger-like pranks that power may play, the mind which has *truth* for its guide feels no discouragement, knowing well that truth and justice will and must prevail at last.

If we look into the history of the convulsions and fall of states, we shall find, that, though the actually bursting out of revolutions, has generally been owing to some insignificant thing, almost always accidental, too; yet that the *causes* have been long at work on the community. I hope that nothing of the kind that is usually denominated *revolution*, will take place in England; but it is now universally acknowledged, that the country is in a state of *great peril*; and that no man is thought wise enough to be able to say what may, and what may not happen.

The causes of this peril are, nobody will now deny, the **TAXING** and the **PAPER-MONEY** systems. How these have worked thus far, we now see and feel. How they will work for the future is evident enough to me; but it is less my object, at this time, to engage in new predictions, than to point out to the public, to this deluded, credulous, gulled and cajoled public (from whom I except the *lower orders*), the confirmation of my former predictions; and the reason for my addressing myself to you is, that you have been the first to acknowledge openly, that those predictions are fulfilled. You have not, indeed, *named me*; that you took very good care not to do; neither have you said, that *any one* foretold that which has now happened; but you have said, that that which I said would take place, *has taken place*.

Your speech, in the House of Commons, on the 8th instant, together with that of Lord MILTON, during the same debate, have given me pleasure, which I cannot describe, and of which an idea can be formed by no man who has not, for years and years, had to endure every species of obloquy, reproach and persecution, on account, and *only* on account, of his having promulgated those truths which, at last, he has seen acknowledged by even his persecutors. To *be right* is the wish of every man: to be proved to have been right, in opposition to bitter persecutors, is an enjoyment far beyond any that wealth can bestow: to be right in opposition to the repeated assertions and solemn acts of legislative bodies, aided by all the light that immense power is able to command; this is my lot: and, it is my duty as well as my pleasure to make the facts known to the world.

The taxing, funding and paper-money system has always, with me, been an object of hatred. From the moment I understood it, I detested it. It was in 1803 that I began to examine into it. In that very year I predicted that, unless it were put a stop to in time, it would make this the most miserable, enslaved, and contemptible nation in the world. From that day to this, I have been at war against this all-corrupting and all-degrading system. And, I have lived to see the system pushed along to its utmost extent, and to see the consequences in a greater mass of ruin and of human wretchedness than was ever before witnessed: while, as to the liberties of the country, there is scarcely a man to be met with who thinks them worthy of any care or attention. I have seen the affair of the 16th of August, and the measures subsequent to it and connected with it; and I have seen a man taken up and *held to bail*, for announcing to his townsmen, that "William Cobbett was arrived at Liverpool in good health."

However, I shall, on the present occasion, confine myself to matter more immediately suggested by the speeches, which have given me so much pleasure, and which related to the consequences of the Bill, passed last year, to produce *cash-payments* at the Bank in Threadneedle-street, which, for brevity's sake, we will call the *Old Lady*; and the Bill, or rather Act, we will, if you please, call the *Cash-Act*.

I have, all along, contended, in opposition to speakers, writers, resolution-makers, and act-makers, that "*the Old Lady never could pay in cash, without a reduction of the interest of the Debt.*" And I have contended, that, "*an attempt to make her do it, would plunge the country into ruin and misery indescribable.*"—These distinct propositions, together with arguments proving their truth, I have repeated so many times, that I have been ashamed of my repetitions. All the grounds, all the causes, all effects, all the various workings of the thing; all the whole history and mystery of this grand delusion; all its branches and twigs; have been so fully and so frequently subjects of my pen, that I have really very often been disgusted at the thought of saying any thing more about the matter. Yet, it is necessary to persevere; and now there is *life* again; for my doctrines begin to be fathered even in Parliament.

The embarrassment, the ruin, the misery are *come*: that is to say, *in part*; but they have not arrived at a *tenth* part of their height, if the *Cash-Act* be actually carried into effect. Mind *that*! However, the misery is come. I was called a *deluder*, when I said, that the country was in misery; when I talked of the sufferings of journeymen and

labourers, and ascribed them to the taxes. For doing this, I was represented as a stirrer-up of *sedition*. But, now, what do I see? Merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen, farmers and landowners, all coming forward and telling the Parliament *that they are ruined*; and that, if there be no remedy, they must perish. The *Six Acts* have silenced the *sensible, public-spirited, and unanimous Reformers*; and now petitions are pouring in from the ignorant, selfish and warring bodies of trade and agriculture, who seem to be anxious to over-reach one another, but few of whom have sense or spirit enough to state the real cause of their sufferings. Nothing can exceed the pleasure I enjoy at beholding this strife. The sufferings of the parties are a just punishment for their conduct towards those who have been endeavouring to obtain a *real remedy*: These petitioners have been, and yet are, the enemies of *reform*, and they have been the cause of preventing it. Let them suffer: let them settle their opposing claims in their own way; according to their own notions of expediency and justice. Being at war against each other, they may, perhaps, vent their malignity in that way, and have little left to bestow upon the Radicals. These petitioners call themselves "the *loyal*;" they cry out against "the *disaffected*:" well, let them be "*well affected*," then; and let them give a proof of it in submitting patiently to their sufferings. They abuse others for being *discontented*: let them, then, be *contented*. They say that this mode of governing the country is *good*. Let them enjoy its *goodness*, then. They like a *standing army* in time of peace; they say it is necessary for their protection: but an *army eats and drinks as well as stands*; and it *must be paid*: and, do these loyal men grudge, then, to *pay the army*? What unreasonable people! The army costs *ten millions a year*; and it is paid, too, in *money of high value*. Well, what of that? It ought to be paid in good money. But, what an unreasonable thing is it, then, to complain of the weight of *taxes*! All the world must know, that the soldiers are paid out of the taxes. What! do these people want the soldiers to live upon the air? The "*Ladies of Huddersfield*," those amiable females, think far otherwise. They give *grand entertainments*, the *Courier* tells us, to the *non-commissioned officers and soldiers*, who have kept the Radicals in awe. These ladies think, I suppose, that fighting, like kissing, comes out of the cupboard. Sagacious dames! It is no such foolish thing, I dare say they think, to be beloved by a couple of thousand of lusty young fellows. Women are very sharp-sighted, especially in cases of this kind; and, I would have the curmudgeons, who are petitioning against taxes, to look at the example of the "*Ladies of Huddersfield*."

To return to the subject before us, I had about five hundred times asserted and proved, that the Old Lady never could be made to pay in cash, unless the interest of the Debt were reduced. In spite of this, the last Parliament, after a long and voluminous inquiry upon the subject, *resolved first, and then enacted, that she should be made to pay in cash*; and, they said nothing about the *interest of the Debt*. As soon as I, who was then in Long Island, heard of this, or, rather, read of it, in an *English newspaper*, I put my hands together, lifted up my eyes towards the straw roof of my tent (the walls of which were made of *Chronicles and Couriers*), and exclaimed: "God be praised! The end of delusion is at hand!" The *bullion* story did not cheat me. I saw clearly, that the *bullion* payments would be, and were intended to be, no payments at all; but I also saw, that they would compel the Old Lady to *draw in her*

paper, and that that would produce *prodigious misery*. I had no idea that the Old Lady would ever pay in cash, unless the interest of the Debt were reduced; but, I saw her now *clearly and safely pinned down*. There was no room left for *any shuffling*. Any man might, after the next February, go to the Old Girl and *demand* a lump of gold. I knew well *how much* she would have; I knew that she had no means of getting any gold worth naming; and, of course, that all she could do was to draw in her paper; and I knew, that drawing-in would cause such misery, such clamour, such an outcry, amongst the farmers, merchants, and manufacturers, as the world had never heard before.

I was not long before I put these thoughts upon paper; and, when I had done that; during the months of August and September, I set off home in October, *to witness the fulfilment of my predictions* and then to point out the *suitable and effectual remedies*: that is to say, if I were in *Parliament*; and, if not, to stay and see the thing *work* under the remedies of others. This I am now doing. I am looking on, while the thing is *working*; and work it does like new beer in a vat.

In the debate of the 8th instant, Lord MILTON said, "that he ascribed a great part of the suffering to the measure of Cash-payments, passed last year; that few persons, he believed, had had an *idea of the pressure*, with which that measure was likely to be accompanied. In fact, they were afraid to look the thing in its face. They were afraid to *alarm the people* as to the embarrassment that that measure would produce. They were willing to shut their eyes as to the consequences of that measure: he thought an opposite line of conduct would have been the *wisest*." To which, were we not afraid of incurring the charge of bad manners, we might ask his Lordship, why *he* did not say this last year, before the bill passed? But, what a pity it is, that he did not read the *Register*! How clearly would he have foreseen all these consequences, if he had read that poor little, dear little "*Two-penny Trash*," against which the *Six Acts* levelled no small part of their force! *Trash* is the stuff to give *light*. Oh, no! Lord MILTON, it was not the fear of *alarming the people* that prevented the last Parliament from looking the thing in the face: it was the fear of *alarming themselves*! The people have nothing to *fear*; for, very few of them have any thing to *lose*. But, the fundholders and the sinecure placemen and pensioners have a great deal to lose. And, of course, they would be easily and greatly alarmed. If Lord Milton had read the "*Two-penny Trash*," instead of the stupid lucubrations of the whig-oracle, the *Morning Chronicle*, he would not now have had a *discovery* to make of the ruinous consequences of the Cash-Act. However, he has made the discovery; and that is something.

You, Sir, are more explicit. Your *long* speech about the *imports and exports*, about *free trade and restrictions*; this is not much. It is of doubtful policy and doubtful philosophy; much of it may be disputed, and much is of little interest. But, your *short* speech about the currency is all *pith*: it is as well worthy of attention as if you had quoted it, word for word, from "*Two-penny Trash*." You say, that "the value of money is risen; that we are *paying too high* an interest; that this is a *VITAL POINT*; that it is necessary for every gentleman to *make up his mind* upon the subject; that the change in the currency was one of the circumstances that *weighed the country down*; that we now had to *pay our creditors a higher value than we received from them*;" and

that you intended to *make bullion-payments perpetual instead of coin*, a plan of your Honourable friend, Mr. RICARDO, for which the country was *infinitely indebted to him*.

Yes, this is a "*vital point*" indeed. It means this; that the Old Lady never can pay in *cash*, unless the interest of the Debt be reduced! And this is what I have said a thousand, and, perhaps, *ten thousand*, times. But, come, Sir! I will stand this no longer! I will not suffer the *truth* to come out, at last, and to pass as being of other people's discovering. I will have my *own*. The Parliament shall not creep out of this thing unseen. They cannot be *right*, without coming to my doctrine; and they shall not come to it without the world *seeing them* come to it. I know, that there are men, who would almost as soon lose their estates as save them by my means. They hate the very *name* of Cobbett. But, they shall hear it, constantly hear it, during the remainder of the existence of the system. They shall hear it the oftener because they do not like to hear it. "I will buy a starling, and teach him to cry *Cobbett* in their ear," from one end of the year to the other.

Subjoined to this letter, you will find, Sir, a Letter to the Prince Regent, written at New York in September last. I had, at that time, lying before me, the speech of the *Speaker* to the *Prince* at the close of the session, during which the *Cash-Act* was passed, together with the *Prince's answer*. The *Speaker* very pompously described the *Cash-Measure* as one of great importance, and as the result of most laborious investigation and most mature deliberation. And the subject of my Letter is, as you will find, a commentary on this famous measure.* Read it, Sir; and then say, whether I did not know, last September, having been two years and a half out of the country, a little more about the effects that would arise out of that measure, than any of you did, who had had a hand in the renowned and most important work. I beg you, Sir, to read this letter, and to bear in mind, that the *Radicals* have read it long ago. You will see the true doctrine. You will, when you come to the end of this letter, be no longer at a loss to know what will be the *end* of the *Cash-Act*. That famous work of the Six-Act Parliament will, be you assured, long be remembered in England.

I remember that, when I first proposed a *reduction of the interest of the Debt*, that wise man, Mr. PERRY, called it a *swindling* proposition; and false old SHERRY suggested, even in the House of Commons, the propriety of *prosecuting* me! I have lived to hear Mr. CURWEN (on Friday last) say, in that same House, that "the only means of alleviating the distress was lightening the burden of taxation, which could *only* be effected by a *diminution of the interest of the National Debt*." Thus you are coming over to me by degrees! No one said anything in answer to Mr. CURWEN. The Ministers never opened their lips. It is very strange what wondrous improvements time and suffering produce!

However, this *diminishing the interest of the Debt*, is not so easy a thing as Mr. CURWEN may imagine. It may be done by an Act of Parliament; but, it will make *other*, and far more troublesome measures necessary. For, does he imagine, that *mortgages*, *bonds*, and all sorts of *debts* must not be reduced too? Here is a pretty budget to open! Un-

* The Letter to TIERNEY, Vol. 5, Selections, p. 341, contains all the arguments of the Letter above referred to, which we therefore omit.—ED.

less these underwent a revision at the same time that the Debt was reduced, the ruin would be increased instead of lessened by a reduction of the interest of the Debt.

Besides, are the army and navy to remain with unreduced pay? Are *Judges* and other persons with *salaries* to retain their high pay? Are the *Sinecures*, *Pensions*, and *Grants*, to retain their present nominal amount? Are the annuitants on *insurance offices* still to be paid to the full? Oh, dear no! There must be a general, a total, a clean-sweeping pecuniary revolution; or a reduction of the interest of the Debt will only add to the general distress. And here I think I hear the "good, loyal, peaceable people" exclaim: "Ah! you Radical villain, you want to ruin us all." No: gentlemen and ladies, I really do not. I really do not wish you to have my medicine forced upon you. Keep on in your present way with all my heart. It is your own affair, not mine. If you would rather let the cancer kill you than undergo the inconvenience of a cure, God forbid that you should lose your beloved cancer.

To reduce the salaries, pensions, grants, officers' and soldiers' pay, sinecures, and all the other incomes of the tax-eaters, will require what Lord MILTON calls a *looking in the face*, and a pretty *bold* looking too. And yet this must be done, and the mortgages must be reduced also; or else a reduction of the interest of the Debt will only tend to add to the ruin and confusion. Your plan of making bullion-payments *perpetual*, is neither more nor less than the declaring and enacting, at once, a *complete bankruptcy*; for what is *payment*? It means giving money for the bank-notes, to be sure; and not the opening of a shop to *sell bullion*. Payment means, the paying of *every body*, and not the selling of gold to a few Jews. But the plan means, that none even of the bullion should ever *issue*. So that it is all a deception; all a delusion; and it means, that there shall always be a *paper-currency*, which shall *not be convertible into coin*, and which shall be a *legal tender*. This is bankruptcy; and this, if the report of your speech be correct, you mean to propose to make *perpetual*. I have said, many times, that if the Old Lady pay in cash, without a reduction of the interest of the Debt, I will give myself up to the carriers-on of the system, and let them, if they choose, *broil me alive*. I know that broiling alive is very bad; that it is worse than hanging and cutting off the head; that it is worse than ripping up the bowels and quartering the body. I have had a *burn* now-and-then, and I know how *sore* it is. I know what pain the fire produces. I am very sure, that the supporters of the system would like to *broil me alive*. And I thus again, with my eyes open, declare, that I will, if the Cash-Bill be carried into effect, without a reduction of the interest of the Debt, give myself up to be *broiled alive*. I am watching, as a cat watches for a mouse, to see what you will do. The moment any law is passed to *put a stop to the Cash-Bill*, I shall begin to shout out *victory!* There will be no bounds to my exultation, and there *ought to be none*. But what will your perpetual bullion project do? What *relief* will it bring? Will it *mend things*? Will it lower the poor-rates, give high prices to the "gallant yeomen," and make trade brisk? Why, no: to be sure it will not. All that it can do is to *make the misery perpetual*. That is all. And that is your mode of *relief!* If, indeed, you fix the price of the bullion at *six or seven pounds an ounce*, that will do. That will shave the fund-men, sinecure men and women, and the judges, soldiers and the rest, *pretty close*. That will really relieve the howling farmers and the

grumbling merchants. But, if you fix the price of bullion at the standard of gold and silver, what *relief* will you give? What is wanted is to *lower the expenditure; to take off taxes*, and your scheme would tend to no such end.

Then, again, your project is essentially a perpetual *paper-project*. And do you not see, that the country can never be *safe in war* with a paper-money? If it be true, that notes have been made even in *Spain*, and sent and passed here, as the newspapers inform us, what do you think will take place if we should be engaged in *another war*? A hundred thousand pounds, employed in this way, would *soon put an end to the war*, unless there were a real money circulation in the country. So that your scheme is not only inefficient for *relief*, but it is completely ridiculous.

However, you disclaim the honour of having invented this scheme, and generously ascribe it to your honourable Friend, Mr. RICARDO, of *Gatcomb Park in Gloucestershire*, and Member for *Portarlington*. This gentleman was, last session, called an ORACLE by Mr. BROUGHAM, and by Mr. WILBERFORCE, he was described as a political economist, worthy of the *esteem and admiration* of his contemporaries. This gentleman, during the last session, broached *another plan*, which, amongst other things included a *paying-off of the Debt*! This was truly *oracular*; and we will here take a look at the words in which it came before the public.

"With respect to the National Debt, his recommendation of the plan for its liquidation was pronounced chimerical; it may be so, but nevertheless he still held it, and thought it a good one. The particular promise of its reduction which was held out by Government, he thought unwise; that opinion he had invariably entertained. He lamented upon this point the state into which the country had fallen, but it was not in idle and unavailing lamentations that they were to spend their time; they were rather called upon to see how they were to get out of the difficulties of this state. (Hear, hear.) The only wise and economical way of getting out of the difficulty was, in his opinion, to pay off the Debt. Why did he think so? Because he saw the state of things daily drawing capital from the country. The obvious effect of this was, to absolve the capital so removed, from its liability to pay its proper share of the National Debt. It not only, in this manner, absolved itself from its responsibility, but it threw an additional burden, *pro tanto*, upon the capital not so withdrawn; and did not this aggravate the evil? What appeared to him wise to be done in the present time was, that *not a moment should be lost in taking an account of the capital, while yet it remained in a considerable and adequate portion in the country, and that the amount of the capital so estimated should be assessed, so as to get rid of the Debt*. He would willingly bear whatever imputation of extravagance was cast upon this recommendation, but he did not see any great insuperable difficulties, if once fairly and fully entered into, of its accomplishing its ultimate end, and giving relief to the country. It was a gigantic plan, he admitted (hear, hear), but he saw no better way of meeting the evil. The payment might be extended to four, five, or more years; it might even be done through the medium of a paper-currency, issued for the specific purpose. Suppose a cheque were given to each of the public creditors, and that this were payable for the taxes, no great demand or variation would then affect the regular circulating medium of the country."

Bravo! Very *simple*, however. Only to take away the estates of the landowners, and give them to the fundholders. That is all; and it is very true, that if this were done, there would be *effectual relief*; for the taxes might be very greatly reduced, and the labouring classes would be wholly relieved. Capital would remain in the country; the poor-rates would come down to what they were seventy years ago; and all would be right; especially as there would *then* be nobody to object to a Radical

Reform of the Parliament; and, of course, England would then be as happy as you represent France now to be. As to the Farmers, they would merely change landlords; and, I dare say, that, when Mr. RICARDO looks at Gatcomb Park and its vicinage, he finds that the estates and tenants and neighbourhoods would lose nothing by receiving new Lords from 'Change-alley and Botolph-lane.

The only difficulty in the way of this plan appears to be the reluctance which the present owners may have to make the surrender. I know that their loyalty and devotion will lead them very far; but without attempting to disparage their disinterestedness, I may venture to think, that they will not like to turn out. Mr. RICARDO's plan gives them, I see, four or five years to reconcile their minds to the change; but still, I think, that they will consent to the scheme with reluctance; and yet I do not know that their adherence to "national faith" may not finally prevail.

This scheme is a great favourite in Fenchurch-street, and all about Cornhill, where the inhabitants are become extremely impatient to see something done. That they are tired of what they call patching. They say, that they are willing to give up a part of their property. In short, they are in a hurry to get into the parks and mansions! This is a matter with which we Radicals have nothing to do, except that we want the taxes taken off, and we want a Radical Reform, which we are very sure a liquidation of the Debt, and especially in Mr. RICARDO's way, would give us. We do not desire to meddle with other folk's affairs. We have had nothing to do in borrowing the money, except *virtually*; and we are quite willing that the liquidation should be done *virtually*. We have no desire to interfere between the parties. So that they settle the thing; so that the taxes be taken off, we care not who have the parks. If the landowners and fundholders please themselves as to the manner of doing the thing, they are sure to please us. Now, is not this amiable? What can we say more? Indeed, sir, we are not that turbulent crew that you seem to think us.

I, for my part, am, I must confess, much disappointed that so many days of the session have passed, without our hearing of any proposition from Mr. RICARDO upon this "gigantic subject." I assure you, that the people at the 'Change are looking out very sharply for the execution of the plan. The farmers (those who rent) would like it too. So that there is very great and general disappointment.

You said, last summer, that it was monstrous in us to ascribe the distress of the country to the organization of the Commons' House, seeing that the country had flourished under a House of the same organization. As a general argument this is not worth a straw, even supposing the premises to be true. A system requires time to produce its bad effects. A cancer is nothing at first. A tooth is partly rotten long before it produces pain. The funding-system is, as PAINÉ so happily described it, strength at the beginning, and weakness at the end. But a paper-system is never prosperity; and this country has never known prosperity since the paper-system and borough-system began. There has been an appearance of it; and so there is in a trade, carried on by accommodation notes. But a trader who always owes more than he can pay, though he may shine, though he may have his carriages and his villa, though he may give claret and Burgundy, though his coachman may have gilded cords hanging from his shoulders, though his footman may not dare to hand a plate without a napkin twisted round his thumb; though he may

show away thus, yet, if all these signs of riches be obtained by *accommodation paper*, the man cannot be called prosperous. His affairs must wind up at some time or other, and then he has to allow, that, *upon the whole*, he has not been a prosperous man.

This is precisely the case with this nation. Its apparent prosperity arose out of the use of accommodation paper. In proportion as the paper increased the apparent prosperity increased; but now the bubble has burst. The rope-shouldered coachman, and the napkin-thumbed footman are gone, and ruin, beggary, and starvation have come in their stead. Therefore, the foundation of your anti-reforming argument fails. It is worth nothing, and we persevere in saying, that a radical reform, and that *alone*, can save this nation from utter and irretrievable ruin.

And now, sir, before I conclude, pray let me beg you to read the letter before alluded to. It is well worthy of your attention. You see, that I understand more about these matters than you do. You ought, therefore, to read and correct yourself. You gave your approbation to the Cash-Act. I wrote home to say, that it would *not do*. You ought to *learn*, therefore, of *me*, upon this subject. You understand exchanges and price of metals, and how to calculate interest better than I do; but these have little to do with *political economy*. That great ass, PERRY, observed, the other day, that the inquisition being at an end in Spain, *science* would take a spread in the country; for that a Spaniard might now have "*a Blackstone or a RICARDO in his library!*" A *Ricardo*, indeed! But, this PERRY is, at once, the most conceited coxcomb and the greatest fool in this whole kingdom. He is a true representative of the Whig party, of which he is the organ. "*A Ricardo!*" The empty, pompous fool, when it has taken but a few months to show that "*a Ricardo*" is a heap of senseless, Change-Alley jargon, put upon paper and bound up into a book; that the measure, founded upon it, must be abandoned, or will cause millions to be starved, and that it has since been proposed, even by the author himself, to supplant it by a plan for paying off the Debt! "*A Ricardo,*" indeed!

Mr. Judge GARROW told a witness, the other day, that he "*could not read a worse book than Cobbett's Register.*" I am not offended with Judge GARROW for this; because I am sure, that he founds his opinion upon *hearsay*. If he had time to read the dear little Twopenny Trash, and *would read* it, he would soon change his opinion. He would say, that it was the *best* book that a man could read. And, if his brother BAILEY had read it, before last summer, he would not, I am persuaded, have pronounced, in his charge to the Grand Jury at York, that memorable eulogium on *National Debts*, which I read in America, and which made us all there laugh most immoderately. Now, though I will not, like Mr. HUNT, *offend* these gentlemen by *praising* them; though I will not say that they are "*fathers*" to us, I can venture to say that they are discerning, clever, acute, discriminating men, and men of great experience in the world, amongst the most knowing part of which they have always lived, and across crowds of the most knowing and most active they have passed to arrive at their present station. Yet, they will permit me to say, that they *lose* by not reading my little books. They hear them spoken ill of, and they think ill of them. This is contrary to the usual practice of lawyers, who are not apt to believe things upon *hearsay*; who are not apt to be content with anything short of *proof*. I therefore, hope

that these gentlemen will read my little books; and I can assure them of this, that they will never see peace and tranquillity in England, that they will never see the people happy any more, unless those measures which these little books disapprove of be abandoned. It is now rung in our ears from every seat in Parliament, that it is *the Debt which is the cause of our calamities*. This is now said by *everybody*. I said, many years ago, that the Debt *would produce* this state of things. But you all now say that it *has produced it*. And, yet, Judge Bailey told the York Grand Jury, that a National Debt was a *good thing*! If he had read my little books, he would not have committed this error.

I was particularly pleased to hear you speak of the *prosperity of France*, and to say, that employment was plenty, and that the people were happy in that country; because this shows that the effects of getting rid of national debts, of tithes, and of petty tyranny are good. The French are not so happy as they might be, and as they *will be*, but they have a *real representation* in one of their Houses of Parliament, and this is the great security for their not being reduced to misery. The late long contest against the people of France has led to a curious result. Before the French Revolution began, France was weighed down by an enormous Debt, and was so overrun, tormented and pillaged by tax-gatherers and priests, that beggary and almost famine, everywhere stared the traveller in the face. England, at that same time, had but a small Debt, her taxes were light, her trade was flourishing, and her people were happy. France has now hardly any Debt, her taxes are light, she has no tithes, employment is abundant, trade is flourishing, and the people are happy. What England *now is*, I leave to you and the other Members of Parliament to describe. And, when you have taken a view of the contrast, I ask you whether we have come *victoriously out of the combat*? And I beg you, and all of you, to bear in mind, that it was *not the Reformers*, who began, or carried on, that combat. To that war we have to ascribe all our present sufferings; all our present *difficulties*, out of which none of you pretend to see your way. That war caused the Debt; that war caused the stoppage of the Bank; that war caused all the evils that we now endure. And that war was opposed by the *Reformers*, many of whom were most severely punished for that opposition. I beg you and all of you, to bear this in mind; and, if you do, you will not be surprised that we feel singular pleasure at hearing your account of the happy state of the people of France.

It is curious to observe, how *civil* we are become in our language towards the *French* and *Americans*, and how very *silent* about Spain! Formerly our bullying and insolent newspapers, imitating or taking the hint from great, empty-headed, blubber-cheeked, fox-hunting fellows, who are not less distinguished by their insolence than their ignorance; formerly, our newspapers, in imitation of these bluff-headed sots, would have talked away at a fine rate about the *cession of Florida*; about the *manufactures of France*; and about the *democrats of Spain*. Now, they are as meek, as modest, and as silent as girls in their teens! You hardly ever hear them say a word about those countries; and, when they do mention them, it is with "*great respect*." Mr. MADISON, whom Sir JOSEPH YORKE talked of our deposing, has lived to see us a nation with *good manners*. This is a strange, but a very good change. Long may we find it prudent to be mannerly. The happiness of *France* particu-

larity; the *prosperity of France*; this is what the people of England ought to rejoice at; because it shows what are the effects of a government where the people are *represented*, and where there is *no state religion*; but, where all men are freely allowed to be of what religion they please, and are *compelled to pay to no religion*.

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL,

IN ANSWER TO HIS SPEECH AGAINST THE QUEEN.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—The incident of the trial of QUEEN CAROLINE took place in 1820, and, as Mr. COBBETT had before, taken a conspicuous part in the discussions relative to that unfortunate lady (see vol. iv. pp. 185 to 251 of these Selections), he was now called on to resume his part. We have, however, confined ourselves to two papers, one is, Mr. COBBETT'S answer to the speech of the then Solicitor-General, now Lord LYNDEMURST, and the other is the Queen's Letter to the King, which, though written by Mr. COBBETT, was never acknowledged by him. The reader will find an able detail of the Trial in Hansard's debates, year 1820.

(*Political Register*, September, 1820.)

London, 12th September, 1820.

SIR,

I am not one of those, who think that much danger to her Majesty's cause is likely to arise from Mr. Brougham not having been permitted to open his case; because I am convinced, that if the matter were now closed; if not another word were to be heard on the subject, in the House of Lords, the public, this whole nation, the whole world would pronounce her Majesty innocent of the charges preferred against her, and would also pronounce those charges to have originated in a long-premeditated and slowly-matured conspiracy. But the *press* has its rights, and amongst these is the right of expressing what men think on subjects connected with the national welfare, whether such expression be necessary, or not, to the safety of individuals. I am of opinion that your summing up was sophistical, and was intended to assist in accomplishing an unjust end, by giving countenance to that contemplated and expected end. I, therefore, submit to the public my answer to that summing up.

In doing this, I shall in some degree invert the *order* which you thought proper to adopt; that is to say, I shall begin where you left off. You, after all your efforts to produce a belief in the soundness of your case itself, think proper to conclude with *professions as to motives and wishes*. Voluntary *professions* and *asseverations* always excite suspicion as to the sincerity of those who make them; but I recollect no instance, in which offerings of this kind have been made with a worse grace than

those made by you. In this case you not only profess for *yourself*, but for all those concerned in the prosecution; Attorney-general, Ministers, and Milan Commission; you are *Professor-general*; and, as you thought it necessary to make the professions, it will, I trust, be deemed not improper that I inquire into their sincerity.

You conclude in the following words:

"He begged now to be allowed to revert to what had been said yesterday, that the case had fallen infinitely short of the opening of his hon. and learned friend, the Attorney-general. He asked if the case now in evidence *was not as strong in the facts and the details as the opening had been, and if it did not justify all which his hon. and learned friend had stated in the discharge of the duty which their lordships had imposed on him?* It was impossible for him to sit down without alluding to what had been dragged into every cross-examination, and had been rung in their ears, not only from the beginning to the end of this case, but from the first moment any mention was made of the subject, and for the purpose of involving in reproach every individual who took any part in the proceedings. It was *quite impossible for the persons at the head of his Majesty's Government not to have established some mode of inquiry*; it was quite impossible that they should not have inquired into reports in the highest degree derogatory to her Royal Highness, and in general circulation in most parts of Europe. He asked them whether it was not their duty to inquire if those reports *were or were not true?* There was only one mode of doing this: that mode was, to select persons eminent in point of character, *of great character for integrity and knowledge, to make that inquiry.* Accordingly, *as judicious, as proper a selection as could be made, had been adopted.* At the head was one known to be a man of the *highest respectability—known to possess unimpeachable integrity, and of great skill and knowledge in the laws of his country.* He had been at the head of the commission—if commission it was to be called—for the purpose of obtaining, not idle rumour, but evidence of facts, such as could alone be admitted in every court in this country. He asked if *any fairer selection could have been made than another gentleman, of whom mention had been made in the course of the proceedings, who possessed great practice in the law.* A third gentleman, Colonel Brown, he was not acquainted with; but he *was told that his character stood as high as that of any of those who had dared to traduce him.* Was he justified, then, in saying that it was a *duty upon Ministers* to have instituted an inquiry into the reports circulated? And was he justified in saying that Ministers had exercised a *sound discretion*, liable to no imputation whatever, in selecting persons to conduct the necessary inquiry? He begged pardon if he had occupied their lordships' time too long. He hoped he had fairly stated the evidence in the case. He had been *anxious not to have tortured or discoloured any fact or circumstance.* If he had tortured or discoloured in any degree, he *regretted it*; for he had been *desirous only to do his duty, and not to misrepresent*; and he hoped he might be allowed in conclusion to say, and he said it *from the bottom of his heart, and in the utmost sincerity*; he *sincerely and devoutly wished*, not that the evidence should be confounded and perplexed, but his wish was, that it should be the result of this proceeding, *that her Royal Highness should establish, to the satisfaction of their Lordships, and every individual in the country, her full and unalloyed innocence.* Whether this was likely or not, it would be unbecoming in him to offer any opinion. He had only to say, that the preamble of the bill was proved, *unless the proof should be impeached by evidence, clear, distinct, and satisfactory, on the part of her Majesty.*" (*Hear, hear! Order, order.*)

Thus, then, we have from you the profession of a sincere and devout wish, coming from the *bottom of your heart*, that her Majesty should be fully and clearly *acquitted*. This is a matter which, taken in connection with the rest of your speech, amounts to a great deal. It is the test of your sincerity and your character. If her Majesty be clearly acquitted, what follows? Why, amongst other things, the everlasting shame and ignominy of the inventors of the Milan Commission; of the parties belonging to that Commission; and of all those who have taken part in

the instigating, and in the carrying on of this prosecution. To suppose that the present Ministry could remain in power after such an acquittal, is impossible; and, therefore, to believe you sincere in this wish, we most first believe that you most anxiously, most sincerely, most devoutly, and from the *bottom of your heart*, wished to be turned out of office, and to see blasted for ever all hope of obtaining those emoluments and honours which were the naturally expected reward of that political apostacy, which no man ever falls into without being actuated by a motive sufficient to overcome all the ordinary feelings of our nature.

Give me leave, therefore, to say, that I not only doubt of your sincerity here, but that I doubt of it as to every part of your statement. I believe you to wish, from the *bottom of your heart*, that the Queen may be degraded, sunk, ruined in public estimation; and that you may profit from this destruction of her Majesty.

I shall by-and-bye speak as to the nature of the evidence generally, and shall here remark only on your assertion with regard to the opening speech of the Attorney-General. You assert that your case is as strong in facts and details as it stood in that opening speech. There was no one who doubted, that the swearing would go as far as the opening. But, there was one part of that opening, which was of so odious and hideous a nature, that it was not to be expected that even an attempt would be made to establish it by evidence. The passage of the opening to which I allude is given by the reporter in the following words:

“On the return of the Princess from the East, she brought in her train a man named Leone, of the most brutal and depraved manners. This person used to exhibit himself at the Villa Branchi in the most indecorous and *shameful manner*, the Princess and Bergami being present. The circumstances are *so shocking*, so disgusting to the mind, that I cannot *without difficulty* bring myself to mention them to your Lordships, but *it is necessary*. The *painful situation in which I am placed*, requires that I should make your lordships understand the nature of the disgusting exhibition, which *shall appear by the testimony of various witnesses*. This man, in the situation I described, used to IMITATE, amongst other things, in the most indelicate manner, the SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, before the *servants in the presence of the Princess*.”

Now, let it be observed, that, with this odious and detestable charge, thus introduced with apparent trembling reluctance, thus painfully forced from the humane and modest Attorney-General; with this charge, thus introduced, that pious advocate closed his long string of accusations, asserting that it should be supported by the testimony of several witnesses. And how has it been supported even by your own witnesses? Why, after all the attempts that you were able to make to get this most horrible falsehood down in the shape of evidence, it turns out that Leone was an ITALIAN BUFFOON; or, as we call such persons as *Grimaldi*, a CLOWN; and that he exhibited before the Princess and numerous other persons, upon numerous occasions, that which the witnesses called a BUFFOONERY. Nothing more could be extracted than this. It will be proved, I dare say, that the Queen was no more guilty of crime here than ladies in this country are when they see the clowns on the stage, particularly at the fairs throughout the country. It will be found, I dare say, that she took no particular delight in these exhibitions; but, at any rate, was it not monstrous to accuse her of having had exhibited before her an imitation of the sexual intercourse; to send forth that accusation, premeditatedly to send it forth all over the world, knowing that it must

lie for many weeks uncontradicted by evidence; is it not now monstrous in you to say, that the facts and details of the Attorney-General have all been made out by evidence? And after this is it not a monstrous attempt at imposition to attempt to give force to your statement by asseverations of your sincerity in wishing from the *bottom of your heart* that the Queen might be acquitted?

Your next attempt in this closing string of professions is, to acquit the Ministers of all blame in sending out and supporting the Milan Commission. You assert that it was "*quite impossible*" that the Ministers should not have established some mode of inquiry into the truth or falsehood of the reports circulated in most parts of Europe derogatory to her then Royal Highness. You ask whether it was not their duty to institute such inquiry.

This is going very far back; it invites us to a discussion which you would have done well to leave unprovoked; for, if the reports were so widely circulated, why have you not dared to produce any of those persons, who were the bringers of the reports; for those persons must have possessed some knowledge beyond that of mere *rumour*; and before any proceeding was adopted upon their intelligence, that intelligence ought to have been seen to be well grounded. Besides, if the Ministers had heard such reports; and if they really had had a desire to preserve unsullied the honour of the Royal Family, if that had been their object, they would have sent out some well-known friend of her Majesty to give her information of the reports; to warn her of her danger; to beseech her to be more prudent. In short, they would have acted as *friends* and not as *enemies*. But, what do they? They listen to all informers, they keep the information secret, they send out spies to watch for turned off servants. They send out lawyers to collect depositions; they make all their preparations for striking the blow; and when they are ready they threaten her with a prosecution if she dare come to England; and at the same time tender her a princely income if she will remain out of the kingdom!

Did this look like anxiety to preserve the honour of the Crown and the Royal Family? Did this show a deep sense of duty towards the Crown and towards the people? Did all this look like fair, honest and friendly dealing; or did it look like a premeditated plan for her Majesty's destruction as Queen of this kingdom?

The next band that you take under your protection are the members of the Milan commission. In your praises of Mr. COOK, it would be unjust to suppose you either more or less sincere than you are in your wishes for the acquittal of the Queen. For my own part I know nothing of him; and shall only say, that I judge of him from his acts; and that his voluntarily taking upon himself such an employment is quite sufficient to make us acquainted with the character of the man. As to Mr. Powell, whom you represent as possessing *great practice in the law*, I have known nothing of him since the year 1806. He is what the West Indians call a *Musti*, or a *Quartaron*, I forget which; and he unites the vivacity of the one race with the keenness of the sharpest race of white men. He was a very efficient fellow-labourer of mine in that great and Holy work, the *demolition of the Aristocratic influence in the City of Westminster*. He was the clerk of Mr. PAULL's attorney during the memorable struggle of that brave little man against the haughty and insolent *noblesse*, and which struggle actually put an end to their power. Mr.

POWELL laboured, not merely in his profession, but as a sincere and able friend of the cause. He wrote placards, he wrote songs; he gave life to the duller mass that we had to deal with; and, in short, he earned what he received, the praises of us all. Not knowing that Mr. POWELL had *changed his politics*, I was at first surprised when I heard his name mentioned in connection with this affair. That change having taken place; he, Sir, having *like you*, and, doubtless, from motives as honourable as yours, undergone a *conversion*, I could at once perceive that a fitter man upon the face of the earth could not have been found to take a part in the Milan Commission. With regard to COLONEL BROWN, whose character, you say, you are told stands as high as that of those who had dared to traduce him; I have to observe, in the first place, that, being an officer in the army, he is wholly dependant for his bread on the breath of the prosecutors in this case. He can, at any moment, be dismissed from the service, and thus be stripped of all means of existence, unless, like your witness, SACCHINI, he was to change his character of officer for that of subaltern menial servant. On the other hand, it is in the power of those prosecutors to make him a general in two days; to load him with honours in his profession; to make him a knight of the Bath; to make him Governor of an Island or Garrison; and, in short, to elevate him to any degree. To be a spy upon the actions of another man's wife; to hunt out for witnesses against her; to be associated with a lawyer and an attorney, to get together the furniture of a green bag: these are offices not very compatible with the character of a soldier; and, therefore, it requires something a little more than you have ventured to say in order to give us a high opinion of this COLONEL BROWN.

The persons constituting this secret and lurking junto were well aware of the purposes to which their information was to be applied. They had all lived in England; they had heard of the treatment of the persecuted Queen; they knew in what manner she had been driven from her husband's house; they had heard of the perjuries aimed against her life in 1806; they were well acquainted with all the unparalleled atrocities committed against her: they must have known of the adventure of the BARON D'OMPTEDA: and, with all this knowledge in their minds, they undertake the office of hunting up turned-off servants, and of raking together every thing that any Italian, however infamous his or her character, would swear against this deeply injured and long persecuted woman. These are facts that nobody can deny. These facts are notorious as the sun at noon-day; and knowing these facts to be true, we want nothing more to give us a correct opinion of the motives and characters of these three men. We want nothing more to enable us to judge of the characters of those, whom the Ministers selected for this memorable undertaking.

You conclude your speech by asserting that the preamble of the *Bill is proved*; and, having thus concluded, the report states that there was a *cheering* in the House! That is to say, Sir, some, at least, of her Majesty's judges and jurors applauded you! It is not for me to question the propriety of conduct of the persons who compose the House of Lords; but I may venture to say, that this is the first time that ever any one heard of judges cheering a counsel at their bar. I should as soon expect to hear a judge *cheer a good tough swearing witness* for the Crown; or, to see him *descend from the bench and shake such witness by the hand*! If

their lordships had done either of these things during the trial, it would not have been more odious than to cheer you; and, therefore, I am bound to believe, that, as to this matter, the reporter must have committed a mistake.

Having thus been led by you, to take a view of the origin of this affair, and to inquire a little into the character and motives of the parties concerned in it, I now go back to the beginning of your speech, where you state the line of conduct that you and your colleagues pursued upon receiving directions to support the Bill. But, though it might be convenient enough to you to blink all the previous transactions, from the sending out of spies to Italy, to the commencement of the trial, it becomes not us to be guilty of such blinking; for, on the conduct of the prosecutors, previous to the trial, a great deal depends.—That conduct serves to elucidate their motives; and, if we find that conduct to be such as to argue a most anxious desire to produce the degradation of her Majesty, we are to carry that important fact in our minds when we are contemplating the evidence that they have finally produced. I, therefore, shall go into these previous transactions; and, if I show that the real object all along has been to *keep her Majesty from the country, or to drive her from it*, I must necessarily view the evidence brought forward as having *that* for its object; and if that was the object, I must look at every tittle of evidence with something a great deal more than suspicion.

In the first place, I think it as clear as day-light, that it was at first intended never to give her Majesty any trial at all. If such had been the intention, why were green bags sealed up sent to the two Houses of Parliament? There were precedents enough for sending Green Bags: for referring these to secret committees; and for passing Bills, at once, upon the report of those Committees. But, for admitting the accused party to trial after such reports, there were no precedents at all. When the Reformers were put in dungeons in 1817, the Bill was passed upon the sole ground of the Report of Secret Committees. The Reformers prayed to be heard in their defence before the passing of the Bill. They presented Petitions praying to be heard before they were condemned. They declared the Reports to contain falsehoods, and prayed to be permitted to produce evidence at the bar to prove those falsehoods. Their petitions were rejected; and the horrible Bill was passed. I can see no reason, therefore, for supposing that, in the first instance, any trial at all was intended; and my belief is, that the trial was suggested to the prosecutors solely by the loud expression of the public voice.

A trial, a fair, open impartial trial, was what the Queen had no right to object to, and it was what, indeed, she had always courted. But what sort of trial is this to which the Queen has, in the face of her repeated protests, been subjected? To enumerate the circumstances, without any comment on them, will be quite sufficient to give posterity a correct opinion of the nature of this never-to-be-forgotten Trial.

First, the pretended evidence is laid before the Houses sealed up, accompanied with a proposition to submit this evidence to secret committees; which committees consisted of the prosecutors themselves, and some other persons of their choosing.

Second, the Ministers describe the evidence as amounting to scandalous and heavy charges against the Queen.

Third, these same Ministers enter into a negotiation with her

Majesty, offering her perfect impunity, a splendid conveyance to the continent, an introduction, as Queen of England, to a Foreign Court, and a princely income for the remainder of her life.

Fourth, the House of Commons send a deputation to her Majesty, containing their declaration that she may accept of those terms, without leaving any stain upon her character. And declaring, also, at the same time, that a trial, terminate how it may, "*must be derogatory to the dignity of the Crown, and injurious to the best interests of the country.*"

Fifth, the Queen having resolved not to accept of these terms; not to be banished from England, the House of Lords (who had suspended the operation of their Secret Committee) resolved to go into that Secret Committee.

Sixth, their Secret Committee make a Report containing heavy charges against the Queen.

Seventh, upon this report, a Bill is brought in by the Ministry, called a Bill of Pains and Penalties, containing the most grievous accusations against the Queen, charging her with an adulterous intercourse, and sentencing her to degradation and divorce.

Eighth, this Bill is not proceeded upon directly; but this Bill, together with the Report on which it is founded, are sent all over the world; are placed under the eyes of the nation, as containing facts which the prosecutors solemnly declared they were prepared to substantiate by evidence. These documents are thus placed under the eyes of the nation, there to remain for *six weeks*, without any opportunity afforded to her Majesty to produce any thing in refutation of these outrageous accusations.

Ninth, her Majesty, in order that she might be prepared to rebut charges founded on evidence, or pretended evidence, collected by the means of *Cooke, Powell, Brown* and others, in the manner that we have seen, applied to be furnished with the names and descriptions of the persons who had sworn against her. This, which is uniformly granted in every case of divorce; and was the more necessary in this case, because the home of the witnesses was at so great a distance, and because they were utterly unknown in the vicinage of the Court; *this was refused to her Majesty!*

Tenth, her Majesty next applied for the *names of the places* where her alleged crimes had been committed. These, too, were refused her. So that, she was left for the whole of the six weeks, without any possible clue by which she could come at the means of cross-examination, or at facts and circumstances to develop the characters, connections and motives of the witnesses!

Eleventh, the Court, as it is called, opens. And how is it composed? Partly of the prosecutors themselves! It is composed, not of twelve men, taken promiscuously from a long pannel; the judges are, at once, judges and jurors, and part of them are the accusers; and these accusers are also the Ministers of the King, from whom it is proposed to divorce the Queen. How these judges, jurors and accusers are situated relatively with regard to each other; how all, or any part, are situated with regard to the King, I leave the public to judge; but, in this case, unanimity is not required in the decision, as is the case with a jury; in this case, the jury are not all required to be present during the whole of the proceedings; in this case, any part of the jury may excuse themselves for non-attendance; in this case, the trial may stop whenever the prosecutor pleases, and may be revived again, at any future period; in this case, all,

you say, is right and fair, but, in this case, we find nothing that we find in that species of trial to which we have been accustomed, and to which species of trial alone her Majesty has appealed; while against the present mode of trial, she has constantly protested.

Twelfth, the witnesses are finally brought to the spot by night. They are shut up in a *fortress*, from which they are drawn, one at a time, to be produced at the bar. The Court itself is guarded not only by numerous soldiers, horse and foot, but by a species of *gens d'armes*, armed with swords and pistols, mounted on horseback, and yet, in a sort of dress other than that of soldiers. The streets leading to this Court have been cut asunder by barricadoes, leaving only narrow passages, guarded by armed men; so that the *public* have been forcibly prevented from getting even a view of the outside of the building! Even the parks have been closed. All these barricadoes and obstructions are so many open and daring *breaches of the law*. They are so many *indictable acts*. They are so many acts which are punishable by the well-known laws of the land; and being perpetrated by the means of absolute force, they argue a total suspension and absence of the laws. Men have been knocked down; the *gens d'armes* have presented their swords and pistols at divers citizens who attempted to pass along those public highways, along which they had a right to pass.

Thirteenth, the trial begins on the 17th of August; the Attorney-General opens his case. This opening, together with the evidence of the first witness, lies before the public for three whole days without the possibility of anything being produced to counteract their effect. Then follows a three weeks detail of evidence drawn from the fortress. The Queen has no knowledge of any witness that is coming forth. She has no knowledge of any of the places where the alleged acts are said to have been committed. Her counsel has no means of effectual cross-examination; and thus this long string of swearings are sent forth to the world.

Fourteenth, at length you have run out your witnesses, and ask for time, in order to obtain a relay. This shameful, this scandalous, this atrocious application, is not, indeed, granted, but it obtains two things; *first*, two days more for the evidence to work against the Queen, and, *next*, a pretence for saying that if this new relay of witnesses had come, your case would have been more complete. It also obtains, in this mode of trial, a pretence for reviving the proceedings, hereafter, in case the present proceedings should fail of their ultimate object.

Fifteenth, as a compensation, or equivalent, for not having a list of the witnesses, her Majesty was to be allowed time to prepare for her cross-examination of your witnesses. But what time was allowed her? What time was allowed her to inquire into the characters, way of life, connections, motives, temptations and other things belonging to these witnesses? No time at all; for her counsel were compelled to cross-examine the moment you chose to close your evidence, or were to forego all the advantages which inquiry might give them, at any future time. They were compelled to say that they at once abandoned all future cross-examination; or, to go, at once, into that cross-examination, before it was possible for them to obtain a quarter part of the information necessary to enable them to put the suitable questions to your witnesses! And this, too, you will observe, was imposed on them by the Court, at once judges and jurors, and consisting partly of accusers, who, be it observed, too, if they fail in their accusation; if they fail in obtaining conviction of her Majesty, have

on their own shoulders the responsibility of having caused these proceedings, and of having expended immense sums of the public money in the enterprise. The House of Commons has declared, by a solemn vote and resolution, that the trial, terminate how it may, " must be derogatory to the dignity of the Crown and injurious to the best interests of the country," but if the decision make it known to the world that the accused party is innocent, what then will be the responsibility of those prosecutors! And, let it be never forgotten, that these prosecutors were amongst those, who refused the Queen's Counsel that which they called an *equivalent* for the denial of the list of witnesses and the list of places.

Sixteenth, and last, comes your *summing-up*, a thing wholly unknown in an ordinary court of justice, where the summing-up is the act of the judge, and not of the counsel; and where the judge has his place *for life*, unless he be impeached, and convicted of misconduct in his office.

Now, Sir, before I proceed to comment on this summing-up, have I not a right to call upon the public to consider well these sixteen circumstances, or parts, of the transaction? It is impossible to arrive at any thing like a correct opinion of the thing altogether, without keeping the whole of these circumstances constantly in view. You are not to be suffered to take us into your case, as if it were a case of an ordinary nature, as if it were a case where party and party met, and where the disinterested judge and promiscuously chosen jury were called upon to hear and determine according to the usual forms and on the settled principles of law. You are not to entrap us into a hearing of your summing-up, without retaining, all along, in our minds, those impressions which all these sixteen circumstances are so well calculated to make. You talk of evidence, witnesses, the Court, and so on; but we should do great injustice to her Majesty, if we were to take these words in their usual acceptance. In this case, the proceeding is neither civil nor criminal; there is neither declaration nor indictment; the party accused is neither traitor, adulteress, nor trespasser. It is a mode of proceeding unknown to our minds; and to come at a just decision, we must constantly bear in mind the character, the conduct, the motives of the parties to the prosecution, and every other thing, by which the proceedings have finally been produced.

When we speak of a witness, do we not always mean a person that has come out of the community? Do we not always mean a person known to many people in the community? Except in cases of adultery and high treason, lists of witnesses are not furnished before-hand. But, in cases of indictment; in all cases, other than for acts of high treason, the names of some of the witnesses are endorsed on the Bill of Indictment; and, be it observed, that there is, in criminal cases, a previous examination before Magistrates. At any rate, when we talk of a witness, we mean a person that has lived openly somewhere; that is known to somebody within the reach of the Court. We do not mean a person imported into the country by night, brought up the water by the means of muffled oars, put into a fortress guarded by land and by water, seeing the face of no creature except the agents employed to bring him and produce him; and, at last, drawn out of the fortress to be clapped into the box. This is a thing that we never mean when we talk of a witness. It is a *secret witness*, which is a thing unknown to the laws.

There is in this case, too, another most material circumstance. When we talk of a witness we mean a person that has to live in the community

after he has given his testimony. Not a person that is to be sent away to some foreign country and never to see England again. There are many men who would fearlessly take false oaths enough if they were sure of being sent away to live in safety and comfort for the rest of their lives without any human being to reproach them. By a *witness*, we mean a person that is destined to live and show his face in the community where he has given his testimony; and not a person that is to be immediately shipped off in improved circumstances to his distant native country, where he may live free from all reproach.

These are our ideas with regard to witnesses; and, therefore, previously to our entering into any inquiry as to what your witnesses have sworn, we have to ask ourselves whether your witnesses answer, in the smallest degree, to what we have always considered as the true description of a witness. Without this previous inquiry, we should be misled. We should fall into the notion, that we have here, before us, witnesses of the usual stamp. Let us ask ourselves, whether, if our neighbour were accused of a crime, no matter what, if his prosecutors were the most powerful persons in the world; if they had countless millions at their command; and if they were to bring against our neighbour witnesses that nobody knew; that none of us had ever seen or heard of; that were to be sent away as soon as the trial was over, never to be seen more by us or any body in the country: I ask any man whether he upon his oath, would find his neighbour guilty upon evidence coming from the mouths of such witnesses, however positive their swearing, and however consistent their story? I, for my own part, should look upon myself as the most wicked of villains, if I were, upon such evidence, to find my neighbour guilty.

I should now follow you, point by point, in your endeavours to make out the truth, consistency, and coherence of the evidence against the Queen, and in your most miserable attempts to uphold the characters of the witnesses, who really come out of your hands much blacker than they went into them; but, I am restrained from going into detail here, by two reasons: *first*, I do not wish to be "laid by the heels;" and *second*, I must necessarily fall short of *doing justice to those celebrated characters*, which can be done only by her Majesty's Counsel when he shall come forth with that statement, which, in my opinion, he ought to have been permitted to make, unless you had been restrained from proceeding with your summing-up. Here, too, I may remark on the enormous disadvantage which you intended to throw upon her Majesty the Queen. It was not enough for you, that the *ex-parte* statements against her Majesty; that the King's message; that the abusive speeches of the Ministers; that the report of the Secret Committee; that the Bill of Pains and Penalties; that your worthy fellow-labourer's opening speech; that the swearings of Majocchi, Barbara Krantz, the Countess Colombier, and Count Milani, commonly called Sacchini, together with the swearings of the high-paid master and his mate; it was not enough that her Majesty's character, that her fame as a Princess, that her feelings as a woman, and a disconsolate mother; it was not enough for you that all these should be exposed to the effect of *ex-parte* assertion and pretended evidence, from the 6th of June to the 7th of September; it was not enough that all this work, this series of *ex-parte* evidence should be going forth for three whole months without her Majesty being afforded the smallest chance of legal or official contradiction; but your summing-up must be added to the

series, and then, even then, her Majesty's Counsel were not to open their lips in the way of reply, unless they would pledge themselves immediately to go into an examination of that evidence, of the necessity of sending to the Continent for which they could not have been apprized *much more than twenty-four hours before you began that summing-up!*

I shall not, as I said before, attempt to analyze the evidence. I shall not attempt to describe the characters of the witnesses in the manner in which they ought to be described, and will be described by Mr. BROUGHAM. I shall content myself with remarking generally on the degree of credit which ought to be given to *swearings* such as those which you have produced; and also with remarking on some of the salient parts of your very feeble, though very insidious, and, I may say, hypocritical harangue.

No man, who contemplated the strength of the motives or the power and influence of the parties to the prosecution; no man that took these into view could possibly doubt of a sufficiency of swearing. Neither, if he considered the length of time that had been employed in preparing and arranging the materials, the immense sums of money expended by the Milan Commissioners, the strong motives by which those Commissioners had been induced to undertake the task of collecting the swearers: no man who kept these circumstances in his eye, could entertain the smallest doubt of your being ready to produce oaths in support of all that the Bill, the Secret Committee, and the Attorney-General had asserted. In short, that there would be swearings in abundance, no man of sense ever doubted. But, as to a *belief* of the swearing; as to the *credit* to be given to what should be sworn; that was quite another matter; and I believe that every just person in the kingdom was prepared, beforehand, not to give credit; not to give the smallest degree of credit to any particle of what you might call evidence, unless it came from, or was corroborated by, testimony *other than that collected by the Milan Commission*. This I take upon me to assert was the firm ground upon which every English mind rested. It was the ground which reason pointed out, too; for, before we came to discuss the question of the credibility of the witnesses, there came to be discussed by us, the question of *Conspiracy or no Conspiracy*. This you seem wholly to have overlooked. If you had bent a little of your attention this way; and had endeavoured to show that the general opinion as to a conspiracy, was unfounded, you would have rendered your employers much greater service than you rendered them by those professions and asseverations, by which you endeavoured to cajole the public into a belief that, *from the bottom of your heart*, you wished her Majesty the Queen to be acquitted, and to come out white as snow after three whole months spent in endeavours to make her as black as the Devil himself. Upon the supposition that to preserve the morals of the country has been the care of your employers; upon the supposition that the dignity of the Crown, the happiness of the people, and a strict love of justice; upon the supposition that these have been their objects, their actions have all been unnatural and preposterous from the beginning to the end. Upon the supposition that they had these objects in view and had not been misled by sinister workings of any kind, nothing can be more absurd and monstrous than their proceedings; nothing so foolish, nothing so likely to defeat the ends they had in view. But, on the contrary, if we suppose a conspiracy to have existed, then the sending out of spies, rummagers for witnesses, hunters after the Queen's turned-off servants, offers of a brilliant fortune to De Mont, having Ma-

Joechi and Sacchini incog. in England; all these explain themselves, at once; every thing is natural, every thing consistent, fitting and in regular order of succession.

Therefore, you ought to have endeavoured, as a prelude to your other efforts, to remove this impression about a conspiracy from our minds. This ought to have been amongst your premises; but you leave this material question behind; jump into the middle of your case, which you choose to regard as an ordinary case, and take your witnesses, one by one, just as if they had been discovered by ordinary means, and had been examined but a day or two before, instead of their having been hunted up by spying commissioners, at an enormous expense, and having been bringing on to a state of maturity for the space of two years. Mr. BROUGHAM congratulated you upon your monopoly of the knowledge of the law; but, really, you are not to be congratulated upon your knowledge of the public opinion; for in that opinion a conspiracy was the foundation of the whole; and not one word did you utter tending to remove this deep-rooted opinion.

The credibility of a witness that has been in a state of progressive preparation, and that has actually been in the pay of the party, on whose side he is brought forward, for a considerable length of time; whose pay can be stopped at any moment or continued for any length of time; who can be punished by immediate dismissal in a country far distant from his own; who can further be punished, at the sole will and pleasure of the party in whose pay he lives, by being driven out of the country, under the Alien Act, at a moment's warning; who, if unable or unwilling to remove, can be seized and forced away, or shut up in a prison, and this, too, by law, the execution of which is in the hands of his employer: the credibility of a witness so situated, placed in such eminent peril on the one side, and under such great temptations on the other side; the credibility of such a witness, be his character what it may, is not, in my opinion, worth a single straw. Were I a juror between the King and one of my fellow-subjects, and such a witness were to be produced before me, his swearing would have no more effect upon me than the whistling of the wind.

It is said, that, people could not swear to *so many things*, unless some of them were true; that such things would never have occurred to them, if *wholly untrue*. You say, that it is monstrous to suppose, that all these witnesses could think of such strange things, if *none of them had ever happened*. You ask how such things could have *come into their heads*, if they had no foundation in fact. This is a poor and contemptible way of reasoning. Did it not occur to you that things might be *put into people's heads*? And was there not plenty of time for this during the space of two years? God forbid that we should *assert* any such thing as this. God forbid that we should imagine that the Countess of Colomby had any thing put into her head by the kind gentleman that found her out, and that offered her a *brilliant fortune in England*. God forbid that we should suppose that so virtuous and grateful a lady, as she in her letter describes herself to be, should have undergone the vulgar operation called *tutoring*, during the eighteen months that her ladyship resided in England; and occasionally, nay frequently, condescended to honour with a *tete-a-tete* that amiable gentleman, Mr. POWELL. God forbid that we should imagine that this estimable personage, who had written a journal full of anecdotes proving the amiable character and virtuous conduct of

her Majesty. God forbid that we should imagine that any part of the eighteen months which this lovely little Swiss had subtracted from the days of her innocent enjoyments at Lausanne, could have been employed in new modelling that journal, which had given so much delight in the sentimental circles of those cantons where the simplicity of the people is such that one brother sells his carcass to fight for one sovereign, while the other brother sells his carcass for the purpose of carrying a gun to shoot at the other. Oh! delightful simplicity! God forbid that we should suppose that the Countess had been tampered with, or that her name had been changed from De Mont to the Countess Colombier from any other motive than that of keeping her mind in that state of *naiveté*, the manifest existence of which was so well calculated to produce crowds of admirers to come with half-conquered hearts to shake her by the hand. God forbid, once more, I say, that I should assert this woman to be a bribed, suborned, perjured wretch. I assert no such thing, I can know nothing of the matter. But this I am not afraid to assert, that if I had thought her to be such, your speech would not have had the smallest tendency to remove the impression from my mind.

You assume, that, because the things have been *sworn to*; because they are *numerous*; because, in short, many things have been sworn to, *some of them must have happened*. Is not this the most miserable attempt at sophistry? It is not sophistry. It is not worthy of the name. Admit this, and then there can be no such thing as false swearing in the world. If the incidents be numerous and the witnesses many. Admit this, and then every man may be hanged that cannot prove, by oral testimony, the negative of what is sworn against him. According to this account of yours, Susanna was guilty. The judge ought to have concluded, at once, that the *elders* were to be believed. The woman had *no proof* that they had sworn falsely. Nevertheless, the old bucks were caught out; and though they had sworn positively to her guilt, she was acquitted and they were punished. They were guilty of a base and infamous conspiracy; not a more base conspiracy than we ever heard of, and, perhaps, not quite so base. Yet conspiracy it was; but, according to your mode of reasoning, there never could be such a thing as a conspiracy in the world. When, indeed, you had to defend Watson and Thistlewood against the swearing of *Castles*; when, indeed, you had upon that memorable occasion, to show the *Ministry that you were a man worthy of notice!* The French call it *se faire valoir*; that is to say, *make oneself worth something*. When, upon that memorable! occasion, you were acting the part of a defender, how you tore the ruffian witness to pieces. Now mark me: *his recent rags, his present good clothes, his being seen frequently with the agents of the Treasury, his going under a false name, the pay he had received from his employers, his having been kept incog., his being brought from a prison to a witness-box*: mark me well, I say, every one of these circumstances was dwelt upon by you and Mr. Wetherell as being of great importance in the case; and the sum-total of these circumstances was, that the witness was an indescribable villain, wholly unworthy of the slightest credit; and the result, the result at which every one rejoiced, was, an *acquittal of the prisoners!* The evidence of *Castles* was, however, as to several points, and those essential points, too, corroborated by other witnesses, and those, too, credible witnesses; yet, you insisted, and the jury determined, notwithstanding the charge of the judge which pointed a contrary way, that no man ought to be found

guilty upon evidence, which at all rested upon the "indescribable villain," *Castles*.

Come, then, let me ask you, what witness have you produced, upon the present occasion, who was not recently clothed in rags, who was not, when produced by you, dressed in clothes purchased by the prosecutor, who has not been frequently seen with the agents of the prosecution, who has not gone under a false name, who has not long been in the pay of the prosecutors, who has not been kept incog., who was not brought from a prison to the witness-box? You know well that all these circumstances precisely fit the present case; and yet, so far are you from calling your present witnesses indescribable villains, that you hold them forth as witnesses entitled to full credit, and call upon the House to condemn the Queen upon her testimony, though uncorroborated by that of witnesses of any other description; and, at the conclusion of a speech in which you do this, you have the unparalleled hypocrisy to put up a solemn prayer for the acquittal of the victim, whom you are pursuing with such deadly malignity.

To hear you, one would suppose, in good earnest, that every fact *sworn to*, though the devil himself were to swear it, must have some foundation. To hear you, one would suppose that there was no such thing in the world as the hatching of a charge. The history of the world abounds with instances of such hatchings. Is there a man in England who does not believe that the charge against ANN OF BULLEN was wholly destitute of truth? Have we not, in the story of NABOTH, an instance of pure falsehood, of taking away a man's life in order to confiscate his estate? The King wanted the man's estate. The Queen, in order to procure the man's death, hired false witnesses to swear, that Naboth had blasphemed God and the King. Upon what ground, then, would you have us suppose, that there must be some truth in this statement against the Queen, merely because it has been supported by swearing. There was no truth in the charge against Naboth; yet Naboth was convicted, condemned, and put to death.

Indeed, you may say, that we live in an age of uncommon purity; that false-swearers are not now to be found in any part of the world; and, that, as to men in power, they are known ever since the prosecution of the tinman of Plymouth, to be above every thing resembling bribery and corruption, in the most distant degree; that their *consciences* are so clear that they wish us to look into their very bosoms; and, that, lest we should not do this, one of them in particular, is everlastingly making appeals to his conscience. We have, indeed, heard of seat-selling being as notorious as the sun at noon-day; we have also heard a system of blood-hunting spies openly defended; you remember *Castles* yourself, and the rest of us have not forgotten Oliver, Edwards, Vaughan and a great many others. Therefore, notwithstanding the uncommon purity in public men of the present age, we are not to be persuaded that to hatch a conspiracy is absolutely impossible; that to hire false-swearers is a thing out of all compass of belief; and, therefore, we are disposed not to believe any part of the facts merely because they have been sworn to.

But why should we travel far and wide to discover the possibility of false swearing against her Majesty, the Queen? If her Majesty had never been attacked by false swearers before, even then we should not have been ready to subscribe to your doctrine. But we know that she has. We know that perjured witnesses were brought against her four-

teen years ago. This we have the proof of ; and, as in all other cases, we reason from the known to the unknown, we conclude that that which was known to have taken place fourteen years ago, may possibly now have taken place again.

In 1806 was there not a *conspiracy* against the Queen ? Was there not a conspiracy against her at that time ? What should have induced the Douglas's and others to come forward and perjure themselves ? Pray let me put this question home to you ; for we do great injustice to her Majesty if we separate this proceeding from that. What, then, I say, should have induced the Douglas's and others to come forward and perjure themselves in evidence they gave against her Majesty ? They could not hope to supplant her Majesty. They must have well known, that at the very least, they would expose themselves to great public hatred on account of their perfidy to their benefactress. They must have seen that they should place themselves in great danger ; and yet they came forward to perjure themselves. Clearly then, they must have been *prevailed upon* to do this by some powerful motive, by some promises of great reward ; and here, then, is the proof of conspiracy. They profess themselves, as you now profess yourself, and as the Ministers profess themselves, and as I dare say, Cooke, Powell, Brown, Varmaceti, D'Ompteda, will all profess themselves, to have been actuated by nothing but a *pure and ardent love of public duty*. Well, then, if this pure and ardent love induced the Douglas's to perjure themselves in 1806, why may not that same love of public duty have produced similar effects upon the present occasion. Your witnesses may possibly be the best sort of people in the world ; but your argument, that there must be some truth in the statement, because they have sworn to it, is not worth a rush.

Majocchi, for instance, may possibly be one of the most worthy men alive. He may have been actuated by nothing but a disinterested desire to promote the preservation of the morals of England. This desire may have produced his trip from Vienna to Milan ; his trip back again to Vienna ; it may have brought him acquainted with the Embassy of CASTLEREAGH's brother ; it may have brought him to England, after his conferences with Brown ; it may have led him to his snug incognito at Gloucester ; it may have made him remember so minutely so many things that so many other persons would have forgotten ; and it may have made him forget so many things that almost any other person would have remembered. I will not say that it *may* have led him to *Carlton-house*, for, really, when we find him there, what other inducement could he have had, than that of an humble endeavour to preserve unsullied the honour of the British Crown and the morals of the British nation !

You are pleased to skip over this important fact, or rather to endeavour to slide by it with an undervaluing sneer. "Where is that palace," says SHAKSPEARE, "into which foul things will not sometimes creep ?" There were here, it seems, two things that crept into the palace. There was Mr. Powell as well as Mr. Majocchi ! Pray let us mark the time. The late King *was just dead*. Majocchi and Powell meet at Carlton-house. That they should *meet* one another, and that frequently, too, was, considering their relationships, not at all surprising. But, why should they meet *in the King's palace* ? That is the question which the public want answered. Powell and Majocchi, dear companions and co-operators, could have met at Mr. Powell's ; they could have met at the Countess Colombier's ; they could have met any where. Why, then, did they meet at

the King's palace? There must have been some *other person* for them to see there? Why could not that person go to Mr. Powell's chambers? What person could it be that they could prevail upon to meet them nowhere but in that one place? Slight, therefore, as you were pleased to consider this circumstance, it is a circumstance which, with the public, has weighed heavier against the prosecutors, than the swearings of all your witnesses against her Majesty, the Queen.

Let it be recollected, that the facts relating to this memorable visit, were drawn out of Majocchi, during a cross-examination, suggested by persons who had known Majocchi at the time of the visit, and who had given to the Queen's advisers information with regard to that visit. When Majocchi came out of Carlton-house, he confesses that he showed his companion *eighty* guineas, or *sovereigns*, and he forgets whether he did, or did not, show him more. He will not swear that he did not count 150 *pieces*. Thus, then, we have this fellow, who was living incog. in England, meeting POWELL at the King's palace, and coming out of that palace with his hands full of gold! And what does he say he was to do with this gold? What does he say that it was given him FOR? Why, to bear his expenses to *Vienna*. Twenty pounds would have been a plenty for this purpose; and he will not say that he did not count 150! But why send Majocchi to Vienna? and why send him, too, just at the time that her Majesty was become Queen! he was going with dispatches to Lord Stewart. What! were there not enough of regular King's messengers to carry these dispatches? What were all these about, that this Majocchi should be fixed upon as the only person to carry dispatches to the British Ambassador at the Austrian court? And what had Mr. POWELL to do with dispatches to the Ambassador at Vienna? Could not these dispatches be prepared without the assistance of this busy Attorney, who is not even yet made a Right Honourable Privy Councillor? In short, even before we hear the evidence of the persons who made the discovery of this memorable visit, can there be a doubt in the mind of any impartial man living as to the object of the visit, and as to real relationship, which existed between Majocchi, POWELL and POWELL's employers.

You complain that Mr. BROUGHAM, in his cross-examinations, said little to the witnesses with regard to the facts that they had sworn to, but *asked them what money they had received*; what money they had been promised; where they had been; what names they had borne at several times and at several places. And were not these the proper topics? What was the use of his asking them any questions about facts that they had sworn to over and over again, during the space of two years? He was not such a simpleton as to suppose, that witnesses brought forward in such a way, and examined so scrupulously so many times; he was not simpleton enough to suppose, that such witnesses would contradict themselves as to facts, with regard to which every one of them had been questioned, in legal form, probably fifty or sixty times. Mr. BROUGHAM knew, that the whole corps of adroit lawyers had been at work in this affair for a great length of time; and how was he to hope to catch such witnesses tripping upon the main facts brought out in regular succession, by those who had looked the witnesses in the face, and put the same questions to them so many times? To get from them the amount of their *pay*, was of the greatest importance. Was it not of use to ascertain, that the mate of a vessel received more per month, besides board and lodging, than the amount of

the hire of the vessel in which he had served, together with the hire of himself and captain and twenty-two seamen, including, besides, the provisions of the crew? Was it not of importance to ascertain that this man and his captain were receiving more per month than the wages of *two hundred and fifty British sailors*? Was not this of great importance? Yes, or else why did you lay so much stress upon the mere clothing and food which Castles acknowledged to have received from the Government, while he was held incog. as a witness against Watson and Thistlewood?

You and your employers soon experienced the effect of this part of the cross-examination. The high pay of these witnesses was a heavy blow to the prosecution; and, therefore, the subsequent witnesses had *received nothing*, and *were to receive nothing*! This was altogether the other way. We were now to be made to swallow the fact, that the sweet COUNTESS DE COLOMBIER, that amiable and simple creature, that shepherdess of Frith-street, so frequently visited by the gentle *swain*, Mr. POWELL; we were now to be made believe, that this dear and simple little creature, to squeeze whose hand the shattered beaux are said to have been ready to press each other out of existence; we are to be made to believe that this sincere and grateful creature, whose letter to her sister lets out the fact, that she had been offered a brilliant fortune if she would come to England; we are to be made believe this paragon of purity, who took such uncommon pains to get her young sister into the house of the Princess, after this paragon of purity had seen, with her own eyes, that that house was as bad as a brothel; we are to be made to believe that this modest and most virtuous creature, who, out of pure *naiveté*, had dropped the name of DE MONT, the chambermaid, and taken that of COUNTESS DE COLOMBIER, and who lived in the style of a Countess, too; we are to be made to believe that even this precious commodity imported, through the agency of the Commission at Milan, had received no reward, was to receive no reward, and had confined her demands and receipts simply to the amount of her actual expenses. You would have us believe this; and, indeed, she positively *swore* it; and which swearing I believe to be of precisely the same value as all the rest of her swearing.

We find that all the principal witnesses are servants *turned off* by the Queen. Now, in the first place, a married woman, who knows that servants are in possession of secrets such as those detailed by your witnesses, takes special care not to turn off such servants. In the next place, such turned-off servants are very apt to be extremely vindictive, while it is well-known that Italians are not less vindictive than other people. Such turned-off servants are, at least, excellent materials for a commission to work upon. In this case there is a double motive. When MACBETH seeks for men to murder BANQUO, he looks out for such as BANQUO has offended; and, indeed, such has almost uniformly been the first movement in every conspiracy that has ever been heard of against men. Here we find, then, that Majocchi had been turned off; that De Mont had been turned off; that Sacchini had been turned off; that the cook had been turned off; and we find, also, that the master of the polacre had had a quarrel with Bergami, on account of the latter having refused to comply with his pecuniary demands! *Why* these people were turned off; what was their conduct and what was their character, we have yet to learn, and a pretty account we shall have of them, I dare say. But, without anticipating this, I say that this turning-off, always, observe, through the in-

strumentality of Bergami, and this quarrel about money, between Bergami and the Captain of the polacre; I say that these circumstances alone, even without including all the other circumstances relating to rewards and promises; without the circumstances of living incognito, changing names, shifting places of abode, and the rest of the traits that make up the disgusting picture; without any of these, the turning-off, and the quarrels about money, are quite sufficient to throw much more than suspicion on every particle of the evidence of these persons.

Viewing, then, as I do, these witnesses to be as little worthy of credit as *Castles* was, how can you have the conscience to suppose that we are to give credit to their evidence. He was an indescribable villain, you said; and upon what did you ground your assertions? Why, that he had been recently clothed in rags, that he appeared before the jury in a good suit of clothes, that he had been frequently seen about with the agents of the Treasury, that he had gone under a false name, that he had been kept incog., and that he had been brought from a prison to the witness-box. Upon these facts, and upon the additional one that he had been the inmate of a brothel; upon these facts you founded the assertion that he was an indescribable villain, and that no person ought to be found guilty upon his evidence, though that evidence had been corroborated, in several parts of it, by witnesses perfectly credible. And yet you would now have us believe, that, unless the Queen can distinctly prove the *negative* of the swearings of all these your witnesses, we ought to pronounce her guilty! Such a monstrous proposition as this; anything so unfair and impudent, never before found its way from the lips even of a Crown lawyer.

Having nothing but such witnesses to produce is the strongest proof in the world that your case was not only bad, but that you knew it to be bad. Your worthy fellow-labourer took occasion to mention the names of several English gentlemen and ladies who were about the person, and actually living under the same roof with the Princess upon land, and some of whom accompanied her even in the famous polacre. I assert it to be impossible for the facts, related by these witnesses of yours to have taken place, without those gentlemen and ladies knowing something about them. You may say that the amorous works might all be going on upon land, and the English gentlemen and ladies never even hear of them. You may say, that these amorous goings-on might have been observed by the master and mate in the polacre, and they might wholly escape the knowledge, never reach the eyes or the ears of either of the two English gentlemen, who were penned up in the same polacre. You may say this, and *Cooke*, *Powell*, and *Brown*, may produce a thousand witnesses to swear it; but, when you have so said and they have so sworn, not one man, woman or child, will believe either he saying or the swearing.

No, and the question, the universal question is, *Why do they not produce some of these English gentlemen or ladies?* And, the universal answer to this question is, *They dare not do it!* You ask, with simplicity enough, *Why do they not produce the Bergamis?* I do not know what they will do; but this I know, that the Bergamis, or, at least, Bergami himself, could not be possibly brought as a witness for the Queen, seeing that he is a *party accused*; but this I know, too, that *you might have brought him*, and that he would have been a very good wit-

ness for you, provided that he could have been prevailed upon to swear anything against her Majesty. But, the not calling of the English gentlemen and ladies, would, of itself, have destroyed your cause, even if the preparatory proceedings and the circumstances attending your own witnesses had not destroyed it. It is impossible to ascribe the not calling of these witnesses to any other than one cause; and that is, the certainty in which you were that their evidence would falsify the swearings of the gentlemen and ladies from Cotton Garden.

You ventured to call only two witnesses of a character different from those of your Italians, and your Swiss Countess; namely, Captains Pechell and Briggs. The latter swore that he knew of no impropriety of conduct on the part of the Princess, now Queen, and the swearing of the former falsified the assertion of the Attorney-General with regard to her Majesty's conduct when she went on board of the *Clorinde*. The Attorney-General asserted, that her conduct was tame; that she put up with an *insult* from this Pechell.—This is false. She resented the insult by not suffering Pechell to sit at the same table with her, and by refusing to see him when he made a *request* to that effect by Captain Briggs. Pechell's father was, at that time, gentleman usher to the *late Queen*; his uncle was Receiver-General of Customs; one of his cousins was a captain in the Navy, as well as himself! another cousin was a judge in India; another cousin was the wife of the Dean of Worcester, who is a cousin of Lord Liverpool. This Captain Pechell stood, therefore, very peculiarly connected: and, yet, when Captain Pechell comes, at last, he is able to produce no one fact against the Queen; though he clearly shows that he behaved towards her in a most unbecoming and insolent manner. This she punished in the only way that it was in her power to punish it; namely, by refusing to sit at table with him, and by refusing him an audience which he endeavoured to obtain. By what motives he might have been actuated in his conduct towards the wife of his sovereign, as the Prince then was; whether he felt himself secure from all harm in acting as he did; whatever might be his motives, upon that occasion, no one will say that he was a witness friendly to the Queen; and yet, out of his evidence, there comes not one single particle to corroborate, even by insinuation, the swearings of Majocchi and the rest of the tribe from the fortress.

Thus, then, your Italian production; the production of a Commission established for the purpose of getting at facts to make the Queen appear guilty; these witnesses stand wholly unsupported by any thing in the shape of corroboration. If it be asked why, upon the supposition of the whole originating in a conspiracy; if it be asked why, if the thing were hatched, more *pump swearing*, more bed-and-bolster work was not introduced: if it be asked why the witnesses were not, upon this supposition, instructed to swear that they actually saw, with their own eyes, the thing which it is the object to cause to be believed was so frequently done; if this be asked, the answer is perfectly ready. It is a rule in all courts of law that numerous strong and well-connected circumstances, are worth more in producing conviction than any fact positively sworn to. Upon the supposition that this evidence was the fruit of a long-laid and slowly-matured conspiracy, nothing could be so well contrived as to abstain from positive oaths as to the real fact itself. Such abstinence would naturally give an air of *scrupulousness* to the prosecutors as well as to the witnesses; and, if the prosecutors could make out, by a concatenation of circumstances, the certainty of the fact, it would be ten

thousand times better for them than to have the fact positively sworn to by eye-witnesses. So that this *beating about the bush* is what deceives nobody; but, on the other hand, has tended strongly to produce that universal conviction which prevails, that the whole thing has originated in a conspiracy; for, this over-strained caution, as to swearing to the positive act, has led to this question: How is it possible that this incessant adulterous intercourse, could be going on, day and night; for so long a time, and in so many and such different situations; and no one single person should, upon any occasion, ever have witnessed *the act itse* / ?

This over-strained caution, therefore, has not at all tended to strengthen your case, but has assisted in strengthening the conviction that the whole originated, in that desire, which has been so clearly discovered in every stage of the proceedings, namely, *to keep or get her Majesty out of the country*, let it cost what it might.

In conclusion of your speech, you say, that the preamble of the Bill; that is to say, the charges against her Majesty are fully made out; and that the Bill must accordingly pass, unless she be able clearly, distinctly and positively, to prove your evidence to be wholly false. This I deny. I say that she is called upon for no such proof. To prove a *negative* was never yet required of any human being. How is the Queen to bring any body to swear that De Mont did *not* see what she has sworn that she saw? All that the Queen's advocates have to do is to show that these witnesses are *unworthy of credit*. This is all; and, as the case now stands, the public think that this has already been done by the witnesses themselves, viewed in connection with all the circumstances attending the Milan Commission, and those other circumstances which I have stated at the outset of this letter. Mr. Brougham might have safely gone on *instantly*; his statement, together with the evidence of a few witnesses of credibility, would have been much more than sufficient for the satisfaction of the public. The trial might have been concluded before now; and we might, on this very day, have been waiting to see whether, upon such evidence as you have produced, the House of Lords would have passed this unparalleled Bill.

As to the case of her Majesty, in the public opinion, it was decided when you closed your case, which case had produced disgust in the public mind; had produced a feeling towards the prosecutors and their agents that I shall not venture to describe; and had produced a degree of affection and attachment towards her Majesty, such as I believe never was before felt towards any human being. You have closed your case: your charges and your evidence are before the world; and the warm-hearted addresses, pouring in upon her Majesty from every town and every village, form the appropriate answer to those charges and to that evidence.

Feeble, indeed, was your attempt to *apologize* for the prosecutors and their agents. We could discover, however, from that apology, that you were not insensible to the weight of your present troubles, and not blind to those greater troubles which you behold in prospect. You appear to see that your patrons and employers are beset with difficulties on every side; and you make a lame attempt to cause it to be believed that the difficulties were *unavoidable*. But, who then was it that *compelled* the Ministers to send out the Milan Commission? Who was it that *compelled* them to expend our money upon COOKE, POWELL and BROWN? Who was it that *compelled* them to send the far-famed Hutchinsonson to St. Omer's? Who was it *compelled* them to send down the Green Bags? Who was it *compelled* them to instruct your dear brother of the law to

promulgate throughout the world that the Queen had witnessed an *imitation of the sexual intercourse*? Who was it *compelled* them to go into a trial which the House of Commons had declared "must, terminate how it might, be derogatory to the dignity of the Crown, and injurious to the best interests of the country?" Who was it that *compelled* them to do any of these things; for, if they have not been acting under some compulsion, the proceedings are all their own.

They cannot have been *deceived*. They well knew the nature and extent of the evidence. We find Majocchi, the simple Countess, and the disinterested Sacchini all residing in England for a long time. The Ministers must have been well acquainted with the circumstances relating to the witnesses; and, what is more, they had all their swearings down in black and white in the green bags. All that we know now, they knew before; and, as to their expenditure of money in this business, they have not condescended, even yet, to give us a glance at an account. Therefore, there is no excuse for the Ministers. The whole of the proceedings is their own voluntary act. They are responsible for that act; and, I trust, that you will find that you have to bear your share of that responsibility.

I pretend not to say whether the Bill will be passed or not. But, this I know, that one or the other will take place; and I am of opinion that it matters very little, with regard to the ultimate consequences, whether the Bill pass or be rejected. "Either way *the system* is sped." It never will recover this blow, be you well assured. If the Ministers could have ventured to *pass the Bill simply upon the report of the Secret Committee*; run it through the Houses in twenty-four hours, and put it in execution the next minute, as was the case with the Reformers, in 1817, putting into it a clause of *banishment* as well as of degradation and divorce; then, indeed, their object might have been accomplished. But, when once they hesitated; when once they began to negotiate; and especially when they began to talk of trial, their defeat was certain. It was then; it was, from that very moment, clear as daylight to me, that they had sealed the doom of themselves and the system. I never for one moment doubted of the perfect innocence of her Majesty. I was well aware of all the means that would be made use of to make her appear guilty; but I was also well aware of the enlightened state of the public mind, of the integrity of the people, and of the still powerful force of public opinion. I was not aware of the pre-disposition of a certain description of our fellow-citizens and fellow-sufferers whom I do not choose more minutely to describe; but I was quite sure, particularly when I saw what was passing in other parts of the world, that this description of our fellow-citizens would not long remain uninterested spectators of the scene.

My anticipations have been fully verified. The state of things is such now, that, let the Bill pass or let it not pass, the system never can recover the blow that it has received; and for your consolation, I offer you this concluding remark, that your employers have dealt this deadly blow *with their own hands*.

WM. COBBETT.

LETTER FROM THE QUEEN TO THE KING.*

(*Political Register*, August, 1820.)

SIR,

After the unparalleled and unprovoked persecution which, during a series of years, has been carried on against me under the name and authority of your Majesty, and which persecution, instead of being mollified by time, time has rendered only more and more malignant and unrelenting, it is not without a great sacrifice of private feeling that I now, even in the way of remonstrance, bring myself to address this letter to your Majesty. But, bearing in mind that Royalty rests on the basis of public good; that to this paramount consideration all others ought to submit; and aware of the consequences that may result from the present unconstitutional, illegal, and hitherto unheard-of proceedings; with a mind thus impressed, I cannot refrain from laying my grievous wrongs once more before your Majesty, in the hope that the justice which your Majesty may, by evil-minded counsellors, be still disposed to refuse to the claims of a dutiful, faithful, and injured wife, you may be induced to yield to considerations connected with the honour and dignity of your crown, the stability of your throne, the tranquillity of your dominions, the happiness and safety of your just and loyal people, whose generous

* It never has been known generally that this letter was written by Mr. COBBETT, though that was suspected by many, at the time that it was published. As I, and two more, are the only persons now alive who *know* the fact, I will state the circumstances that I know respecting it. At the time it was written, great apprehensions were entertained by that part of the public who espoused the QUEEN'S cause, that she would yield to the importunities of the Parliament and false Counsellors, and quit the Kingdom; and, to assure them of the contrary was one of the objects of promulgating this paper in the shape of a Letter to the King. It was written by my father in the night of the 6th of August; was copied by my sister Anne in the morning of the 7th, and I took it and delivered it to Mr. Alderman WOOD at Brandenburgh-House, according to appointment, in the evening of the same day. The QUEEN, as my father understood from the Alderman, was so delighted with it, that she determined to send it to the King. Windsor immediately, and, fearing that her legal advisers might, if they arrived before it was gone, advise her to the contrary, she signed the paper just as it was then written, and sent it off. It was returned, I believe because some point of etiquette, in the manner of sending it, was omitted. On the 14th it was published in the *Times* newspaper, and thence it went into every newspaper in the kingdom, and, being printed on open sheets of paper, was posted all over London. It instantly produced the desired effect: the newspapers that first published it were eagerly sought for, groups of people stood about the corners where it was posted, reading and discussing it, and the bulk of the people now clearly understanding that the QUEEN was resolved to remain and stand her Trial, resolved also to act their part on the occasion.—The Letter was so great a favourite with the QUEEN, that, when she had her portrait painted for the City of London, she desired Mr. LONSDALE, the artist, to represent her with this document in her hand.—Its merits as a composition were admitted by all who spoke or wrote of it; but the grudging press, which always attributed my father's

hearts revolt at oppression and cruelty, and especially when perpetrated by a perversion and a mockery of the laws. A sense of what is due to my character and sex forbids me to refer minutely to the real causes of our domestic separation, or to the numerous unmerited insults offered me previously to that period; but, leaving to your Majesty to reconcile with the marriage vow the act of driving, by such means, a wife from beneath your roof, with an infant in her arms, your Majesty will permit me to remind you, that that act was entirely your own; that the separation, so far from being sought for by me, was a sentence pronounced upon me, without any cause assigned, other than that of your own inclinations, which, as your Majesty was pleased to allege, were not under your control.

Not to have felt with regard to myself chagrin at this decision of your Majesty, would have argued great insensibility to the obligations of decorum; not to have dropped a tear in the face of that beloved child, whose future sorrows were then but too easy to foresee, would have marked me as unworthy of the name of mother; but, not to have submitted to it without repining would have indicated a consciousness of demerit, or a want of those feelings which belong to affronted and insulted female honour.

The "tranquil and comfortable society" tendered to me by your Majesty, formed, in my mind, but a poor compensation for the grief occasioned by considering the wound given to public morals in the fatal example produced by the indulgence of your Majesty's inclinations; more especially when I contemplated the disappointment of the nation, who had so munificently provided for our union, who had fondly cherished such pleasing hopes of happiness arising from that union, and who had hailed it with such affectionate and rapturous joy.

But, alas! even tranquillity and comfort were too much for me to enjoy. From the very threshold of your Majesty's mansion the mother of

writings, when without his name, to the most learned and most elegant writers of the day, abused poor Doctor PARR for this performance! The *New Times* of the 15th August had a long article upon it from which I will take a short extract: "Who the writer is can only be matter of conjecture. The name of COBBETT has been mentioned; and certainly the composition betrays all the malignity of that writer against the established laws and institutions of the kingdom. Perhaps a *more classical pen may have here and there polished off the vulgarity of the author of the TWOPENNY REGISTER.*"—The *Courier* was less reserved as to the author, and, on the same day, said this: "It affects to be written by the QUEEN—it is notoriously not written by her. The cant of maternal feelings with which it is filled, are the cool suggestions of a hired penman. The tears it talks of were never shed, but in the libeller's ink. The tender feelings of the female heart which it describes, are the *florid inventions of a big wigg'd rhetorician.*" (Dr. PARR was famous for his large powdered wig.) "In short, it is, although the QUEEN has written her name at the bottom of it, an impudent fabrication and fraud; and it is at once ludicrous and disgusting, to fancy *two grave Doctors*, who, as SHAKSPEARE says of Cardinal CAMBRIDGE, 'never had a child' laying their *wigg'd* heads together, to describe the throes of a mother's afflictions, and the niceties of female delicacy. But let us leave the woman's tears of Doctor PARR, and the feminine sighs of Doctor REYNOLDS, and turn to other topics." My father's friends attributed it to him; for the evidence on its face was too strong to escape the eye of any man who was accustomed to read his writings; but when taxed home with it, he turned it off by jocosely saying—"I believe it was written by Alderman WOOD."—JOHN M. COBBETT.

your child was pursued by spies, conspirators, and traitors, employed, encouraged, and rewarded to lay snares for the feet, and to plot against the reputation and life, of her whom your Majesty had so recently and so solemnly vowed to honour, to love, and to cherish.

In withdrawing from the embraces of my parents, in giving my hand to the son of George the Third and the heir-apparent to the British throne, nothing less than a voice from Heaven would have made me fear injustice or wrong of any kind.—What, then, was my astonishment at finding that treasons against me had been carried on and matured, perjuries against me had been methodized and embodied, a secret tribunal had been held, a trial of my actions had taken place, and a decision had been made upon those actions, without my having been informed of the nature of the charge, or of the names of the witnesses? And what words can express the feelings excited by the fact, that this proceeding was founded on a request made, and on evidence furnished, by order of the father of my child, and my natural as well as legal guardian and protector?

Notwithstanding, however, the unprecedented conduct of that tribunal; conduct which has since undergone, even in Parliament, severe and unanswered animadversions, and which has been also censured in the minutes of the Privy Council; notwithstanding the secrecy of the proceedings of this tribunal; notwithstanding the strong temptation to the giving of false evidence against me before it; notwithstanding that there was no opportunity afforded me of rebutting that evidence; notwithstanding all these circumstances, so decidedly favourable to my enemies, even this secret tribunal acquitted me of all crime, and thereby pronounced my principal accusers to have been guilty of the grossest perjury. But it was now (after the trial was over) discovered, that the nature of the tribunal was such as to render false swearing before it *not legally criminal*! And thus, at the suggestion and request of your Majesty, had been created, to take cognizance of and try my conduct, a tribunal competent to administer oaths, competent to examine witnesses on oath, competent to try, competent to acquit or condemn, and competent, moreover, to screen those who had sworn falsely against me from suffering the pains and penalties which the law awards to wilful and corrupt perjury. Great as my indignation naturally must have been at this shameful evasion of law and justice, that indignation was lost in pity for him who could lower his princely plumes to the dust by giving his countenance and favour to the most conspicuous of those abandoned and notorious perjurers.

Still there was one whose upright mind nothing could warp, in whose breast injustice never found a place, whose hand was always ready to raise the unfortunate, and to rescue the oppressed. While that good and gracious father and Sovereign remained in the exercise of his royal functions, his unoffending daughter-in-law had nothing to fear. As long as the protecting hand of your late ever-beloved and ever-lamented father was held over me, I was safe. But the melancholy event which deprived the nation of the active exertions of its virtuous King, bereft me of friend and protector, and of all hope of future tranquillity and safety. To calumniate your innocent wife was now the shortest road to royal favour; and to betray her was to lay the sure foundation of boundless riches and titles of honour. Before claims like these, talent, virtue, long services, your own personal friendships, your royal engagements, promises, and pledges, written as well as verbal, melted into air. Your cabinet was

founded on this basis. You took to your councils men, of whose persons, as well as whose principles, you had invariably expressed the strongest dislike. The interest of the nation, and even your own feelings, in all other respects, were sacrificed to the gratification of your desire to aggravate my sufferings, and to ensure my humiliation. You took to your councils and your bosom men whom you hated, whose abandonment of, and whose readiness to sacrifice me were their only merits, and whose power has been exercised in a manner, and has been attended with consequences, worthy of its origin. From this unprincipled and unnatural union have sprung the manifold evils which this nation has now to endure, and which present a mass of misery and of degradation, accompanied with acts of tyranny and cruelty, rather than have seen which inflicted on his industrious, faithful, and brave people, your royal father would have perished at the head of that people. When to calumniate, revile, and betray me, became the sure path to honour and riches, it would have been strange indeed if calumniators, revilers, and traitors had not abounded. Your Court became much less a scene of polished manners and refined intercourse than of low intrigue and scurrility. Spies, Bacchanalian tale-bearers, and foul conspirators, swarmed in those palaces which had before been the resort of sobriety, virtue, and honour. To enumerate all the various privations and mortifications which I had to endure, all the insults that were wantonly heaped upon me, from the day of your elevation to the Regency to that of my departure for the Continent, would be to describe every species of personal offence that can be offered to, and every pain short of bodily violence that can be inflicted on, any human being. Bereft of parent, brother, and father-in-law, and having my husband for my deadliest foe; seeing those who have promised me support bought by rewards to be amongst my enemies; restrained from accusing my foes in the face of the world, out of regard for the character of the father of my child, and from a desire to prevent her happiness from being disturbed; shunned from motives of selfishness by those who were my natural associates; living in obscurity, while I ought to have been the centre of all that was splendid; thus humbled, I had one consolation left; the love of my dear and only child. To permit me to enjoy this was too great an indulgence. To see my daughter; to fold her in my arms; to mingle my tears with hers; to receive her cheering caresses, and to hear from her lips assurances of never-ceasing love; thus to be comforted, consoled, upheld, and blessed, was too much to be allowed me. Even on the slave-mart the cries of "O! my mother, my mother! O! my child, my child!" have prevented a separation of the victims of avarice. But your advisers, more inhuman than the slave-dealer, remorselessly tore the mother from the child.

Thus bereft of the society of my child, or reduced to the necessity of embittering her life by struggles to preserve that society, I resolved on temporary absence, in the hope that time might restore me to her in happier days. Those days, alas! were never to come. To mothers, and those mothers who have been suddenly bereft of the best and most affectionate and only daughters, it belongs to estimate my sufferings and my wrongs. Such mothers will judge of my affliction upon hearing of the death of my child, and upon my calling to recollection the last look, the last words, and all the affecting circumstances of our separation. Such mothers will see the depth of my sorrows. Every being with a heart of humanity in its bosom will drop a tear of sympathy with me. And

will not the world, then, learn with indignation, that this event, calculated to soften the hardest heart, was the signal for new conspiracies, and indefatigable efforts for the destruction of this afflicted mother? Your Majesty had torn my child from me; you had deprived me of the power of being at hand to succour her; you had taken from me the possibility of hearing of her last prayers for her mother; you saw me bereft, forlorn, and broken-hearted; and this was the moment you chose for redoubling your persecutions.

Let the world pass its judgment on the constituting of a commission, in a foreign country, consisting of inquisitors, spies, and informers, to discover, collect, and arrange matters of accusation against your wife, without any complaint having been communicated to her: let the world judge of the employment of ambassadors in such a business, and of the enlisting of foreign courts in the enterprise: but on the measures which have been adopted to give final effect to those preliminary proceedings it is for me to speak; it is for me to remonstrate with your Majesty; it is for me to protest; it is for me to apprise you of my determination.

I have always demanded a *fair trial*. This is what I now demand, and this is refused me. Instead of a fair trial, I am to be subjected to a sentence by the Parliament, passed in the shape of a *law*. Against this I protest, and upon the following grounds:

The injustice of refusing me a clear and distinct charge, of refusing me the names of the witnesses, of refusing me the names of the places where the illegal acts have been committed; these are sufficiently flagrant and revolting; but it is against the *constitution of the Court itself* that I particularly object, and against that I most solemnly protest.

Whatever may be the precedents as to Bills of Pains and Penalties, none of them, except those relating to the Queen of Henry the Eighth, can apply here; for here your Majesty is the *plaintiff*. Here it is intended by the Bill to do what you deem *good to you*, and to do me *great harm*. You are, therefore, a party, and the only complaining party.

You have made your complaint to the House of Lords. You have conveyed to this House written documents sealed up. A secret committee of the House have examined these documents. They have reported that there are grounds of proceeding; and then the House, merely upon that report, have brought forward a Bill containing the most outrageous slanders on me, and sentencing me to divorce and degradation.

The injustice of putting forth this Bill to the world for six weeks before it is even proposed to afford me an opportunity of contradicting its allegations is too manifest not to have shocked the nation; and, indeed, the proceedings even thus far are such as to convince every one that no justice is intended me. But if none of these proceedings, if none of these clear indications of a determination to do me wrong had taken place, I should see, in the constitution of the House of Lords itself, a certainty that I could expect no justice at its hands.

Your Majesty's Ministers have *advised* this prosecution; they are responsible for the advice they give; they are liable to *punishment* if they fail to make good their charges; and not only are they part of my *judges*, but it is they who have *brought in the Bill*; and it is too notorious that they have *always a majority* in the House; so that, without any other, here is ample proof that the House will decide in favour of the Bill, and, of course, against me.

But, further, there are reasons for your Ministers having a majority in

this case, and which reasons do not apply to common cases. Your Majesty is *the plaintiff*: to you it belongs to appoint and to elevate peers. Many of the present peers have been raised to that dignity by yourself, and almost the whole can be, at your will and pleasure, further elevated. The far greater number of the peers hold, by themselves and their families, offices, pensions, and other emoluments, solely at the will and pleasure of your Majesty, and these, of course, your Majesty can take away whenever you please. There are more than *four-fifths* of the peers in this situation, and there are many of them who might thus be deprived of the far better part of their incomes.

If, contrary to all expectation, there should be found, in some peers, likely to amount to a majority, a disposition to reject the Bill, some of these peers may be ordered away to their ships, regiments, governments, and other duties; and, which is an equally alarming power, new peers may be created for the purpose, and give their vote in the decision. That your Majesty's Ministers would advise these measures, if found necessary to render their prosecution successful, there can be very little doubt; seeing that they have hitherto stopped at nothing, however unjust or odious.

To regard such a body as a *Court of Justice* would be to calumniate that sacred name; and for me to suppress an expression of my opinion on the subject would be tacitly to lend myself to my own destruction, as well as to an imposition upon the nation and the world.

In the House of Commons I can discover no better grounds of security. The power of your Majesty's Ministers is the same in both Houses; and your Majesty is well acquainted with the fact, that a majority of this House is composed of persons placed in it by the peers and by your Majesty's Treasury.

It really gives me pain to state these things to your Majesty; and, if it gives your Majesty pain, I beg that it may be observed, and remembered, that the statement has been forced from me. I must either protest against this mode of trial, or, by tacitly consenting to it, suffer my honour to be sacrificed. No innocence can secure the accused if the judges and jurors be chosen by the accuser; and if I were tacitly to submit to a tribunal of this description, I should be instrumental in my own dishonour.

On these grounds I protest against this species of trial. I demand a trial in a Court where the jurors are taken impartially from amongst the people, and where the proceedings are open and fair. Such a trial I court, and to no other will I willingly submit. If your Majesty persevere in the present proceeding, I shall, even in the Houses of Parliament, face my accusers; but I shall regard any decision they may make against me as not in the smallest degree reflecting on my honour; and I will not, except compelled by actual force, submit to any sentence which shall not be pronounced by a *Court of Justice*.

I have now frankly laid before your Majesty a statement of my wrongs, and a declaration of my views and intentions. You have cast upon me every slur to which the female character is liable. Instead of loving, honouring, and cherishing me, agreeably to your solemn vow, you have pursued me with hatred and scorn, and with all the means of destruction. You wrested from me my child, and with her my only comfort and consolation. You sent me sorrowing through the world, and even in my sorrows pursued me with unrelenting persecution. Having left me nothing but my innocence, you would now, by a mockery of justice, deprive me

even of the reputation of possessing that. The poisoned bowl and the poniard are means more manly than perjured witnesses and partial tribunals; and they are less cruel, inasmuch as life is less valuable than honour. If my life would have satisfied your Majesty, you should have had it on the sole condition of giving me a place in the same tomb with my child; but, since you would send me dishonoured to the grave, I will resist the attempt with all the means that it shall please God to give me.

(Signed) CAROLINE, R.

Brandenburgh-house, Aug. 7, 1820.

A

PASSAGE FROM A LETTER TO EARL GREY,

DATED 23RD DECEMBER, 1820.

ON THE DISTRESSES OF THE NATION CONSEQUENT ON MR. PEEL'S BILL. ON THE PRESIDENT MONROE'S MESSAGE RELATIVE TO DISTRESS IN AMERICA. AND, ON THE EXPECTED REVIVAL OF COMMERCE.

(Political Register, December, 1820.)

WHAT is the principal cause of that ruin and misery which now pervades the land, and which makes the life of the industrious man hardly worth preserving? What is the principal cause of the discontents which have furnished us with the best possible means of urging on the cause of Reform? This cause is the existence of a paper system, by the means of which the incomes of the landowners, and earnings of the industrious, are taken from them in proportions so large as to leave to the farmer, the trader, the journeyman, and the labourer, so perfect an inadequacy of means, as to deprive the two former classes of the possibility of making suitable provision for their children; and as to produce, with regard to the two latter classes, that monster in civil society, *starvation in the midst of abundance*.

My Lord, is it to be arrogant or presumptuous, to differ in opinion with, or to call in question the wisdom of, those who one year ascribed the distresses of the country to a *superabundance of food*, and the very next year ascribed it to a *superabundance of mouths*? Is it to be presumptuous, my Lord, to assert that there must be something *radically wrong* in a system under which good harvests as well as bad harvests are an *affliction* to a nation? Is it to be presumptuous to discard as unworthy of attention the opinions of men, who declared the distress to have arisen from a *sudden transition from war to peace*, and who, at the end of six years of peace, have seen nothing but a constant increase of distress, and have then avowed that they have no remedy to administer, and no remedy even to suggest? Is it to be presumptuous to venture to set forward

one's opinions in opposition to those of men, who tax one part of the people to furnish another part with the means of *emigrating*, at the very same time that they pass laws to *prevent the importation of food*, and, of course, the *exportation of manufactures* in exchange ?

I think it is not to be presumptuous to do this. I have all along disapproved of the measures which have been adopted with respect to this great matter. In my last letter I took the liberty to call your Lordship's attention to what was passing in the United States of America relative to the subject in question ; and I shall, by-and-by, have to notice the recent speech of the President, and again to avail myself of it in the way of illustration.

But, in justice to myself as well as in justice to the subject, I must first trace the *cause* from its root to the extremity of the branches. It was in the year 1797 that the first step was taken towards our present state of ruin and misery. It was then that that memorable Order of Council was issued, out of which have grown twelve Acts of Parliament, the last of which goes by the name of Mr. Peel's Bill ; to which Acts we have to ascribe a long train of suffering and a hideous mass of present danger.

The first of these Acts suspended cash payments at the Bank ; the last of them has enacted, that cash payments shall be resumed ; and has provided for the adoption of certain measures preliminary to that resumption. Here is the great cause of the distress ; and now, in justice to myself, I will simply set down a very short account of my endeavours to prevent the existence of this cause of calamity and of danger.

At a very early period after my return to England in 1800, I clearly perceived the dangers of this paper system ; and I perceived not less clearly that payments in cash could never be resumed, without a destruction of a great part of the Debt, or, without producing, first, general ruin and misery ; and last, a convulsive revolution. During the years from 1803 to 1810, it was very seldom that a month passed over my head without an endeavour to inculcate these opinions, for the inculcation of which opinions I was repaid, in speech, in print, and in conversation, by every species of abuse, and in certain other ways, by the severest of persecution and punishment short of absolute killing. If ever man was *martyr* to anything, I was a martyr to these opinions, which are now put forth as their own by thousands upon thousands of men, who then persecuted me, or who heartily applauded the persecutors.

I now come to the memorable epoch of 1810, when the discussion upon this grand subject, upon the decision as to which I well knew the fate of England was to turn, assumed a more regular and official form. The party to which your Lordship belonged, took the matter up, on the motion of the late *Mr. Horner*, and obtained a committee of inquiry, which committee was called the Bullion Committee, and which Committee reported, that an Act ought to be passed *to compel the Bank to resume cash payments at the end of two years from that time*. The Ministerial party contended that the Bank was able at any time to resume cash payments ; but that it would be inexpedient that it should do this until peace.

Thus stood, in 1810, the opinions, declarations, and propositions of the two parties in Parliament. Each party had its partizans out of doors. More than two hundred pamphlets were published on the subject ; I stood alone, and, in my work written at that time, entitled *Paper against Gold*, I asserted, and I think I proved to demonstration, this position : " That cash payments never could be resumed, without a large reduction of " the interest of the Debt, or, without the utter ruin of all persons actively

"engaged in trade of every description, and in agriculture." In repayment for this new and extraordinary effort of mine, I had to receive a fresh and extraordinary quantity of the foulest abuse that ever was poured forth upon mortal man; but, as I have most satisfactorily experienced, abuse, misrepresentation, calumny, have no effect in enfeebling the body, or in relaxing the efforts of the mind, especially when the latter is supported by a consciousness of its rectitude. I knew I was right: I knew that *time* was constantly working for me and against my calumniators: in that knowledge I was gay, while I knew that their bosoms were filled with apprehension, or, at least, were the habitations of uncertainty.

Peace came; that long-looked for peace; that peace which was to remove every obstacle to the resumption of cash-payments, and upon the arrival of which, even the law positively said, cash-payments were to be resumed! Now was the time when that which one party had proposed to adopt, and which the other party had said would at once take place in peace without any danger; now was that long-looked-for time arrived, and it came too with the unexpected good luck of the restoration of the Bourbons, and of the chaining of the "*arch enemy of our finances*" to a rock!* Now, then, arrived the time for the cash payments to be resumed, or for me to exult in my triumph, and to repay my calumniators with scorn! Were cash payments resumed, my Lord? O, no! my prophecy was fulfilled. An Act was passed to continue the suspension for *a year*. When that year expired, another Act was passed to continue it for another year. When that year was expired, another Act was passed to continue cash payments for two years longer! I could hold no longer! Triumph would burst forth, whether I would or not, and out it came in the following words, which I insert here, however, not so much in justice to myself, as in the way of present warning to my country, every man in which country I beseech to pay attention to these words, for I am sure every one of them has full as much interest in the thing as I have myself.

"The Parliament, and, indeed, the country, were, as to this question, divided into two parties: one said, that the Bank would be able to pay in specie in two years; the other said that the Bank was *always able* to pay, but that it would not be *prudent* to suffer the Bank to pay, till *peace* came. I gave it as my opinion, that peace would not enable the Bank to pay; or, at any rate, that her ladyship would not pay in gold and silver when peace should come. Thus far, then, time has proved me to have been right.

"We must now wait for *TIME* again; but, happily, we shall not have to wait *long*. Peace is now again come; and come in a way, too, that seems to defy even chance to interrupt its duration. Not only is Napoleon down, but he is in our hands; he is banished to a rock, of which we have the sole command and possession; he is as completely in the power of our Government as if they had him in the Tower of London. Therefore, this great obstacle to gold and silver payments is swept away. The Capets, or the *Bourbons*, as they call themselves, are restored. Spain has regained that beloved Ferdinand, in whose cause we were so zealous, and he has restored the Inquisition and the Jesuits. The Pope, to the great joy of loyal Protestants, is again in the chair of Saint Peter; has again resumed his keys and his shepherd's crook. In short, our Government, so far from dreading any enemy, is in *strict alliance* with every sovereign in Europe.

"Now, then, are come the halcyon days. Now, John Bull is to sit down in peace under his own vine and his own fig-tree with no one to make him afraid. Now there will be, there *can* be, no need of armies or navies. Now, then, my good neighbours, we shall, surely, see gold and silver return. Which of you will *bet* any thing on the affirmative of this proposition? My

* Lord CASTLEREAGH's expression with regard to the imprisonment of Napoleon at St. Helena.—ED.

opinion is, that we shall not see it return; that we shall not see the Bank pay in gold and silver; that we shall not hear the Minister say, that the Old Lady is ready with her cash. In short, my opinion is, that another and another Act of Parliament will convince even the most stupid and credulous, that, as long as the dividends on the National Debt are paid, so long will they be paid in Bank-notes, so long will the law protecting the Bank against demands in real money remain in full force: for, the man that needs more than two more Acts of Parliament to produce this conviction in his mind, must be an *idiot*.

"Let us wait, then, with patience for two years more; but, let us keep our eye steadily fixed on the movements of the Ministry and the Bank. Let us listen quietly to all they say, without seeming to take any notice of what they are about. If they *do* pay in cash at the end of two years, and still continue to pay the dividends, or the interest of the debt, I will frankly acknowledge, that I ought to pass for an ignorant pretender all the remainder of my life. If they *do not* pay in cash at the end of two years more, then, what *they* ought to pass for I shall leave my readers to decide.

"As to giving them a longer tether, that is wholly out of the question. Twelve years, is the average length, it is said, of the life of man. I have already given them *four*. I will allow them two more; but, as the grey hairs begin to thicken very fast upon my head, as my sons and daughters begin to walk faster than their father and mother, I certainly shall not lengthen the tether; but, at the end of two years from this 1st day of the month of September, 1815, I shall, if I still hold a pen, and the Old Lady does not pay the dividends in cash, assume it as a notoriously admitted fact, that *she never will and never can*."

I must confess that I did *revel* a little upon this occasion; but, if I had revelled ten times as much as I did, I should have been fully justified in so doing. I laughed at the confusion of my enemies, of my stupid and base traducers; but I had a right to laugh. It was, after all, but a moderate satisfaction for the sarcasms of the Edinburgh Reviewers and for the revilings of the London press.

Well, my Lord! The two years expired, and this new prophecy was fulfilled. No cash payments came, but another Act was passed to continue the suspension for another year; however, this Act provided that the Bank *might* resume! Yes, this Act graciously *permitted* the Bank to resume, upon giving due notice of its intention, to the Speaker of the House of Commons. This Act was to expire in July, 1819; but, alas! before that time arrived, another Act was passed continuing the suspension until the 1st of May, 1823!

O, delusion! Was there ever delusion like this since the world begun? Twenty-six years of putting-off, and twelve Acts of Parliament appointing the time of resumption! Call the reformers a set of *deluded* people, indeed! Have their leaders ever been deluded themselves, or have they ever attempted to delude others to an extent like this!

So much for the *past*, my Lord; and now we come to the *present* and the *future*. The last of the twelve Acts was what is called Mr. Peel's Bill; and this Bill, in only four pages, decides the fate of England, if it be persevered in; and it does as much for the public character of its rulers whether it be persevered in or not. This Bill is not like the former Acts, merely to suspend the payment of cash at the Bank; but it provides for payments in bullion, between the time of passing it and the 1st of May, 1823. The substance of the provisions are as follow: From 1st February to 1st October, 1820, the Bank is to pay its notes, in sixty-ounce pieces of gold, at eighty-one shillings an ounce. From 1st of October, 1820, to 1st of May 1821, it is to pay in sixty-ounce pieces, at seventy-nine shillings and sixpence an ounce. From 1st of May, 1821, to 1st of May, 1823, it is to pay in sixty-ounce pieces at seventy-seven

shillings and tenpence halfpenny an ounce. From the 1st May, 1823, it is to pay in specie as it did in former times!

The moment I saw a newspaper account of this Bill, I said, and I put the saying into print, that if this Bill were carried into complete effect, without a reduction of the interest of the Debt, *I would suffer myself to be broiled alive*. I now deliberately repeat the saying. To carry this Bill into effect, is even physically impossible; and yet if a stop be put to its progress, where will then be those two Houses of Parliament who passed it by an *unanimous vote*?

Here is the cause, my Lord. Here is the great cause of the distresses of the country. Here is the cause of the falling-off in the means of the landowner; of the ruin of the farmer and the trader; of the swelling of the poor-rates and the filling of the poor-houses; and of the starvation in the midst of plenty of the journeyman and the labourer. It is to be observed, however, that the distress begun before the passing of this Bill. It began the moment that peace was seen to be certain; and it did so begin, because the paper-money makers knew that they would be called upon, or that they would be liable to be called upon for cash, when the peace arrived. The renewal of the Suspension Act, from time to time, did not give them sufficient confidence to enable them to keep their paper out in the former quantity, and therefore the distress begun long before the passing of Mr. Peel's Bill. But this Bill has insured a *regular increase of the distress*, until the month of May, 1823; and when that time arrives, if the Bill be not before repealed, it has insured the blowing-up of the system, if not a convulsive revolution. It is not necessary for me to explain to your Lordship the manner in which this Bill operates. Not that I should be afraid of offending you by going into such matter; because your Lordship would well know that I meant the explanation for others and not for you. It will be sufficient just to state some of the effects of this Bill. Before this Bill arrive at the termination of its provisions, it will cause wheat to sell for four shillings a bushel or less. It will ruin every man who has borrowed money even to the fourth part of the amount of his property. It will ruin every man who trades, to any considerable extent, on borrowed capital. It will ruin every man who has taken a lease of a farm for three years to come. It will ruin a great many thousands of persons who have annuities, rent-charges, ground-rents, marriage settlements, and other things to pay. It will disable the Government from raising taxes sufficient for more than half the demands upon it. It will totally ruin commerce and manufactures. It will convey three-fourths of the estates of the nobility into the hands of fundholders and stock jobbers.

Now, my Lord, I was very confident in my predictions in 1810 and in 1815. I am not less confident now. But, *I never shall see this Bill carried into full effect*. O! no! This is one of the things that a Parliament, which has been called omnipotent, cannot do. This is one of the things that it cannot do, though it passed the Bill by an unanimous vote. It can do many things that I shall not take the liberty to mention. It can pass a law to prevent the people hearing even my prophecies; but it cannot prevent the prophecies from being fulfilled.

Gagging Bills and Dungeon Bills, and Banishment Bills, and even Censorship Bills, it can cause to be carried into effect; but to cause to be carried into effect Mr. Peel's Bill, is beyond the stretch of its power. Before I come to speak of the difficulties which this Bill presents to a

change of the Ministry, give me leave, my Lord, to draw your attention for a few minutes to the American President's speech, which has just been received and published in this country. In my last letter to your Lordship, I took occasion to assure you, that, what was called *distress* in that country was by no means removed, nor, upon the point of removal; and that I imagined that loans in time of peace would, in that country, as well as in this, be resorted to.

In another part of this number, your Lordship will find the whole of the President's speech or message.* You will find that the American debt amounts to about a *hundred millions of dollars*, which requires about *six millions of dollars* to pay the interest of it. You will find that last year, they made a loan of *three millions of dollars*; and that the whole of the income (including the three millions borrowed) was *sixteen millions seven hundred thousand dollars*, while the expenditure was *sixteen millions eight hundred thousand dollars*. Here is a deficiency of more than *three millions of dollars* upon an expenditure of *sixteen millions*. How different is this state of things from that of 1817! In that year, there was a large surplus, and the President then announced his intention to recommend to the Congress to show its generosity towards the old men who had served in the war of the revolution.

Having thus stated the simple facts, let me now beseech your Lordship's attention for a moment to the manner in which the President endeavours to plaster them over; and I think you will find, that when republican rulers do take the trowel in hand, they can plaster as well as the rest of us. The passage which I am about to quote, is rather long; but if the instruction it gives do not compensate for its length, a man must have very little laughter in him that does not find his trouble of reading repaid by the diversion he will receive.

"In communicating to you a just view of public affairs, at the commencement of your present labours, I do it with great satisfaction; because, taking all circumstances into consideration which claim attention, I see *much cause to rejoice in the felicity of our situation*. In making this remark, I do not wish to be understood to imply, that an unvaried prosperity is to be seen in every interest of this great community. In the progress of a nation inhabiting a territory of such vast extent, and great variety of climate, every portion of which is engaged in foreign commerce, and liable to be affected, in some degree, by the changes which occur in the condition and regulations of foreign countries, it would be strange, if the produce of our soil, and the industry and enterprise of our fellow-citizens, received, at all times, and in every quarter, an uniform and equal encouragement. This would be more than we have a right to expect, under circumstances the most favourable. *Pressures on certain interests, it is admitted, have been felt*; but, allowing to these their greatest extent, they detract but little from the force of the remark already made. In forming a just estimate of our present situation, it is proper to look at the whole; in the outline, as well as in the detail, a free, virtuous, and enlightened people know well the great principles and causes on which their happiness depends; and even those who suffer most, occasionally, in their transitory concerns, find great relief under their sufferings from the blessings which they otherwise enjoy, and in the consoling and animating hope which they administer. From whence do these pressures come? *Not from a Government which is founded by, administered for, and supported by the people*. We trace them to the *peculiar character of the epoch in which we live*, and to the extraordinary occurrences which have signalized it. *The convulsions with which several of the Powers of Europe have been shaken, and the long and destructive war in which all were engaged, with their sudden transition to a state of peace, pre-*

* President JAMES MONROE. We do not insert the whole Message; but there is an extract from it contained in this letter, sufficient for the author's purpose.
—ED.

sending, in the first instance, unusual encouragement to our commerce, and withdrawing it in the second, even within its wonted limit, could not fail to be sensibly felt here. The station, too, which we had to support through this long conflict, compelled, as we were finally, to become a party to it with a principal Power, and to make great exertions, suffer heavy losses, and to contract considerable debts, distributing the ordinary course of affairs by augmenting, *to a vast amount*, the circulating medium, and thereby elevating, at one time, *the price of every article above a just standard*, and depressing it at another below it, had likewise its due effect.

"It is manifest, that the *pressures* of which we complain have proceeded in a great measure, from these causes. When, then, we take into view the prosperous and happy condition of our country, in all the great circumstances which constitute the felicity of a nation—every individual in the full enjoyment of all his rights—the union blessed with plenty, and rapidly rising to greatness, under a national Government, which operates with complete effect in every part, without being felt in any, except by the ample protection which it affords, and under state governments which perform their equal share, according to a wise distribution of power between them, in promoting the public happiness—it is impossible to behold so gratifying, so glorious a spectacle, without being penetrated with the most profound and grateful acknowledgments to the *supreme author of all good* for such manifold and inestimable blessings. Deeply impressed with these sentiments, I cannot regard the *pressures* to which I have adverted otherwise than in the light of *mild and instructive admonitions*; warning us of dangers to be shunned in future; teaching us *lessons of economy*; corresponding with the simplicity and purity of our Institutions, and best adapted to their support; evincing the connection and independence which the various parts of our happy union have on each other, thereby augmenting daily our social incorporation, and adding, by its strong ties, new strength and vigor to the political; opening a wider range and with new encouragement to the industry and enterprise of our fellow-citizens at home and abroad; and more especially by the multiplied proofs which it has accumulated, of the great perfection of our most excellent system of government, the powerful instrument, in the hands of an all-merciful Creator, in securing to us these blessings."

You see, my Lord, that though the President is aware that he is about to announce the existence of distress, he begins by saying that he has *much cause to rejoice in the felicity of the nation*, which is so much like something that I have frequently read in our king's speeches, that I really thought at first that I was getting amongst the documents of St. Stephen's. However, he gets on; and out it comes that *pressures have been felt*. I did not know before that *pressure* had a *plural*. Let that pass, however, and now we come, after some high compliments to the people, to the ticklish point, namely, "from *whence* do these pressures come?" Aye! Aye! I say; *whence do they come?*—And now hear him, my Lord; you will certainly think that it is Lord Liverpool that is speaking.—"*Not from the Government*," oh! no, no, no! Not from the Government to be sure!—"*Not from the Government*, which is founded by, administered for, and supported by the people." Come, come, Mr. President! This is being "*a little tricky*," as they call it in your country. This is shocking logic. It amounts to the full of our doctrine, that the *King can do no wrong*, and it goes a great deal further, too, for it does not leave the people even a nominal responsibility in any set of persons whatever. But, let us hear now, whence the "*pressures*" have come: "we trace them to the *peculiar character of the epoch in which we live*, and to the extraordinary occurrences which have signified it. *The convulsions with which several of the Powers of Europe have been shaken*, and the *long and destructive war*, in which all were engaged, with their *sudden transition to a state of peace*." Who would not imagine that it was Lord Castlereagh himself that was speak-

ing? Here is all the old empty stuff, that has long been worn out here, gathered carefully up to deck out a presidential speech on the other side of the Atlantic. By-and-by, however, Mr. Monroe comes to something like common sense, and speaks of the *vast increase of the circulating medium* that took place at one time, and of its great *subsequent diminution*. This is sense; and why could it not have been uttered clearly and simply, and not to be attempted to be buried in a heap of non-sense.

The last part of the above-quoted passage is one of the most complete instances that ever came under my view of the art of bewildering. The solemn acknowledgments to God do very little credit to the President's taste; while the whole piece presents a confusion of ideas, a defiance of logic and of grammar, such as I find it impossible to pass over unnoticed, though I have very great respect for the character of Mr. Monroe.

The truth is, that he is a very honest man; much too honest ever to have approved of a funding system; but that he is fairly entangled in it; and that, meaning to be President a second time, he dares not speak of it in the terms which it merits, for, if he were to do this, that caucus, on whom his re-election depends, would take care that he should never fill the President's chair again.

It is from the Government, then, that the "pressures" have come; and it was the Government that, by establishing the National Bank in 1816, entailed the curse of paper-money upon America. At the conclusion of the war, the whole might have been swept away. That was not only my advice, but the advice of many most enlightened men in that country. Instead of getting rid of the plague at once, it was rendered permanent by the establishment of that Bank; and in spite of the President's flowery picture, my opinion is, that that very paper-money will finally produce a dissolution of the Union. The *American farmers* will not, I am convinced, suffer themselves to be robbed in order to fill the pockets of stock-jobbers. The interest of the debt has hitherto been paid out of the proceeds of the Custom-house. The taxes so raised fall indirectly in part upon the farmers; but if they attempt to go to the homesteads of the farmers to get the money to pay the interest of that debt, away goes in one instant all security for the existence of the general government. Indeed, the thing will never be attempted. It is unjust in itself, and it will have to meet with an opposition, of which no one not well acquainted with *American farmers* can have the smallest idea.*

But, my Lord, the interesting point for us is the proof that we here have of the fatal effects of *paying in gold what was borrowed in paper*, even in a country like America. They do there actually pay in specie now. There are no internal taxes worth notice. All the taxes of a considerable farm, including poor-rates, road-rates, and school-rates, amount, in a whole year, to not more than seven or eight days wages of a common labourer; and yet, in a country thus situated, with a superabundance of land; with a degree of ease and comfort amongst the common people unknown in any other country; with an orderly, peaceable, sensible population: with all these advantages, and with only a debt of about twenty-eight

* The struggle here anticipated is actually going on at this time (May, 1837).—Ed.

millions sterling, the change from paper to gold has produced what the President calls "pressures." Yet, this unjust, this unnatural, this really wicked compulsion to pay in gold what was borrowed in paper, has produced pressures even in America; and, if the loaning system be persevered in, instead of resorting to a reduction of the debt, and especially if an attempt be made to make the American farmers pay the interest of that debt, my opinion is, that this accursed system will produce a dissolution of the Union.*

However, there is another view to take of this matter, and a view which, to us, is of very great importance. Your Lordship has doubtless attended to the curious notion of the promoters of Mr. Peel's Bill, *that commerce would revive*, and that the revival of commerce would be one of the means of enabling the Bank to pay in specie without injury to the country. A notion may be so completely absurd, as to set all commentary at defiance. And this is precisely one of that sort. But, though we cannot comment upon the thing, we sometimes find the means of showing the contrary of its assertion by facts which transpire. Now, my Lord, please to observe, that, a few years ago the revenue of the American Custom-house amounted to nearly a third more than it does now; and I believe that more than five-sixths of it arose out of imports from England, Ireland, and Scotland. The cause of the diminution has been the diminution of the imports; and that has arisen principally from the rising of the value of money in England; or, in other words, from the increasing inability in English merchants to give credit to merchants in America; which inability in English merchants has principally arisen from the drawing-in of the paper of the Bank of England, which paper was drawn in preparatory to the return to cash payments! And, therefore, this Bill of Mr. Peel, which was to be rendered harmless partly by the revival of commerce, contained within itself the efficient means of preventing that revival!

So happy are we, my Lord, in heads to guide us in the conducting of our affairs; and so true it is, that it is sheer power, and not wisdom, by which, in general, mankind are governed! Loan-jobbers and stock-jobbers, and brokers in silver and gold, are very clever in managing their affairs, and in the making of money; but of all the scourges that God, in his wrath, ever permitted to be laid upon the back of a nation; the severest, the most odious and most degrading, is, the suffering of its affairs to be placed, even in the smallest degree, in the hands of persons of this description. Princes and nobles may be blunder-headed; may commit hundreds of follies; but the effects of these are open, visible, they strike all eyes, they give offence, the errors are corrected, and the nation is to rights again; but the minings, the sappings, the underminings of the muck-worm, are carried on unseen and unapprehended, till all is hollow, all is false, all is treacherous to the feet: the hour of destruction suddenly comes, and learning, wisdom, patriotism, loyalty and valour are all unavailing.

If I have succeeded in convincing your Lordship that the attempts to return to cash payments have been the cause of the ruin and misery;

* The President JACKSON avoided this, by paying off the Debt before he attacked the paper-money system.—ED.

and that those attempts, if they be persevered in, must increase that ruin and misery, you will agree with me, of course, in opinion, that one of two things must be adopted; the repeal of *Mr. Peel's Bill*; or, a reduction of the interest of the Debt.

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT TO THE FARMERS,

EXPLAINING THE CAUSES OF THEIR PRESENT EMBARRASMENTS
AND IMPENDING RUIN.

(*Political Register, January, 1821.*)

London, January 1, 1821.

FARMERS,

There is a Scotch lawyer who has accused me of *proscribing men by whole classes*. This is a very greedy hunter after place, and he dislikes me as naturally as a rat dislikes the cat which guards the cheese and bacon. This accusation of his is false. I never marked out any class of men for proscription. If I have an antipathy to *stock-jobbers* or *seat-sellers*, my antipathy is warranted by law as well as by reason. These men are continually acting in open violation of the law; and they are much more proper objects of attack than thieves and pickpockets are, because these latter, though they violate the law, do not carry on the violation openly, confessedly and boastingly.

To complain of the misconduct of whole classes of men, is not to *proscribe* such classes. In surveying the different classes; in making a comparative estimate of their public conduct; in taking a view of the effects of that conduct: those who do this, and who choose to put the result of their observations upon paper, have surely a right to give the preference to one class before another; to praise those deemed worthy of praise, and to censure those deemed worthy of censure.

Proceeding upon these principles, and taking a fair view of the conduct of the persons of different classes in this kingdom, I have often said, and I still say, that the *farmers* form the class who have conducted themselves in the worst manner. In talking of classes, however, I am not to be supposed to include the *traffickers in seats and the jobbers in stocks*; because these are really proscribed by the law; they are two sets of criminals; and are by no means to be confounded with classes who have been guilty of political offences, whether of commission or of omission. You, the farmers, have not only been deficient in point of public spirit; you have not only shown a willingness to support a system, which has at last brought even yourselves to the verge of destruction; but you have voluntarily aided and abetted those by whom the system has been carried on; and, what is still worse, you have appeared to take pleasure in the persecution of every man, whose zeal has urged him forward to oppose that system. You are, therefore, not proper objects of compassion; all of us suffer, but you merit your sufferings.

I speak here with *numerous very honourable exceptions*; and if I did not in the most marked manner make these exceptions, I should be guilty of crying injustice; for, I know many farmers, who are amongst the most ardent friends of freedom and of justice, and who are also amongst the most enlightened men with whom I have ever had the honour to be acquainted. If I personally know *many* such, the whole number of such farmers must be great. My natural partialities, my liking for your calling and state of life, the pleasure I derive from participating, though it were only by books, in your pursuits; all these naturally dispose me to see in every farmer a man of public spirit, of ardour in the cause of freedom, as well as to find in him, what are very seldom wanting, a clear understanding, and soundness of judgment. But (always speaking with numerous exceptions) I am constrained to confess, that, as to public matters, I have always found you miserably selfish and destitute of feeling; the causes of which it would not be very difficult to point out; but the effects are manifest in the continuation of a system, which has been productive of a greater mass of human suffering than, as I believe, was ever before experienced, in a like space of time, in any country in the world. And, I am really of opinion, that this system will continue until you shall feel very nearly what your miserable labourers now feel.

Considering your past conduct, I can deem nothing due to you in the way either of instruction or advice. I do not, in addressing you upon the cause of your ruin, act from a hope or even a desire to relieve you, or render you assistance in any way whatever. You and your affairs are a subject of pure speculation with me. I write about you with as little feeling as a chemist writes about the things that pass through his crucible. But, you form a curious subject for the political philosopher; and to develop the nature of your concerns may be of use to the nation at large, not only at the present time, but in times yet to come.

It is now about six years since you began to feel the pinchings of distress. This feeling filled you with the desire of seeking a remedy through the assistance of a legislative measure. For nobody did you feel as long as you were thriving; but, the moment you ceased to thrive, you flew to the Government for that assistance and protection, which you had never called for in behalf of any other human being. Your *prices fell*; and the notion got into your minds, that the sole remedy was to *make the prices rise again*. The means of accomplishing this object, was, as you thought, to prevent the importation of farm produce from other countries. Hence the *Corn Bill*, which not only with your approbation, but agreeably to your pressing entreaties, was passed with troops drawn up round the Houses of Parliament! After this there was nothing that ever could arise that would leave you just ground of complaint: for in this one thing, we see you deprived of all claim to the compassion of any part of your countrymen.

From that day to this day, your affairs have been upon the decline; your embarrassments have been increasing; your final ruin has become, daily, more manifestly unavoidable. Still you cry on for Corn Bills and Wool Bills; still you call out for what you call *protection*; and during the last two years, or thereabouts, you have been forming yourselves into *combinations* (far less clearly lawful than the clubs and societies of Reformers), in order to produce an extension of the effect of the Corn Bills. At last, however, the Government and the Parliament have told

you, that they can do nothing for your relief; that the "*healing hand of time*" can alone effect your cure; while time, your true and faithful councillor, tells you that it has no remedies in store.

I should suppose, that, within the last five years, you must have expended amongst you, on writers, printers, publishers, secretaries, club-rooms, agents, and one thing and the other, a quarter of a million of money, at least, in order to effect a *rise in the price of corn*. All this money has been wholly thrown away. It has answered no purpose but that of keeping up the deception in your own minds, and of giving offence to the rest of the community. If you had followed the advice which I gave in the years 1814, 1815, and 1816, how different at this time would be your situation!

In explaining to you the causes of your ruin, first let me endeavour to get out of your minds the erroneous notion that *high price* is, in itself considered a good thing. If wheat were sold for a shilling a bushel, the farmer might be better off than if it were sold at twenty shillings a bushel. If a man give a hundred shillings an acre rent for his land, and sell his wheat for twenty shillings a bushel, he is not so well off as the farmer who gave three shillings an acre for his land, and who sold his wheat at a shilling a bushel. If one shilling would buy a yard of broadcloth, the farmer who got that shilling for a bushel of wheat, would be a richer man in that respect than the farmer who had to give thirty shillings for a yard of broadcloth, and who must sell his wheat for twenty shillings the bushel. It is not, therefore, you see, *mere high price* that can be any good to you. You should make a distinction between *positive amount* and *relative amount*. By positive amount I mean the *amount in itself considered*. And then, as mere amount, twenty shillings is better than one. But when the amount is *relative*; that is to say, when it is to be considered *relatively* to, or in *comparison with, other sums*; then one shilling in this case may be better than the twenty in the other. For, if I can buy a greater quantity of useful things with one shilling, than I can with twenty shillings, it is clear that the one shilling is better than the twenty. Therefore, it is not at *the sum received* that you are alone to look; but also at the sum which it is required that you should *expend*.

Keep these things in mind, and you will soon discover that it is not an augmentation of your *receipts* that you ought to have been seeking for; but a reduction of your expenses. The first thing that strikes you is a falling off in the prices of your produce; and, therefore, the first thing which an unreflecting man does, under such circumstances, is to seek for a rise in the price. To seek for a lessening of the *outgoings* does not occur to him so quickly. It appears to be a matter of greater difficulty, and much slower in the accomplishment. Besides, he does not perceive any hope of success in this way; especially when he reflects that his *outgoings* consist, for the greater part, of rents, tithes and taxes. The first he is generally bound to pay by lease; the second he is also bound to pay by lease, except in a few cases where tithes are taken in kind, to avoid which mode of payment, he will make almost any sacrifice; and from the fourth he sees no more possibility of fleeing than from death itself. He looks upon the tax-gatherer as inflexible, irresistible and immortal. To cope with such a power he has no hope. He, therefore, looks to the remedy of an Act of Parliament, the effect of which shall be to raise his prices, and to keep them up. He sues for a compromise

with his landlord, his parson, and the tax-gatherer, and he says, "secure me high prices, and I will pay you your rent, your tithes and your taxes."

This has been the line of conduct pursued by the farmers. Acts of Parliament have accordingly been passed; the objects of those Acts were to raise the price of farm produce, and to keep it up, and still the ruin of the farmers has proceeded steadily on. They have not perceived the real cause of their ruin; and, therefore, I will now, for about the hundredth time, explain to them that cause.

When, in any community, the quantity of money, or of circulating medium, is great in proportion to the number and magnitude of the dealings in that community, then *prices are high*. When the quantity of money or circulating medium in such community is small, then prices are low. The reasons of these are very clear, and need not now be stated.* It is of no consequence to a community, or to any part of it, whether *there be much or whether there be little* money in circulation within such community, provided, mind, that there be *no fluctuation in the quantity*. But, if there be fluctuations in the quantity; if there be a change from a small quantity to a great quantity; or, from a great one to a small one: then all the affairs of the community experience *disturbance*: instead of a fair chance of gain or of loss, distributed promiscuously amongst the several members of the community; and leaving to ingenuity, industry, skill, economy, and providential foresight, all the advantages which they naturally secure to their possessors; instead of this, a circulating medium, fluctuating in its quantity, divides the community *into classes*; and of these classes it ruins some and enriches others; or it diminishes the wealth of some, and betters the condition of others. Let us suppose a community with a money, or circulating medium; and it will be best to call it money at once, it being all the same in this respect whether it be paper or gold. Let us suppose a community with money to the amount of ten millions of pounds. Let us suppose that wheat sells for five shillings a bushel, while this quantity of money is afloat. If this money be (by any means whatever) augmented in quantity to twenty millions instead of ten, wheat will necessarily sell for ten shillings the bushel. It will sell indeed for more; because the latter ten millions will cause the whole mass to move quicker from hand to hand, and any given piece of money of the twenty millions, will have much greater power than any piece of the ten millions (the pieces being of the same nominal amount) has ever had.

It is very clear, that all the time that the augmentation of the money is going on, *prices will go on rising*; and the farmer will go on reaping advantage from such rise. Suppose he has a lease for seven years, when the augmentation of the quantity of money is beginning; and suppose his rent to be a hundred pounds a year. It will then require 400 bushels of wheat to pay his rent; but when the quantity of money has been augmented to twenty millions, it will then require, to pay his rent, only 200 bushels of wheat at the most. The same cause will produce the same effects with regard to tithes, which he takes on lease, and also with regard to taxes.

On the other hand, all the time a diminution of the quantity of money

* See this explained, Vol. 5, p. 492 of these Selections.—Ed.

is going on, *prices will go on falling*; and the farmer will go on suffering from such fall. His rent which, at first, demanded four hundred bushels of wheat, would go on every year demanding more and more, till at last, when the quantity of money has been lessened by one-half, his rent will demand eight hundred bushels of wheat per annum. His tithes, if he has them on lease, will oppress him in the same way; as will also his taxes.

If you keep this clearly in your minds, you will soon perceive that it is not Corn Bills that can relieve you; and though I, by no means, wish to prevent the presenting of those petitions which you are again, I understand, preparing for the Parliament; and which, while they cannot possibly do the mass of the people any harm, may serve to amuse you, and to produce long botheration speeches, which are a great diversion to me. I by no means wish to prevent you from sending these petitions. They will give employment to clerks, printers and paper-makers. These are rather *unproductive* labourers, to be sure; but their employment is as beneficial, at any rate, as the digging of holes one day and filling them up the next, a mode of employment suggested by the profound Castlereagh, to whom you have given your cordial support; and in defence of the system of which he is one of the conductors, you so gallantly drew your swords on St. Peter's-field at Manchester. I by no means wish to prevent you from presenting these petitions to a Parliament which you so much approve of; but, that I myself may not, from my silence, pass for a fool, too, I think it right to tell you, as I told you in 1814 and 1815, that *Corn Bills can do you no good*; that all they can do for you, is to assist in adding to your ruin, while they expose you, at the very same time, to the hatred of the rest of the community.

The cause; that is to say, the immediate cause, of your ruin is, *fall in prices*. The cause of that is, a diminution of the money in the country. The cause of that diminution is, an endeavour, on the part of the Parliament, to compel the Bank to pay in gold and silver, instead of promising to promise to pay, for so many years, and paying, in fact, in bits of oblong material, consisting of oil, lamp-black, and ground rags. The cause of this endeavour to return to cash-payments is of a mixed nature: partly moral and partly political. The men in the Ministry, and in Parliament, who conduct the affairs of this happy nation, began to be ashamed of not returning to cash-payments, agreeably to the declarations and enactments. They began to be ashamed to look one another in the face; and there were not wanting persons to taunt them with the failure of their promises. But, besides this, they saw (for even an idiot must have seen), that, until the country returned to cash-payments, *it never would dare to go to war*; and this for two reasons, first because the expenses of a new war would compel them to make new and enormous issues of paper-money; and, second, because in a state of war, no man could answer for the credit of the paper-money for one single day, seeing that any foreign nation might, according to our own example, in our conduct towards France and America, render our circulating paper as worthless as so many pieces of those rags which you fling over your land for the purpose of manure.

Here, then, brother Jobbernoles; here brother chewbacons; here brother clodthumpers; *here are the causes*, immediate and remote, of your ruin; of your removal from farm-houses to workhouses; of your change from big plump cheeks and swelled-out bellies, to lantern jaws and herring paunches. Take a good look at these causes. Think a

little about your bankers and your banker's book. Recollect how easy you used to get money from your banker; and pray mark well that your stock now belongs to him much more than to yourselves.

It is the diminution of the quantity of money circulating in the country, which has been the cause of your ruin.* The Ministry, and that Parliament which you like so well; these good gentlemen did, for the reasons above-stated, wish a return to cash-payments. In order to return to cash-payments, it was necessary that the Bank should reduce the quantity of its paper-money. The Bank reduced its quantity of paper-money; the country bankers did the same. Prices fell in consequence of this. Wheat came down from twelve shillings a bushel to eight or seven. You had still the same nominal sum of rent to pay, of tithes, in many cases, and of taxes in all cases. Your corn having fallen in price nearly one-half, you have now to give nearly *twice the quantity of it* to the landlord, the parson, the tax-gatherer, that you gave before. So that, your ruin must be inevitable. Your labourers, indeed, and servants in husbandry, you have compelled to lower their wages in proportion to the fall in your prices; but in pinching them to the utmost of your power you have been unable

* This was always contended by Mr. COBBETT, but denied by most of the politicians, both writers and speakers. The distresses that he was now (1821) writing on, went on increasing, till, in 1822, prices began to rise again, by another issue of Bank-notes; but, as this is a thing not avowed at the time of doing it, we must get the avowal where and when we can. In this case we now have it; for, on the issue of notes to cure the distresses of 1821-2, speculations of the wildest kind sprang up, the prosperity was surprising, but in 1825-6 came a panic which had nearly blown up the whole affair. In 1832 a Committee of the House of Commons sat to consider of a renewal of the Bank Charter, and, amongst the evidence that they took, is that of Mr. WARD, one of the Bank Directors, who, in page 137 of the Minutes, gives this account of the putting out of notes in 1822, in order to raise up prices: "Do you recollect, that, when his Majesty's Government in 1822, decided upon the plan of putting an additional four millions into circulation, it was then stated by Mr. HUSKISSON, that one of the chief objects his Majesty's Government had in that operation was to revive speculation, which was then dormant, upon which revival they placed their main hope of restoring the prosperity of the country; and do you not consider that the increase that was occasioned would have a natural tendency to revive and to increase speculation?—I recollect distinctly many circumstances referred to. Government, at that time, received many complaints relating to the Agricultural distress and the depression of prices; and I think, the price of wheat was at one time as low as 37s.; the average for the year was as low as about 43s. My own opinion is, that, whatever circumstances were in operation, one of the most unfavourable circumstances that occasioned the low price was the very low state of the aggregate currency of the country. The amount of country notes which had been at twenty millions, had become reduced in one year to sixteen millions, and had then been reduced to eleven millions; and by the year 1821" [the year that Mr. COBBETT addressed the above to the Farmers] "it had been reduced to seven millions sterling; the consequence was, that not only were prices low, but that a disinclination to transact business, and a great deal of positive evil, existed; and I think the Agriculturists had a clear right to complain of that circumstance. I think the Government had a clear right to try to restore the prices, in some degree to relieve them from that depression, and I do not know any other means by which it could be done than by giving them at least as good a currency, as full a currency, as was legitimate in connection with the laws relative to the currency." Mr. WARD had before stated, page 135, that the Government had caused four millions of money (notes) to be put out by the Bank, in order to effect a rise of prices; so that, here we have it given in evidence by a Bank Director, that the Government and the Bank together, regulate the prices of goods and produce, by the issuing and withdrawing of paper-money.—Ed.

to keep employed the same number of hands as before. Still the poor creatures must *continue to exist*. They cannot be knocked on the head. It would not be safe to suffer a million or two of persons in one country to be without food. They would break out, and, thinking that they were not born to starve in a land of plenty, *would take the food*; therefore, they must be fed, in a way sufficient to keep them alive. Hence comes a dreadful augmentation of the poor-rates; and that, too, just at the very time, when, even without this new charge, you are upon the point of becoming paupers.

Do you understand this? Can you misunderstand it? Indeed, to suppose you capable of misunderstanding what I have here written, would be to suppose you less rational than the horses or the oxen that drag your ploughs and waggons. Nevertheless, I will place the matter in another point of view; for, the salvation of the country depends, and it *wholly* depends, upon this matter being clearly understood.

You will observe, that, while the regular diminution in the quantity of money in the country ruins you, it does great good to some other classes of the community. We have seen how it must benefit a landlord who let his farm some time back. We have seen that it gives him four hundred bushels of wheat in place of two hundred. We have seen that this is the case when corn has been brought down to half the price at which it was when the farm was taken. And, by-the-by, corn is, at this hour, taking barley, oats and wheat together, at less than half the average price, which it brought for many years previous to 1814. We have seen, then, that the landlord in such a case, gets twice as much as he got before. But, so also does the fundholder, the placeman, the pensioner, the sinecurist, the army, the navy, the tax-gatherer himself, and every other creature who lives upon the produce of the taxes.

Now, suppose you were to agree at Michaelmas to give your servant-men twenty-four pounds a year a-piece, and your servant-women twelve pounds a year a-piece. Suppose they were to board themselves, and were to receive their wages monthly. Suppose that, just after you had made the bargain, a law were to be passed to compel you to pay them these wages, and an addition to them, regularly increased from month to month, in such proportion as would make the last month for every man four pounds, and the last month for every woman two pounds. I am supposing the increase to have been gradual from the first month to the last; and, in that case, you would at the end of the year, have paid each man thirty-six pounds, and each woman eighteen pounds, instead of the twenty-four pounds and the twelve pounds that you had agreed for.

Now, how should you relish a law like this? How should you relish such a law, and how should you act while Dick and Bess were pocketting your money and laughing in your faces? Would you not swear and stamp, and kick the dogs about the house, as you do in a rainy harvest? Would you not bellow like your calves and roar like your bulls? Yet, this is precisely what has been done by that Parliament which you so much love, with regard to the wages of placemen, and the pay and income of all others, whose income and pay come out of the taxes. You can see clearly enough that you pay the landlord and the parson more than you ought to pay. You grumble, and pretty loudly, too, with regard to them; and you vent your ill-humour most copiously upon the poor; but the fundholders, the placemen, the sinecure gentlemen and ladies: these you take special care never to offend by your unmannerly complaints and reproaches. To

support these, you not only give your money freely ; but, upon all occasions, you come boastingly forward with offers of your services and your lives.

There are some of you who have borrowed money, by mortgage, bond, annuity, or under some other shape. If you did this five years ago, you must now pay twice as much interest as you did the first year after the loan was made ; just in the same way that you, if a renter, must, as above proved, pay a double rent to the landlord. You must sell twice as many bushels of corn to get the money to pay your interest as you had to sell to pay your interest during the first year of the loan. Now, let us take a simple case : suppose a farmer has borrowed on mortgage a thousand pounds, and suppose his farm to have been worth two thousand pounds when he borrowed the money. Suppose the loan to have been made to him six years ago. The interest of the thousand pounds then required about seventy bushels of wheat. This was what he, in fact, bargained to pay. Now, suppose a law be passed, or a series of laws to be passed, to compel him to pay more than he had bargained to pay. About ten pounds more the first year. That is to say, nearly sixty pounds, instead of fifty pounds. Nearly twenty pounds the next year, more than the fifty. And so on, till, at this time, he has to pay a hundred a-year in place of the fifty ; or, which is the same thing, has to sell a hundred and forty bushels of wheat, instead of seventy bushels of wheat, to pay the interest with. Suppose, I say, that a law had been passed just after he had made the loan, to compel him to make payments in this increased way ; and suppose, further, that the same law authorized the mortgagee to enter up his mortgage, and to sell the farm, which farm, observe, will now sell for only one thousand pounds instead of two. Suppose the farm to sell for less than a thousand pounds, and the mortgagee to seize the goods of the farmer, and to take the very bed from under his wife to make up the deficiency. Suppose a law like this to be passed, suppose the law to say that these things shall take place ; what would the farmer ; what would the ruined monopolizer of loyalty say ? Would he not rail a bit ? Would he not begin to think that his boisterous and blackguard execrations against the Radicals had been improperly employed ? Yet, this is precisely the effect of the laws which have been passed, and the measures which have been adopted, to cause a return to cash payments.

If, therefore, you have not completely taken leave of your senses, you will cease to clamour about Corn Bills. You will no longer be the laughing-stock of men of sense. You will no longer be objects of hatred amongst the other classes of the community ; but will join with the rest of your countrymen in calling for a remedy which is pointed out by common sense. Before, however, I speak of that remedy, it may be necessary, or, at least, it may be useful to notice, what is going on amongst you, in the several parts of the country. Time and experience do not appear to have had any effect upon you. I have, before me, an "*Address from the Huntingdonshire Agricultural Association, to the Occupiers of Lands.*" This Address appears to have proceeded from an association of landlords, who are calling upon the occupiers to come forward again with petitions ; and this they do in the following curious manner. They put thirteen questions to them, which, they say, must all be answered in the negative ; and, then, they most earnestly exhort them to come *boldly* forward and petition. They tell them to petition *boldly* and *peaceably*. They tell them that they are the most industrious and most useful

class of the community; and that they ought not to *suffer* themselves to be borne down by the senseless cry of the manufacturers, or by the clamour and violence of a mob. They bid them, in short, to petition away, as gaily as ever, for Corn Bills and Commercial Restrictions; and this, too, precisely at the time when commerce and manufacturers are crying aloud for a repeal of the present Corn Bill. They invoke them to leave *violence* to their opponents, and to rest their cause upon argument. The questions which they put to them, are such as very weak and very greedy persons would naturally put, upon such an occasion, and under such circumstances. It is altogether a most contemptible and ridiculous document; but I will insert it just as I find it; and then make a few remarks upon it.

"The Parliament being shortly expected to assemble, your attention is most seriously called to a few important questions, which, if answered, as they cannot fail to be, by men of *plain understandings*, you will, no doubt, think it high time *loudly* to call on the Legislature to take your grievances into their most serious consideration, under the pressure of which, if not speedily redressed, you *must soon sink to rise no more*.

"1. Will the present prices of agricultural produce pay the expenses of growing it?

"2. Do you, when at market, perceive the times are mending?

"3. On passing the last Corn Bill, did the Legislature say that wheat could be grown to remunerate the grower, under ten shillings per bushel?

"4. Are your expenses less now than they were when the last Corn Bill was passed?

"5. Is it just that foreign nations, *who bear no share of the burdens of this country*, should be suffered to undersell you in your own markets?

"6. Will you *patiently* suffer yourselves to be undersold by foreign nations?

"7. Do the merchants, or manufacturers, bear their proportion of supporting the clergy, the church, the poor, and the roads?

"8. Have very many of you experienced much benefit from your rents having been lowered within the last four or five years?

"9. Can you, if the present prices continue, occupy your poor lands, rent free?

"10. If occupied rent free, will the ruin of the landlords benefit you? Or do you think it just they should be so occupied?

"11. Can the landed proprietors bear their proportion of the burdens of the State, if they get nothing for their estates?

"12. Can you bear to see the condition of your labourers getting worse and worse every day, from your inability to support or employ them?

"13. Will you, the most *industrious* and *useful* class of the community, *suffer* yourselves to be borne down by the *senseless cry of the manufacturers*, or the *clamour and violence of a mob*?

"If to these questions you answer *No*; surely you must be anxious, without delay, *boldly* and *respectfully* to come forward to petition the Legislature to redress your *grievances*, as the only *rational* method of averting the ruin which will so speedily overwhelm you. If you ask, as you probably may, what did you get by your petitions last year? the answer is obvious: *much was gained*, by its having ascertained that many, who before opposed your claims, after reading your petitions, acknowledged your *grievances*, and in the House of Commons advocated the *justice of your cause*. For what do you petition? You petition only that your grievances *may be inquired into* by the Legislature of your country; surely no proceeding can be more reasonable, more moderate. Proceed, then, as you have hitherto done, *leave violence* to your *opponents*, 'let them sound the tocsin of alarm;' they have no arguments to oppose to your well-founded complaints; *petition boldly* and *peaceably*, and you will ultimately find that justice and reason will prevail over *clamour, folly, and self-interest*."

The first four questions are childish; purely childish. The next two tend to a demand for a new Corn Bill. They ask you whether it be *just* that foreign nations, who bear no share of the burdens of this country,

should be suffered to undersell you in your own markets; and, then, they say, will you *patiently* suffer yourselves to be undersold by foreign nations. In answer to this you might say, that, as to suffering *patiently*, you have no more patience in your natures than other people; but that there is no way of showing your *impatience*, except that of resistance; and, that you would be glad to know whether that be a mode of prevention which your landlords recommend. Because, if it be, you have got horses and uniforms and swords, only you must wait, till the landlords come and put themselves at your head. They tell you that foreign nations bear *no share of the burdens of this country*. By which they mean, I suppose, that foreign nations pay no part of the taxes of England. This is not quite so clear a point as these jolter-headed landlords appear to imagine. They cannot, indeed, pass laws to enable an English tax-gatherer to collect taxes in France or in America; but wise men would know how to pass laws which would make foreign nations contribute, and contribute largely too, towards the taxes of England. Suppose, for instance a master cutler, with twenty men, employed at Birmingham in making knives for the use of the people in Mr. BIRKBECK'S settlement. Suppose the knives sent out to amount to two thousand pounds a-year. Suppose Mr. BIRKBECK'S settlement to send over to Portugal or Spain two thousand pounds worth of flour, and as much more as would pay all expenses that would arise from the turning of it into money. By the means of bills of exchange, this two thousand pounds finds its way to Birmingham, where, after paying the twenty men excellent wages, affording the master and his family the means of excellent living, and the means of putting a little by, it circulates in all directions, and the far greater part of it finally passes through the hands of the farmer, in exchange for his flour, meat, and wool. It is clear that this sum of two thousand pounds would enable the parties into whose pockets it would come, to pay the more taxes, on account of having received it; and thus, as clearly as that two and two make four, Mr. BIRKBECK'S settlement would bear a share of the burdens of this country.

This is a very plain and simple case. Such a case is seldom seen in practice; for, commercial transactions are complicated; and can only be illustrated in this sort of way. But, now, to come closer to your affair: suppose the flour to come to England under the present circumstances, instead of going to Portugal or Spain. It is put into warehouse: it is re-shipped, after a time; and then it goes to Portugal or Spain. You would prevent this; for you say that the warehousing does you harm. The American ship has to pay lighthouse duty, pilotage, wharfage; the flour has to pay warehousing. The English merchant gains at every step. An English ship is employed to carry away the flour, when it goes away. The final consumer of the flour pays all this to English merchants, ship-owners, sailors, and workmen; and the American ship that brought the flour takes back a cargo of English goods to America, amongst which, perhaps, there is another two thousand pounds worth of knives. This cargo is bought by an English merchant, who has another cargo to receive by-and-by, in payment for the cargo which he has here sent away.

Now, do you not see, in all these operations, the means of making America and Portugal contribute towards English taxation, and English prosperity? If you do not, I would advise you to give over thinking about the matter.

However, let us suppose the two thousand pounds worth of knives to be paid for in part by American food. That, say you, is our case. Suppose the whole to be paid for in flour to be consumed in England. That is not your case, nor anything like it; but suppose it to be your case. Even then, the importation of foreign produce can do you *no harm*; but, on the contrary, good; for, after all, the food that was brought from America would have come in consequence of means, which means would never have existed, if the flour had not been ready to come. The flour would be consumed in the country, but it would be consumed by mouths which *never could have consumed yours*; because the persons having those mouths would not, had it not been for the Americans' taking their knives, have had the means of purchasing any flour at all. If this be not clear, take another supposition. Imagine ten men and a master dropping down from the clouds, setting to work, with the tools that they had brought down with them, and making knives, as in the other case. Suppose them to receive in exchange, not only all the food that they lived upon, but all their clothing into the bargain. There they would be without eating any of your food or using any of your wool or leather, or flax. Even then, the operation would be to the advantage of the nation; you must participate in that advantage; while it is impossible for you to say that the introduction of American produce, in this case, did you any harm.

The truth is, that, to prevent the importation of foreign produce, is merely to injure commerce and manufactures without any possible benefit to the land. The food which is imported from foreign countries is, and must be, paid for in the use of English ships, in the products of the labour of English manufacturers, in the products of English mines, and in the products, too, of the land of England. In exchange (to continue the American illustration) for English cloth made out of English wool, and in exchange for the other things above-mentioned, there come amongst other things, American flour; but this flour does not come unless something be sent from this country in exchange for it; so that, when the flour does come, it comes to mouths which would not consume yours if the American flour did not come.

You and your landlords never take into consideration the important circumstances of *diminished consumption*. You appear to imagine that the people will continue to eat as much bread and meat, *whether they have commerce or manufactures or not!* This is your conclusion, but the conclusion is not only false, but ridiculous. Can a man who earns seven shillings a week, lay out as much upon food as he used to do when he earned twenty? If not, how can a manufacturing town or city be expected to consume as many oxen and sacks of flour, when the workmen in it earn seven shillings a week, as it did when its workmen earned twenty. The great cause of your ruin is, as was before shown, *the change in the value of money*; but this cause works in various ways; and in one way, it diminishes the consumption of food, and in this it is assisted by the Corn Bill, which, by diminishing the export of manufactures, diminishes the means of the manufacturers to purchase food. Immense, therefore, has been the falling-off in the demand for food, as the butchers in and near all manufacturing towns, can, I am sure, most amply attest. The difference, in the mode of living, amongst the most numerous classes, is quite surprising. I believe that there are *millions* who now have not more than a third part of as much as they could eat, and who formerly

had a bellyfull. I believe if all the people of England were taken and weighed, they would not weigh so much, by one-third, as the people weighed seven years ago. Yet, this is a matter that your wise landlords never appear to take into consideration.

The *seventh* question is just what one would expect from a set of grumbling, grunting, growling, half-landlord half-farmers. It is this, "Do the *merchants and manufacturers* bear their proportion of supporting the Clergy, the Church, the Poor, and the Roads?" You are told that you must answer this question in the negative; and ought, thereupon, to step *boldly* forward to avert the ruin which must speedily overwhelm you. Now, I say, that if you do answer this question in the negative, you must have little more sense than a rat or a cat; and, perhaps, not so much. If *Mr. Walter*, who pays, probably, sixty thousand pounds a-year, in stamp-duty, were to come out, one of these days, and call upon his customers to thank him for this enormous contribution towards the revenue, do you think that there would be nobody to be found to tell him, that it was not *he* who paid the sixty thousand pounds a-year, but the people who purchased his paper? And, do not those who purchase your corn, meat, wool, hides and flax, do not these pay their share towards *all the expenses* which are incurred in the raising of those articles of produce? When they were at it, I wonder the wise-acres of Huntingdonshire, had not included the rent, the taxes, and the labour, of their farms; which they might have done with full as much reason. It may be very well for *Mr. Curwen*, *Mr. Western*, and such very shallow men, to talk about the *land* supporting the church, the poor and the roads; but every man of sense will laugh at such trash; and will see that not only the merchant and the manufacturer bear their due proportion of all these; but that a due proportion is also borne by the labourer and the journeyman, and by every creature that eats bread of his own earning.

The *eighth* question is, at once, insidious and silly. I will only ask you to look at it again. If it does not make you laugh, misery must have rendered your risible muscles immovable.

The *ninth* question may with truth, I dare say, be answered in the negative. And this answer is the best possible commentary that can be made upon the former bragging and boasting about the great number of *Inclosure Bills* that were annually passed. I can readily believe that poor lands, even though rent free, will not enable an occupier to pay the poor-rates and the assessed taxes; and, if Castlereagh wants a better proof than this of the prosperity of the country, let him find it where he can.

Under *number ten*, there are two questions which are unworthy of notice, except on account of their exquisite silliness.

The *eleventh* question is of a description not to have been put even to you. But still, plain as the landlords may think it appear, I venture to give it an answer, contrary to the one they anticipate and regard as inevitable. The question is this: "Can the landed proprietors bear their proportion of the burdens of the State, if they get nothing for their estates?" I say they can; for, if they get nothing for their estates, they then become labourers; and we know well that every labourer is compelled to contribute his proportion of the burdens of the State. He is compelled to pay taxes upon an infinite number of articles that he uses, and he is also compelled to come forward in person, to take arms and to

fight for his country. This is contributing his proportion of the burdens of the State; and when the landlords are placed in this situation, they will doubtless cheerfully submit to burdens, which they have had no scruple in imposing upon him.

The *twelfth* question is rather of a pathetic description: "Can you bear to see the condition of your labourers getting worse and worse every day?" This is pointed at your tender feelings; but there is a *tail* to this question; namely, "from *your inability* to support or employ them?" O! no; I can easily believe that you *cannot bear* to think of *your inability* to support or employ them; but, when I reflect on the observations which I have heard from *some* farmers relating to their labourers, I am almost disposed to believe, that to make such farmers feel as much as they ought for the poor, they must themselves be reduced to the condition of paupers.

The *thirteenth*, and last, question compliments you, as the *most industrious* and *most useful class* of the community. This is vulgar stuff that has neither sense nor decency in it. In a well-ordered state, all classes are equally useful, because they are all equally necessary. To say that a dull, slow ploughman or shepherd is more *industrious* than an intelligent, active, bustling shopman, is ridiculous, upon the face of it. Yet the calling of the one is as much an *industrious* calling as is that of the other. Slowness of motion is not only habitual, but proper, in the one case, as nimbleness is in the other. All *classes* are equally industrious, if the comparison be made as to the people of the *same country*; and, therefore, to cry up one class, as the *most industrious*, is to discover a great degree of that "*senseless cry*," which, in this very question, is ascribed to the manufacturers, who are here accused of a "*senseless cry*," while the *people*, under the name of *mob*, are accused of *clamour and violence*. Violence might, indeed, be pretty fairly imputed to those who are at all times ready to *cut and slash*. But what violence has been committed, or attempted, or even talked of, towards the farmers, I am at a loss to discover. The Corn Bill was passed in spite of the petitions of almost the whole nation; and in no part of the kingdom have there been any violences (since the passing of that Bill, and in consequence of it), committed against the farmers; though, since that period, the sufferings of the people, from actual hunger, have been greater than any ever before experienced by any people in the world. It is curious enough, that the wise men, who drew up these questions and observations, seem never to have thought about the 44 *millions a-year* raised for the National Debt and Sinking Fund. They complain of *church, poor, and roads*; but say not a word about the *great* burden of all. They complain against the *merchants* and *manufacturers*, who suffer as much as you do; but make no complaint against fundholders, placemen, pensioners, and army and navy. The truth is, they are *afraid*. They dare not open their lips upon *this* subject! If they were to touch here, they would be *joining the Radicals*; and that would not do! However, they and you and all other complainants must join the Radicals at last, or, you will get *no redress*.

As to the *remedy* for your ills, I have not room to speak of it here. I may probably address another letter to you; and, in the meanwhile, I sincerely hope, that your produce will go on falling in price, till your eyes be completely opened. *If Peel's Bill be not repealed*, your wheat will, very likely, be at *five shillings* a-bushel before the end of this year. That

would make you *Reformers*; but, perhaps, it must come down to *four shillings* before you will become downright *Radicals*. It is not, as yet, either *treason* or *blasphemy* to pray for *cheap meat and bread*; one cannot be *banished* for putting up such a prayer; and, therefore, put it up I do with all possible fervor and piety.

WM. COBBETT.

TO MR. HUSKISSON,

ON THE POOR-LAWS AND POOR-RATES.

(*Political Register*, February, 1821.)

London, 20th February, 1821.

SIR,

You and I stepped on upon the political theatre about one and the same time. I began a flaming Royalist, at Philadelphia, and you a member and orator of a Jacobin club, at Paris. We have both changed, and, whatever other sins we have to reproach each other with, we must be mute upon that of "*inconsistency*," that cuckoo-cant, set up against me by every knave and every fool, whose roguery or folly I find it my duty to expose. In our "*inconsistency*" we have, thank God, great me enough to keep us in countenance; and, therefore, having congratulated you on this score, I shall proceed to the subjects of my Letter; namely, the *Poor-laws and Poor-rates*; and, upon these subjects I address myself to you, because, as to them, you have recently expressed sentiments in which I do not agree.

Those sentiments to which I allude, respecting the *Poor-laws*, were expressed by you in the House of Commons on the 19th inst. on a Bill for extending the Poor-rates in HULL to the *shipping* belonging to that port. You disapproved of this Bill; and, perhaps your objection to it was very good. It certainly is very great nonsense to suppose that the town of HULL would gain any thing, or obtain any relief whatever, by the proposed Bill. Just as great nonsense as it is for MR. CURWEN and others to talk of the Poor-rates *falling wholly on the farmer*. In some parishes a couple or three farmers pay the whole of the Poor-rates of the parish; but is any man foolish enough to suppose that these taxes fall finally upon these two or three persons? With full as much reason might it be said, that the whole of the *tithes* fall upon the farmer. Suppose a farm let free of tithes and Poor-rates, will not the landlord demand the amount of these in additional rent? Lay Poor-rates upon the ships at HULL, and will they not be finally paid by all the persons, whether shipowners or others, who are, in any wise, affected by the trade of HULL? In fact, the town of HULL and its precincts, would lose just as much in one way as it would gain in another.

Therefore, I agree with you perfectly in objecting to the Bill; but, then, I wholly disagree with you as to the sentiments which you expressed

with regard to the Poor-rates generally. You are reported to have said, that, "It was agreed on all hands that the Poor-rates were an evil which ought, in every possible manner, to be repressed; that the Poor-rates were a *cancer* which spread throughout the country; and that it was not for Parliament to encourage the growth of *an evil so monstrous*."

Now, Sir, I am at a loss to discover the ground for these declarations on your part. It is very strange that this *cancer* should never have been discovered until the profligate and wasteful administration of PITT. The Poor-laws have existed about two hundred years; but, never till within about five-and-twenty years have they been talked of as an evil;* much less have they ever been called a cancer. Before I proceed further let me quote Mr. FRANKLAND LEWIS,† who also spoke in this debate. He said, that, "the Poor-rates would ultimately *eat up all property*; that there was no hope of *safety* from them; that it was impossible to save any thing that came within *their clutches*; that there was no *danger so great* as that which arose from the Poor-rates; that every species of property that was assessed to the Poor-rates was sure to be *eaten up*; and that the only thing the country had to do was, to *defend itself* wherever it could."

This is a horrid picture, to be sure. But, first let me observe that Mr. Lewis appears to have dipped but very shallowly into this great subject. What can he mean by property being *eaten up* by Poor-rates? What can he mean by representing the particular property assessed to the Poor-rates as suffering from that cause more than any other species of property? If this were so, it would be a fair and strong argument in favour of the Bill which he was opposing; for that Bill proceeded upon the notion that the shipping of HULL did not now pay any thing to the Poor-rates. The notion, however, is completely false; it is so absurd, and the absurdity is so glaring, that one wonders how it could have found its way into the head of any man of sound understanding. In answering the arguments; or, rather, in refuting the assertions of a person like Mr. Lewis, I am almost ashamed to resort to illustrations such as would seem excusable only in cases where children are the parties addressed: but, what is one to do, when one finds such notions coming from the lips of grown-up men?

Let us suppose (for the thing is possible) a parish consisting of one large farm and of divers houses inhabited by persons, none of whom are assessed to the Poor-rates. In short, let us suppose for argument sake, that a law were passed to prevent any body but the farmer being assessed to the Poor-rates in this parish; and let us suppose all the produce of his farm and no more than that, to be consumed in that parish. Now, is it not clear that all the people in the parish; that every creature who eats bread or meat, would, when they purchased the bread and meat from the farmer, *pay him back* the amount of what he had paid in Poor-rates? If there be any person to whom this is not clear, such person must believe, that the tax paid upon the paper, of which this Register consists, *falls wholly upon me*; and that I have a right to say that my Register is "*eaten up*" by the tax. Upon just as good grounds; and, indeed, better, Mr.

* See Lord ALTHORP'S speech in the House of Commons, 17th April, 1834.—ED.

† Chief Poor-law Commissioner, 1837.—ED.

Lewis might complain that the land is "eaten up by tithes;" but there requires but very little reflection to convince any rational man, that every one who eats bread, assists in paying tithes.

Having, and I trust quite sufficiently, exposed this error, let me now remonstrate a little with you and Mr. Lewis. To hear you and this gentleman, one would imagine that the Poor-rates were not a tax, or rent-charge; but that they constituted some big, hideous, voracious devil of an animal, that was let loose upon the country, and that was actually tearing it and eating it. Or, at the very least, one would suppose it to be an impost laid by some cruel conqueror, whose desire was totally to destroy the property and happiness of the people. At any rate, who, from the picture here given of the Poor-rate, would suppose that it was a rent-charge, imposed upon the land in order to prevent any part of the community from perishing for want of food? Who would suppose that it was a thing to which the poor had as good a right as the rich have to their estates?

To hear some persons talk, one would imagine that the holders of the land had a power over it as complete as that of God himself; that they had a right so entire to it as to form a complete exclusion with regard to all other claimants. This never was the case in any community in the world; and the absurdity here is, that, while these famous land proprietors very quietly suffer their rents to be taken away under the name of property-tax; while they suffer large portions of the worth to be taken away under the name of legacy-tax; and while they even suffer a part of the land itself to be taken away under the name of redemption of land-tax: while they very quietly suffer all these things, they cry aloud against the poor-rate as something monstrous; as something that they must get rid of or else be devoured! The truth is that they are more bold, when the *poor* are the objects of attack, than they are when they have to look at the Civil List, the sinecure placemen, the pensioners, the grantees, the clergy and the Fundholders! They put on a modest look when they turn their eyes in any of these directions. They appear not to see the forty millions a-year to the fundholders, but the Poor-rate of eight millions a-year they can represent as a monster that is eating up their very dirt.

The Poor-laws are, as Blackstone says, founded in the *first principles of society*; for, it never could have been in the contemplation of any people to suffer a few individuals (comparatively few) to have the complete, absolute and exclusive possession of the land, even to the producing of the starvation and destruction of other persons. The basis of the social compact *must* have been this: that every man shall have a right to live, to enjoy the use of his limbs and faculties, and to receive, either from land of his own, or from labour performed for others, a sufficiency of food and of raiment.* Society can exist upon no other basis than this. It never could have been in the contemplation of human beings to enter into society, and to acknowledge proprietorship in the soil, upon any other presumption than this. The laws of England have proceeded upon this principle. They have provided by positive enactments that no man shall perish for want of the necessaries of life. They have

* BLACKSTONE. Commentaries. Book I. c. 1.—PALCY. Moral Philosophy. Book II. c. 11.—ED.

said : To you proprietors of land shall your lands be secured ; but, recollect, that your proprietorship is not so absolute as to enable you to refuse the means of subsistence to those who are unable to provide for themselves : you are landowners ; but recollect this condition.

And, pray, Sir, are there no other reasons why the land should come to the assistance and comfort of helpless and destitute persons ? Pray, Sir, upon what ground do the landowners call upon the labouring man to come forward, to take up arms, and to risk his life, if necessary, either in posse, or in the more regular manner of a soldier ? The labouring man is compelled to do this by the laws ; and why is he so compelled ? Because his appearance in the posse, or in military array, is necessary to the keeping of the proprietors in quiet possession of their property ; or to the defence of the whole realm, which is made up of parcels of that property. As things are ; as the laws stand altogether, this claim upon the labouring man is just enough ; and why is it just ? Because the laws give him an interest in the land : the land is at last his security against suffering for want of raiment or of food. But if you take away this his claim from him ; if you say that this his claim is unjust ; if you stigmatize it as a "*cancer* ;" if you call it a "*monstrous evil* ;" if you say that it is *eating up* property ; how flagrantly unjust, how detestably cruel, are those laws by which he is compelled to abandon his aged parents, or his wife and his children ; to take up arms to venture, and perhaps to lose, his life, in defence of the land !

I wait (and I shall wait a long while, I believe) for an answer to this question, which, by the by, I have put many times before ; and I proceed now, to observe that, amongst all these attacks upon the Poor-rates ; amongst all the long speeches upon the subject, I in vain look for some acknowledgment of the *cause* of the increase of the Poor-rates. I know that the increase is fearful enough. Perhaps, you may do me the justice to recollect that when PITT and Old GEORGE ROSE and ADDINGTON and HOBHOUSE, the worthy successors of PITT and Old GEORGE ; perhaps you will do me the justice to recollect that, when these immaculate personages used, about sixteen years ago, to be bragging about the *flourishing* state of the country, and used to be exhibiting their masses of figures about imports and exports, I used to tell them to *look at the Poor-rates* ! This is what I used to tell them. Every one of their bragging statements was answered by me with, "*look at the Poor-rates*." I used to tell them that the Poor-rates were the criterion of happiness or misery, of prosperity or adversity ; and not the silly lying stuff about imports and exports. Was I not right, then ? And were not these men either very great deceivers, or, which I take to have been the fact, extremely empty and shallow persons ?

I am tired of hearing people *rail* upon the subject of the Poor-rates. I am tired of hearing them talk as if the increase of the rates was the *fault of the poor* ! It is indeed but too common to see anger against the sufferer supply the place of that compassion which ought to fly to his relief. He who wants the disposition to relieve, seeks a justification of himself in some charge or other against the sufferer. This is but too common a thing all over the world ; and, therefore, I am by no means surprised to hear reproaches cast upon the poor. But, is their misery their fault ? Have they themselves been the cause of the increase of the Poor-rates ? Is it they, who have borrowed a thousand millions of money ; and have imposed that which the fundholders call their mortgage upon

the land? Is it, truly, the labouring part of this community that have called for an army of ninety thousand men in time of peace; and is it they who have passed Acts to restore a depreciated paper to its value in gold?

If the labouring classes have not done these things, how are they chargeable with the increase of the Poor-rates? For, that these things have caused the increase, you will not, I think, affect to entertain a doubt. In Paper against Gold the progress of the Poor-rates is clearly shown to have kept an exact pace with the progress of the Debt and of taxation. And, indeed, must it not be so? Can it possibly be otherwise; is it not in the nature of things that, taxation produces poverty; is it not in the nature of things that, misery must inevitably be the effect of taking from those who labour and giving to those who do not labour? This has been so often proved by me; the matter has been elucidated in so many ways; that I will not insult you, who are a person of great experience and understanding, by a renewal of any of my former illustrations. But, when you talk of the increase of the *Poor-rates*, which is truly frightful, especially when we consider the present comparative high value of money and low value of provisions; when you talk of this increase of the *Poor-rates*, you do not seem to advert to the very material circumstance of a considerable portion of the labourer's *wages* now having assumed the name of *Poor-rates*! You are to know, then, if you do not already know it, that every labourer, in almost every part of the country; that every labourer who has children, is *now regularly and constantly a pauper*! A price for labour is fixed for the single man as well as the married man. They all receive in a certain place, we will say, nine shillings a-week. Upon this the married man and his family must starve; therefore, to him is given every week as much more than nine shillings as will just keep his family from starving. The nine shillings you will observe are only just enough to enable the single man to perform his labour. The scale for supporting human existence is made out with great nicety. So that, the single man is mulcted of a part of his wages in order to be given to the married man to prevent actual starvation.

Instead of this how did the thing stand before PITT, ADDINGTON, PERCEVAL and their followers together with their prompters and abettors and supporters had loaded the nation with a thousand millions of debt? How did the thing stand before? Why, when you and I were boys; and, indeed, when you were a Jacobin and I was an Ultra-Royalist; in those times the wages of a labouring man were sufficient to maintain, not only himself but his wife and his family! He was a labourer; he lived by the sweat of his brow; but he was *no pauper*, nor could he, properly be called a *poor man*; as, indeed, no man can who earns a sufficiency to support himself and family in a manner suitable to his station in life.

In those same days; before PITT began his deadly works upon us, the *single man* received, as he ought, as much wages as the married man. He lived as well. He dressed, perhaps, a little better; and as he naturally would have something to save, that something gave him the desire in most cases of having a little more; and, at any rate, he was enabled to *begin* as a husband and as a father, without beginning at the same moment to be a pauper; which is now almost universally the case, thanks to that degrading; that soul-degrading system, the praises of which insult the country in the toasts and songs and speeches of those knots of impudent men called Pitt Clubs.

I cannot help stopping here, just for a moment, to observe on the fatal effects of this paying of wages in the shape of Poor-rates. That shallow and savage fellow, MALTHUS, has his project for what he calls *checking population*. One magistrate, contributing to that famous and memorable volume of letters to the Board of Agriculture, has a proposal to *prevent early marriages*; while another proposes to *whip with additional severity the mothers of bastard children!* These two last propositions put together, would, with a suitable glossary, make a pretty decent sum total. But, what says common sense and the experience of mankind upon the subject? What do these point out as the most effectual means of making the labourer careful; restraining him from indulgences tending immediately to poverty; making him look forward; making him provident in the steps that he takes as to matrimonial connections: what do these point out? Why, to put good wages into his hands; to let his labour bring him something to preserve; to enable him to have a little store; to make him desirous that his wife and children, when he have them, shall be well provided for, shall have a sufficiency of food and shall be dressed as well as their neighbours in the same rank of life. These are what wisdom, and justice, too, point out as the only means of *checking population*. The check which these will give is proper and productive of happiness; any other check; a check given by any other means is unjustifiable, cruel and beastly.

When the single man sees that he is no better off than the married man; when he sees that single or married he is to have the bare means of existence and no more; and especially when he sees, that part of his wages is deducted to go to the maintenance of the married man's family; when he sees this, Parson Malthus may preach till he is as hoarse as I was at Coventry; but never will he find a labourer to listen to his doctrines of "*moral restraint*."

Thus then, the whole of the evil; the evil in all its parts, arises out of the Funding and Taxing Systems. The farmer, from the burden of his taxes, is compelled to deduct from the wages of his labourer. In the making of this deduction, he resorts to the scale before-mentioned, taking from the unmarried man and giving it to the married man. To be a pauper ceases to be a shame; and the unmarried man, sensible of the injustice exercised towards him, and of the utter inutility of the smallest restraint upon his natural inclinations, hastens to become a father, in order to be enrolled upon the poor-book, knowing well that, in any case, his lot cannot be worse than it is. Thus, by premature marriages, the number of paupers is increased; and the evil, adding to itself in every possible way, at last is becoming so great as to threaten a total overthrow of every sentiment of independence and even of decency; and the English people, were this abominable system to last another twenty years, would be little less degraded than the slaves in Jamaica.

Blame not, therefore, the labourers. It is not their fault that they are paupers. The fault is in that thousand millions of Debt, which the PITT system contracted, and in those thundering establishments necessary to collect the taxes, to pay the interest upon that Debt. Here is the great cause of all the wretchedness and all the danger. Away with the empty talk about immorality, irreligion, sedition and blasphemy. It is a base and infamous lie from the beginning to the end. Those are impostors, who pretend that the misery of the people arises from a falling-off in their morals; and what miserable stuff is it to hear this charge preferred at the

very moment when boastings are put forth of the distribution of millions upon millions of bibles and testaments and prayer-books and religious tracts! You and I can remember, Sir, when none of these things; none of these Bible-Societies and Tract-Societies were in existence. We can remember when newly-erected chapels did not stare us in the face, at the corner of every street in London, and in some part of every little village in the country. We can remember when no clamour was made about Lancaster schools and Bell's schools; and when Royal Dukes were not seen cheek-by-jowl with Methodist parsons hatching contrivances for giving instruction to the poor; and we can also remember when the labouring man had his clock, his pewter-plates and his barrel of beer; when he had meat for his dinner, and when his wife would have thought herself dishonoured to have been seen in the house of an overseer of the poor.* The misery and the cant and the education, as it is called, have all gone on increasing together; and continue to increase they will till the cause shall be removed, by a reduction first, and gradually by an annihilation, of what is called the National Debt.

This, therefore, is the thing, on which Mr. FRANKLAND LEWIS ought to bestow his invectives. The Poor-rates are forty times as ancient as the Pitt System. They did no harm. They have nothing of harm in their nature. They have everything that is good, on the contrary; and, at the present time, they are the only security which millions possess against actual starvation in a land of plenty.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient, most humble servant,
WM. COBBETT.

TO MR. ATTWOOD.

THE MANIFOLD BLESSINGS OF A LARGE LOAF.

(*Political Register*, May, 1821.)

Kensington, 1st May, 1821!

SIR,

This very day PEELE'S BILL reaches its third stage, and we shall now see how it will go on to the end of its eventful journey. This day I have chosen for writing to you, on the subjects treated of in your speech, delivered in the House of Commons on the ninth of last month; and, before I conclude, I shall, I think, convince you, that there are manifold *blessings belonging to a large loaf*, and that your opinions, as to this point, are erroneous. When I addressed my letter to TIERNEY, I fore-

* See the evidence of SPARSHOTT, before the Poor-law Committee, 22nd May, 1837.—ED.

saw, that some scheme of *cash-payments* was on foot. I was anxious to anticipate the measure, and to put on record, *beforehand*, my opinions as to the *consequences*. I put TIERNEY'S name to the Letter, as I then said, that it might be distinguished from other essays on the same subject, and that it might be, as I knew it would, *referred to* when the predictions it contained should be fulfilled. I put *your* name to this Letter, because you have taken an open and decided part in the great question now at issue; and, further, because I really have great respect for your knowledge and talents.

It has been my misfortune to be doomed to *chop blocks*; and having been warned by SWIRT (the first author, after Moses, I ever read) of the misery of "*chopping blocks with a razor*," I have generally employed a tool better suited to the skulls that I had to work upon. It shall be my endeavour, in the present case, to operate gently and smoothly; and, if you should find me, now-and-then, laying on more like a hewer than a shaver, I beg that you will be pleased to ascribe it, not to any rudeness of disposition, but merely to that hardness and heaviness of hand, which my long and laborious chopping of blocks has naturally produced.

Before I begin, let me congratulate the country upon hearing, at last, plain common sense distinctly articulated in the Honourable House, upon the subject of paper-money. How all the Barings and Peels and Grenfells and Maberlies and Broughams and Tierneys and the disciples of St. Horner; how all the deep and dark gabblers about "*Mint price*," and "*market price*," sink before you! And, as to the poor *Oracle* he really seems to have become the jest even of his former worshippers. But, Sir, take care! Remember what the wise man says of a fool's wrath; and remember also, that that wrath is never so heavy as when his folly is exposed! You think, perhaps, to make converts and to find co-operators. You will neither make the former nor find the latter. Your sound sense and clear reasoning are *upstarts* and *interlopers*, which, happen what will, must not be encouraged. I give you this warning, because I perceive you, in one place, go out of your way to express your "*respect*" for "*a noble lord in another place*." Sir, I know the people of Whitehall better than you do, though I never was within its doors, while you frequently have been; and, I know that, to manage them, you must work by the shoe; that is to say, you must either lick their shoe, or make them feel the point of yours. You may think to win them over to sense and sound measures by treating them with mannerly deference, by seeming not to perceive their native folly, while you are proving to them that they are acting the part of fools. They are much too cunning to be caught in this way. Their pride takes the alarm; and they become obstinate as hogs. You must be their *slave* or their *master*: no middle course will ever succeed with them. *Lick, or kick* is the maxim; and, as you are *able to kick*, kick by all means.

Leaving you to follow your own taste as to this matter, only reserving to myself the right of laughing, if I should see you baffled in a temporising attempt, I now proceed to my remarks on your able and impressive speech, which, with your own notes subjoined, I have now before me, in a pamphlet published by RIDGWAY, and which ought to be in the possession of, and to be attentively perused by, every gentleman in the kingdom.

The propositions, maintained in your speech, are these: 1. That the existing distresses have arisen *immediately* and *wholly* from the mea-

asures adopted with a view of returning to cash-payments, and particularly from Peel's Bill. 2. That, of this distress the labouring class suffers in as great a proportion as any other class. 3. That an effectual and permanent remedy would be found in a repeal of Peel's Bill, and a new putting forth of paper-money, so as to make the quantity in circulation equal to what it was in 1818. To the first of these propositions I say, *aye*: to the two last I say, *nay*.

The *third* I shall dismiss, at once, by referring you to my *first Letter to Lord Grey* [See page 38 of this vol.], in which I spoke pretty fully of the shame, the disgrace, the infamy, that must attend a repeal of Peel's Bill and a sending out of the paper again; and, in which I also spoke of that terrible convulsion, which such a measure *must* produce in the end. Your *first* proposition shall not detain us long; but your *second proposition*, namely, that the *fall in prices has injured the labouring classes*, demands, and shall receive, when I come to it, my best attention; it being a proposition, not only at war with truth, but aiming at a most mischievous and cruel end.

To the *first* I may, indeed, easily assent, seeing that it expresses, not only what I have laid down as to the actual effects of Peel's Bill, but also what I predicted with regard to the effects of any such measure. "My New Year's Gift to the Farmers" [See p. 47 of this vol.], familiarly explains the whole progress of this set of measures, intended to bring about payments in cash. It clearly points out the cause of the distress, and as clearly shows that no new law about corn can possibly afford any relief to the farmer. You have, therefore, done no more, as to this part of the subject, than I had done before, and that I had done, too, in Long Island, whence I even sent a petition to the honourable and most pure and enlightened body, of which you are now a member, which petition the member to whose charge it was committed, declined to present, because he thought, that that immaculate assembly would not have the patience to listen to a petition so *very long*! Bless their delicate organs of hearing! A pity, indeed, it were to subtract from those moments that they employ in lending, or, rather, *bending*, those organs to the dulcet and wisdom-shedding voices of Castlereagh and Van, Grenfell and Ricardo!

I say this much in the way of *justice towards myself*; and, I must take care of that, or nobody will take care of it for me. I see enough public writers now to steal my opinions, who abused me for uttering those opinions. I see some, who are honest enough to *quote the words*: but still rogues enough to disguise the *source* whence they quote. I see even you quoting LOCKE, when you might have quoted PAINÉ or me, and especially PAINÉ, who had foretold, with the utmost precision, the stopping of payment at the Bank, and who, while *he himself was an outlaw*, devoted the profits of that celebrated work to the *relief of the debtors in Newgate*! You might have quoted this true Englishman and true patriot and matchless writer, instead of the placeman LOCKE, who, compared with PAINÉ, was, as to subjects of this nature, a mere babler. Here was a fair opportunity of showing that you held canting calumny at defiance; and, if you had availed yourself of it, you would have frightened Whitehall out of its wits.

However, Sir, I by no means confound you with the Barings, the Perries, and the Ellices, the latter of whom has even begun to prattle away about "the *war* between the land and the funds." I believe, that your own mind would have been sufficient to guide you in this case; and I

have before done you the justice to observe, that you wrote to recommend the pushing out of the paper in 1817; and also, that you manfully opposed the passing of Peel's Bill, and even petitioned against it, making, at the same time, a speech relative to its consequences enough to convince any body but a born idiot. I have never stolen the thoughts of others, were they alive or dead. I have never withheld due homage to talent or knowledge or merit of any kind when I have profited from them. In return for this fair and honourable dealing I have been incessantly plundered; but, the plunderers shall no longer proceed with impunity. *My way* is the only way in which a horrible convulsion can be avoided; and that convulsion will take place, or it shall be clear to all eyes *that it is I who have shown the way to prevent it.*

My petition of 1818 was *too long* for the Honourable House, and CHARLES WYNNE, the brother of the *Saxony Ambassador*, has lately instanced the wearisome effects of another *long* petition of mine. But (and this I thank *you* for) you made them hear *you*; and though you were a *new man*, and were, with your good sense, a sort of *rebel*; a sort of *bolter*; a good slice of your speech got into the newspapers; and you, by repeating and filling out, have taken care to have your forewarnings upon record. This is highly commendable. Pursue this course, Sir, and faction will not be able to mullify your efforts.

How the Honourable and enlightened House stood your taunting I cannot imagine. To be told plump and point blank, that they *could not* carry their grand measure into effect; to tell them to their heads, that that measure could not be carried into effect and the *present debt and taxes exist*, and that "it was *folly and rapacity* alone that could think of attempting their union;" to look in their faces and tell them, that their grand measure, which had been so eulogized by the Speaker of the *Six-Acts* Parliament, had "overwhelmed the people of this country with "greater calamities, severer sufferings and more extensive ruin *than had "ever before been brought on any civilized people by any government;"* to remind them of all solemnly sage sayings and anticipations as to the *happy efforts of this measure*; to call the Acts of 1797 acts of "*fraud*," and that of 1819, "an act of *greater fraud*;" and to conclude, at last, by foretelling, to the very teeth of the Honourable House, that their measures would "terminate in a sudden and violent catastrophe, too "sudden and too violent for resistance or remedy, which will prove "destructive to the public credit, and dangerous to the safety of the "state:" to tell them all this to their very heads, to sound it in their very ears, to poke it under their very noses, and that, too, at a time when they have passed laws to *banish* us, if we say any thing even *tending* to bring them into *contempt*! O! It was *so good*! By ——, if you were a lady I would kneel and kiss your hand!

Pray, Sir, agree to take the chair when we hold our *Feast of the Grid-iron*! Whole flocks of *geese* will be sent up for us by the big farmers' wives, those amiable Abigails of England. Two or three hundred grid-irons will be at work all at once. You shall have one, as big as a harrow, suspended over your head as a canopy. We will have a tragi-politi-comifarcical exhibition.—We will have all our actors dressed out in paper-doublers and fool's-caps and bells. Some shall dance about, crying "Old rags for ever, the solid system of finance!" Others shall step one foot forward, and with smiling air and soft accent, assure us that we are merely in a *transition* from a happy state to one more happy; and this

buffoon shall add, that, in order to make the transit pleasant, we ought to amuse ourselves with *digging holes and filling them up again*. Then shall come a swaggering, hectoring, brass-faced bully, bellowing out: "Poh! 'tis all a lie! It is not night, you grumbling villains. It is only a rascally cloud that has got before the sun. He shall re-appear in a moment and put your eyes out with light." This actor shall be, as it were, an *upstart* upon the theatre. He shall bolt at once *out of the green-room*. Then shall come a Dutchman, who shall swear, as occasion demands, that black is white, and that white is black. He shall bring *an old rag* in his hand, and swear that it is as good as a *guinea*. Then the buffoons shall set up a shout, "Huzza for old rags! huzza for Mynheer!" This idiot-like roar shall hardly have ceased, when Mynheer shall come forward again, and, flinging down the old rag and holding out a guinea, shall swear, in a voice of thunder, that the guinea is worth all the old rags in the world. Whereupon the buffoons shall set up a shout louder than the last: "Down with old rags! huzza for the guinea! huzza for Mynheer!" Amongst the rest we will have a parcel of Jews, the spokesman of whom shall step forward and comfort us with *fortune-telling*. He shall say: "Neva mind, neva mind, 'tish oney dree per centch; dat ish all; 'tish vera easy ting." Then all the whole band of buffoons shall dance and caper, and flock about Moses and cheer him and pat him on the back till he is black in the face, and till his big round eyes are ready to bolt out of his head. Then shall come a long, gaunt, greedy-looking hound of a fellow in top-boots, and with a negro-driver's whip in his hand; and he, in most solemn accent, and laying his other hand to his breast, shall assure us, upon his honour, that pure *humanity* induces him to wish *that bread may be dear*. This actor shall have at his elbow a theatrical *Satan* with an amazing tail and horns and with a prompter's book in his hands. When the humane advocate for *dear bread* has finished his speech, Old Nick shall set fire and brimstone to his paper-doublet; to escape he shall run amongst the rest; and the whole botheration band shall go off burning and blazing like so many faggots at an *auto-da-fé*.

To return from this anticipated scene of fun, let me thank you for having well exposed the monstrous folly of measuring the effect of Peel's Bill by the standard of the price of gold. Nothing, surely, was ever equal to this in point of folly. I pointed it out in my second Letter to Mr. PEEL (Pol. Reg. p. 455, vol. 38. Feb. 17, 1821); but, contempt, joined, perhaps, to a little laziness, prevented me from going into the matter in the elaborate manner that you have. Whether Mr. PERRY will still continue to exult in the circumstance, that the Spanish *legislator*, may now, without any fear of the Inquisition, take down from his shelf "*a Blackstone or a Ricardo*," is more than I can say; but, if the Spanish legislator *do* take down the latter from his shelf for any purpose but that of lighting his fire or his pipe, I have no hesitation in saying, that there ought to be an Inquisition, or something else, to deprive such an *ignoramus* of the power of laws.

Before I come to your *second* proposition, let me observe, that you are likely never to receive *any answer* to your *first*. You received none in the House, except we look for it in that foolish remark of VAN, in which he referred to the distresses of other countries, and asked, particularly as to America, whether *Peel's Bill* produced the *fall of prices there*. If you had been informed of the facts, and could have spoken a second time

in the debate, how completely you might have closed up his mouth! You had completely proved what I had years before asserted, that our distress was not produced by a transition from war to peace; because, as you showed, the "*prosperity*," as it is called, came and visited this country a second time in part of 1817 and 1818; and that was three years after the peace took place. And you showed, by the amount of bank-notes out during this period of *second "prosperity,"* compared with the amount out before it, and after it, that the prosperity kept pace with the bank-notes. But, had you known the history of the *American* distresses, what an answer you would have had for VAN, who really seems to understand nothing at all about the affairs of the country over the finances of which he has been chosen to preside.

Now, Sir, the fact is, that all was *high-flying prosperity* in America, notwithstanding war and invasion until the peace, the news of which reached that country in *February*, 1815. I beg you to mark the *epochs*. Flour was, in some cases, so high as twelve dollars a barrel. The *peace*, the "*sudden transition*," brought down flour to about six dollars a barrel. But, was it the peace? No; it was certain Acts of the Congress for *collecting the duties in specie*. This made the banks *draw in their paper*; and the merchants, and even farmers, tumbled about like rotten sheep! Mr. MATHEW CAREY, of Philadelphia, published a little work on the subject, a copy of which he sent me to England. It was lost, or sold, at Botley, after my departure in 1817; and, I am sorry I have it not; for the picture he drew of the distress was so precisely suited to our present state, that it would be valuable at this time. He wrote his book about *May* 1816. The Congress, however, in *that year*, established by law (a fatal law) an infernal *National Bank*. Out of this sprang other banks, State banks, private banks, and banks of all sorts, to such an extent, that, in Kentucky, the Legislature passed no less than *forty* Bank Charter Bills in *one week* in the year 1817! Need I say, that "*prosperity*" came back again? That it *revisited* the American States as it did England, at that time? All was *flourishing*; but, how long did the flourish last? Curious coincidence! Until *the winter of* 1819! Then money became a little less plenty; and it kept on getting more and more scarce till I left the country, in *November*, 1819, hastening home to participate in the blessings of Peel's Bill, which was passed by the *Six-Acts* Parliament in the preceding month of July; and, I find, that the "*distress*," as it has been called *there* too, has been increasing ever since. And what was the cause of this *second* distress? Precisely the same as that of the former distress, a large contraction of the paper-money. Two hundred banks, or thereabouts, broke between October 1818 and October 1819. The general government received its custom-duties in specie, or in bills of its own bank; and the circulation became contracted. This was the *cause*, and the cause still remains at work, and will, I hope, remain, until the American people rid themselves of that degrading curse, a *public debt*.

So that VANNY might have been met and put down upon his own ground. The good of it is, too, that the *prices of gold and silver remained the same during the whole of these several periods*; and there was no law to authorize a refusal to pay in specie. Any man might, at any time, during the whole of these years, refuse to take payment in notes of any sort. What, then, becomes of Mr. Ricardo's doctrine? VAN appears to have put on a *smile*, when he said, "can the distress in America have

been occasioned by an *English Act of Parliament.*" Yes, VAN, notwithstanding that sweet *self-complacent* smile of yours. Yes, VAN; and, be it known to the English Chancellor of the Exchequer, that, as the currency in London cannot be contracted without producing a proportionate contraction at Liverpool, the currency of this kingdom cannot be contracted without producing a contraction of the currency in America, proportioned to the extent of the commercial transactions carried on between the two countries; and, I believe, that it is very well known, that of the commercial transactions of America *nearly two-thirds of the whole* are *with England!* There VAN; pretty smiling VAN; you see there is something in the world that requires knowledge besides those Scotch herrings of which you were once a Commissioner!

Yes, VAN, and in both these cases of "American distress" a part, at least, of the cause was, "*English Acts of Parliament.*" It ought to be known to a Chancellor of the Exchequer in England, that much of the means of giving credit and of putting forth bank-notes in America is derived from credit obtained there *from merchants here.* Now, can the merchant, who has a capital of 100,000*l.*, and who is in the habit of having 30,000 of it in America, let that 30,000 remain there, if, by an English Act of Parliament, his capital be reduced to 50,000*l.*? O, no, VAN: a merchant cannot work by hocus-pocus, nor can you, if you really give us payments in gold. There was a merchant at New York who had two banks, one in town and one in the country. His means consisted of his credit in London. That was curtailed in the spring of 1819; and, in the August after, his notes were at a *discount of 50 per cent.!*

Thus it is, Sir, to have to do with *self-complacent ignorance!* One must, in a dispute with it, lose one's temper or give up one's good manners. It is impossible, without self-abasement, to treat it with respect; and yet it is beneath one to be seriously angry with it. Talk of *banishment* as long as they please, there is no punishment equal to that of being compelled to *chop such blocks with a razor!* And yet, "God forbid" (to use the words of Judge Best) that the affair should (*as yet*) be taken out of the hands of VAN!

You are a staunch "*ministerial man,*" as people call it. You hate us *Reformers.* You wish for *the thing* to exist. You will, I dare say, support even VAN against the *Reformers.* But, the *true men* will never forgive you for this act of *rebellion.* They will look upon you as a *self-hunting dog;* and they will never suffer you to feed with the pack. But, how are they to forgive your taunts! Your reminding them of their ignorant sayings; their wild, their mad calculations! How are they to forgive you for repeating to their faces, to their very blocks, the substance of my Registers, on this subject, for three years past! However, we are in a state of things, which makes a man like you an object of fear to ignorance in power. The great *blazer,* PITT, had the first skimming of the nation's resources. Addington and Perceval skimmed the pan pretty clean. The present gentry are got to skim-milk. It is nearly *sky-blue.* And, therefore, they will be more tame, and are more tame, than any of their predecessors, with regard to those who have the courage to contradict them. The whole nation is beginning to recognize the truth of *my doctrines;* and those doctrines, as far as they relate to the effects of cash-payments, I have, at last, in your excellent speech, heard openly and ably maintained in the Honourable House itself.

Thus, and *no farther,* however, do I agree with you. Your two last

propositions I dissent from. The *third* I have already dismissed, and, with regard to the *second*, I am now going to endeavour to convince you of your error.

Your *second* proposition is, "that the *labouring class* suffers from the *distress of low prices* as much as any other class." This I deny; and I think I am able clearly to maintain my denial.

I know, that, upon a subject like this, *facts* must be very good indeed, very complete, to be worth anything at all; because they are so difficult to come at with accuracy; and, because, if capable of being *bent*, bent they will be, to assist the man who has an argument to support.

Your argument, that the labourer is *not to be benefitted by the diminution of the demand for labour* is, generally, and supposing a not unnatural state of things, true. With this qualification it is also true, that the labourer *cannot be benefitted by the ruin of his employer*. But, a *forced*, an *unnatural*, a *violent process*, may be adopted, which shall *increase the demand for labour*, shall *increase the quantity of labour*: and yet, that shall make the labour *lower-priced*, and the *condition of the labourer worse*. For, it is not to be denied, that a Virginia or Jamaica negro-driver, if he ply the lash with additional activity, will *increase the quantity of labour*, though he give his negroes *no more food than he did before*. And, it will hardly be pretended, that this his *increased demand for labour* is *beneficial* to the unhappy drove.

Now, if something very much resembling this has taken place with regard to the labourers in husbandry in England, Mr. HUSKISSON, whom you treat rather sarcastically, may be right, after all. Indeed, I am convinced that he is right: and that unquestionable facts, as well as the reason of the case, are on his side and against you.

You, Sir, are a banker, and, without imputing to you any motive particularly selfish, I may fairly suppose, that you view with favourable eyes the effects of bank-paper. You uniformly *take it for granted*, that the *showy* effects of rags turned into money, is "*prosperity*." This is full as great an error as the measuring of the effects of Peel's Bill by the variation in the price of gold. You say, that, at this moment, the *nation* is in the deepest *distress*; that the *concerns of agriculture, manufactures, commerce*, all are involved in the *deepest distress*. And what you say is true. Will you tell me, then, how it happens, that about *ten thousand new houses* are building *at this moment* for the reception of rich men and their *suites* in the villages round this monstrous place? Are these new-comers arrived from the clouds, or from El Dorado? The *fact* you may ascertain by getting upon a horse and opening your eyes. Is it *commerce* that brings these gentry here? O, no! for the wharfs are deserted, and the ships breaking up to be turned into paddock-fences and coach-houses for these odd sort of gentry. Now, Sir, answer me, I pray: Is it "*prosperity*" that brings these gentry forth? Yes, assuredly, it is "*prosperity*" with *them*. They come into these new and fine houses to enjoy that good fortune, which *the rise in the value of their funded annuities and fixed salaries has given them!* This, to them, then, is *prosperity*, and, you acknowledge that, at this very time, the concerns of land, manufactures and commerce, are in a state of ruin!

Well, then, there may exist *prosperity* in one class and misery in *another*, at one and the same time. These annuitants and salary-people profit by the fall of those who profited before. These houses, this unnatural prosperity, this fungus, comes out of the pockets of the big-farm-

ers, the landlords, the lords of the loom, and the lords of the anvil, many of whom you know to be now under a *sweating process at Birmingham and Coventry*. These gentry do not call our ten thousand new houses a sign of "*prosperity*." No, say they, it is *robbery of us*. *We suffer* for your fine new houses and all your pretty gardens and paddocks. *We suffer* for your Regent-Street and Regent-Park and your Circusses and Squares and Bridges. They say very truly.

Now, Sir, just as the big-farmer, the bull-frog-farmer, is suffering under this *prosperity* of the annuitant and salary-man, so the labourer suffered from the *prosperity* of the bull-frog. The bull-frog's house changed its form. His garden became a paradise. He had white paling and paddocks. Out he drove his carters and threshers, whom he began to call "*the peasantry*;" and that empty impudent follow, the younger ELLMAN, actually calls them so *now*, in a Letter to Lord Liverpool. He could no longer, polished gentleman, sit at table with such "*lower orders*." But, he took good care, that they should not *overfeed elsewhere*. He took good care, that they should not *participate* in his "*prosperity*." He, by means that the greediness and injustice and cruelty of an insolent upstart at once suggested, took care, that, while his prices rose, the price of labour should be kept down to the lowest possible standard. He violated all the principles of *free trade*, by *fixing the amount of wages*, and by bringing to the *poor-book*, all those who could not *exist* upon that amount! And, if the miserable wretches mutinied, he had his horse, his carbine, and his sword!

You talk of labour being carried to *market*! What *market* had the labourer to go, when, in fact, there was a book kept in every parish *to fix the price* of his wages? He was to have just as much as would *sustain life in a single man* and no more. To prevent *actual starvation*, the married man was to have more in *proportion to the number of mouths*. Do you call this carrying labour to *market*? Was there any more *freedom* here, than the Virginia or Jamaica slave enjoys? Was the *increased demand for labour*, under such circumstances, a *benefit* to the labourer?

Your comments on Dr. Copplestone's *facts* are, perhaps, no more than just. You should, however, bear in mind the *calling* of the Doctor, which necessarily implies an unreservedness of *faith*, which he may be excused for carrying into profane disquisitions, and which, if it do not absolutely justify his believing that a woman labourer used to earn what would now be equivalent to *forty shillings a week*, forms, at least, an apology for the Divine Doctor. However, the thing is by no means so *wholly incredible* as you would have us believe: for, the women labourers or *helps*, as they call them in America, do not receive much less, and that too, when wheat is at a price much lower than our *present price*. A man labourer has there *five shillings*, at least, of our money, a-day, in harvest time, and *sits at table with his employer*! And that, too, when wheat is not above *five English shillings a bushel*. So that, though the Doctor's authorities to prove that our labourers have *suffered by high prices*, be not quite unexceptionable, the facts drawn from them are by no means so incredible as you would represent them. The state of England at the times to which the Doctor refers was, in all probability, as to agricultural matters, somewhat like that of America now: the *farmers very numerous*, and the labourers comparatively *few in number*: The *funding* system, by drawing money into large parcels, necessarily reduced

the number of the farmers; and Pitt's infernal system of *paper-money*, by enabling a banker, an attorney, or some one who would dash into the discounting line, to take farms over the heads of small farmers, swept away that race of men, brought them down to be mere labourers, put them upon the parish-book kept for the *fixing of wages*, and made them very nearly, excepting colour of skin, resemble the labourers of Virginia and Jamaica.

It is not high price *simply* that hurts the labourer; for, if he have *six* shillings a week when wheat is *three* shillings a bushel, and *twenty* when wheat is *ten* shillings a bushel, and if the rise in wages keep pace *weekly* with the rise in the price of wheat, he is as well off in the latter case as in the former, if there be no other circumstance attending the rise in prices. It is not, therefore, simply the high price that hurts him, if prices of wages and of wheat keep on the level. But, in the first place, they *do not keep on the level*. The wages *do not rise with the wheat*. A long time takes place, even in a natural and *unforced* state of things, before the labourer can get even a small augmentation of wages. Every rise in price, therefore, gives the employer *an advantage* over him; for, observe, labourers in husbandry are more restricted in their choice of employers, than labourers in manufacture and crafts are. They cannot go to *next shop*. They are under engagements as yearly, or monthly, servants, and are bound by very strict laws. The married ones generally inhabit the houses of their employers, and even the single ones *out of house*, must remove to some considerable distance, perhaps, in order to get employment. They must go from *home*; and there is "*mother*" to be left! There are *mother's* remonstrances to hear; and, it would require another thirty years' progress of the hellish Pitt-System, to eradicate the power of these from the breasts of home-loving English sons. But, there is one plain case, that settles the point, and that requires no knowledge of country affairs to make it clear to every man; and that is this: it is a notorious fact, that nine-tenths of the labourers are either *in house as yearly servants*, or engaged *for the year at so much a week* for all the weeks except the harvest-month, and *so much for that month*. Now, let us take the case of the *carter in house*. At Michaelmas he hires for *seven pounds for the year*, and wheat is *seven shillings a bushel*. Out comes the atrocious, the hellish paper-money; wheat rises to 14 shillings a bushel before his year expires, and he receives *ten* bushels of wheat, instead of the *twenty* that he contracted for! Is he not, then, a *loser* by the *rise in prices*? Can any man living deny this? It is the same, in a different degree, with the men *out of house*. They suffer still more severely; for they have to *purchase* their food, which the man in house has not. You will observe, that *the law* gives them the choice of sticking to the letter of their engagements, or *going to jail*!

Well, but the *year ends* at last. They *live* it out; and then they have new bargains to make. Now do you think, that they will get their wages *doubled*? Do you think that a year of oppression will have made them *bold*? Do you think that being pennyless and shirtless will make them stout in standing out for a rise of wages? If you do, pray do not affect to laugh at Dr. COPPLESTONE any longer; for your *faith* in wonders is much larger than his.

Thus, then, clear as is that accursed thing, which is, you know, "*as notorious as the sun at noon-day*," is the conclusion, that the labourer in husbandry suffers and the employer profits by a rise in the prices of

produce of the labour, in spite of any augmentation that may take place in the quantity of labour in demand.

We have yet, however, but an imperfect view of the effects of a rise of prices. The landlord raises his rent. The taxes rise in nominal amount. But the consumer pays these back to the farmer. He neither gains nor loses by high prices as far as rent and taxes are concerned. His gain comes *solely* out of the blood and flesh and bones of the labourer. The labour upon a farm makes *more than the half of its outgoings*; judge, then, how the farmer must *gain* by the same process that *depresses* the labourer! Will you say, that what the farmer does not pay in wages he must *pay in poor-rates*? O, no! for, when the man comes to *that book*, that record of degradation, he is a *slave*. He then must take what is *given* him. What he receives, he receives as an *alms*; and the sum total of the rules of that book is, to allow as much as will *sustain life*, and *no more*!

At every stage of a rise of prices of food, the employer *gains upon the labourer*, till, at last, the former becomes a foxhunter and yeomanry cavalry man, and the latter a rack of skin and bones. Pride seizes hold of the upstart, and insolence intolerable. He soon finds, that it is *inconvenient*, in fact not attended with so *much gain*, to have men and boys and maids *in his house*; for *there* he cannot *starve* them. He, therefore, banishes them from beneath his roof, and brings them to a *regimen of the parish-book*. Thus while *he prospers*, the labourer is *ruined*; while he rises the labourer sinks, and exactly in the same proportion. All, in the eyes of such men as you, Sir, appears to be "*prosperity*." All is *flourishing* and *shining*. The big-farmer is decked out in gay attire, horses, carriages, footmen, come where they never were before. The farm-houses resound with the notes of the piano, and the decanter and glasses sparkle upon the table. But, in the midst of all this, and of all the "*improvements in husbandry*," the labourer, the real husbandman, is pining and starving:

"And, while he sinks, without one arm to save,
 "The country blooms: a garden and a grave."
 "Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
 "The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay;
 "'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
 "Between a *splendid* and a *happy* land."

If our state be not here truly described, never was description true. Dr. GOLDSMITH, if he used a little of poetical license, only *anticipated* the literal and melancholy truth; except that we should in vain look for "*statesmen*," to whom to address with propriety these beautiful lines.

Now, Sir, I think I have shown, that the labourer in husbandry; and it will hold good with respect to smiths, wheelwrights, collar-makers, and country-shoemakers, tailors, and almost every other kind of handicraft-men, who are, in *effect*, labourers in husbandry; I think I have proved that they were injured, that they were oppressed; because I have shown, that they *must* have been injured and oppressed; and that, too, while their employers were *benefitted* from the very same cause; an unnatural, a forced, *rise of prices*. I might, therefore, without more ado, go to the other side, and show how the labourer must be *benefitted* by the *fall of prices*. But, you have been pleased to say, that this is an "*important question*;" that it is of the greatest moment to *ascertain*, whether it can be *true*, that "the depreciation of money and the conse-

quent rise of prices are *injurious to the labourer.*" I will, therefore, though I have, I think, proved the affirmative of the proposition, add some *facts*, which, of themselves, without any reasoning at all, would have answered the purpose.

You have said, and you wish to have it *taken for granted* (but, mind, without any proof), that the labourer *prospered* during *high prices*. How, then, did it happen, that during the rise of prices, the Poor-rates rose in amount from *two millions and a quarter to eight millions*? This is not drawn from one of Dr. Coplestone's authorities, though the Doctor's *may* be good too, for any thing that you have proved to the contrary. This fact is drawn from the archives of that renowned assembly to which you now belong. In short, the fact is *certain*; and will you tell me that it is *possible* that the labourer could be in a *prosperous state*, during the time that this augmentation of Poor-rates was taking place? "The *country* was prosperous; all the *great interests* flourished." Aye, aye! That is another man's matter! What you may think "*great interests*," I may think *great curses*. You may call banking and loan-jobbing and cotton and anvil aristocracy and yeomanry cavalry "*great interests*;" and *they* certainly were *prosperous*; but the increase of the Poor-rates from two and a quarter to eight millions, during the rise of prices, is what you can never get over. It is complete and conclusive as to the point, that a depreciation of money and high prices, while they *benefit the higher classes* *destroy the labourer*, by enabling them to throw all the public burdens *upon his back*.

Dr. Coplestone has, you state, referred to *ancient authorities*, and such as are suspicious from their origin having been a *desire to establish an argument*. Now, I will appeal to one clear of all suspicion of every kind; and one that is conclusive and complete in all its parts. TULL, in his "*Horse-hoeing Husbandry*," chapter xix. pages 122 and 123 of the folio edition, states the price of *seed-wheat* at *three shillings* a bushel; wages of the ploughman at *one shilling* a day, and of the ploughboy at *sixpence*. This was in the year 1743, mind. And TULL was, when he wrote his book and was practising his drill-husbandry, living at *Shalborne* in Berkshire, which is just close upon the borders of Wiltshire.

This authority is unquestionable. TULL's husbandry was making a great noise at the time. Some accounts of his practice, which he had published before he published his *book*, had been roughly handled by the critics of the day. He was a lawyer by profession. A person likely to be very accurate in his statements. And, besides, he had *no end* to answer by misstatement as to *prices*. He was not writing about *prices*, but about the mode of *tilling land*; and the statement of prices comes out *incidentally*. It is that sort of *circumstantial evidence*, which is always, and always must be, regarded as better than positive records and oaths.

What have we here, then?—Why the fact, that the English labourer in husbandry was, in the time of this fine writer, and great enlarger of science, living a happy life, having an abundance to eat, let his family be as large as it might. You will observe, that TULL speaks of *seed-wheat*, which is always about a tenth of price above the average of wheat for grinding. Observe also, that, at the time when TULL wrote, *nine gallons* to the bushel was the only measure in use all through Surrey, Berks, Hants, and all the counties to the West. However, to take the thing with the least possible advantage to me, here is the *common ploughman*

receiving *two bushels of wheat a week*, and the *common ploughboy one bushel a week*.

Here, taking the bushel at eight gallons, and not at nine as I fairly might, the man had (the offal paying for grinding) *ninety pounds of flour a week*; that is, a quantity of flour sufficient to make *twenty-six quartern loaves*! I say, *twenty-six quartern*, or half-gallon loaves; and the boy enough to make *thirteen half-gallon loaves*. Now, Sir, compare this with what they received in the times of your "*prosperity*." In your *flourishing* times. In your times when "all the *great interests*" were in a state of "*prosperity*." What did the ploughman get then? Did he get *one bushel of wheat*? And did the boy get *two gallons*? Is it not notorious, that they did not? "No," say you, "it is not notorious." Well, then, I will give you an authority, that you will not venture to call in question. In 1814, Mr. BENETT of Wiltshire, and now a member of your famously Honourable House, came as a witness before a Committee of that most renowned corps, and, to that Committee, he gave the following evidence:—

"We (the *magistrates*) calculate, that every person, in a labourer's family, should have *per week*, the price of a *gallon loaf*, and *threepence over*, for *feeding and clothing*, exclusive of house-rent, sickness and casual expenses." This Report was ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, on the 26th of July, 1814.

Here we have it! Here is the result of the *progress from low prices to high*! Here we have, at last, the lowest figure on the scale of human misery and degradation. Here are the effects of the Pitt "*prosperity*." Here lie the wretched crowds, prostrated by the hellish system of banking, funding and paper-money! And yet, Sir, now that you see a glimpse of hope for the labourer, you would pass on him the sentence of despair!

But, we have not all the parts of the contrast here. In TULL's time, and long and long after, it was the custom, the universal custom, to give all labourers in husbandry, out of the house, as well as in, *beer* as regularly as the day came. It made, within even my memory, a part of their daily wages; and that has now been *wholly discontinued*. Besides, though I have stated the wages in *bread*, English labourers, in former times (before these times of "*blasphemy*" came on) believed, that man was not to live "*on bread alone*"; but, on every good thing that the earth produced; and that it was the devil only that wished to condemn man to dry bread. They thought it, too, no sin to use *untaxed salt, soap, candles, and shoes*. The tax, then, on the *malt* and *beer* was a mere trifle. And, if you deduct for what the labourer now pays out of his week's wages in *taxes upon these things*, more than he paid then, you will find, that he does not actually receive (or did not till prices came down) more than *one-third* of what he received in the time of TULL! And yet, you call this "*prosperity*!" And yet, you would "*save the nation*" by making it impossible for the most numerous class ever to taste of happiness again! I thank God, Sir, that you and all the bankers in the world put together, have not the power, even if you had the Government and the yeomanry cavalry at your back, to accomplish so cruel and so nefarious a purpose!

I leave out much. I might mention numerous other things which demonstrate what the labourer has *lost by high prices*. However, I have said and brought forward more than enough to establish the point. And,

Sir, surely (especially after my two letters to GAFFER GOOCH) I need not say much to prove, that they have *gained*, do *gain*, and must continue to *gain*, by a *fall of prices*?

Their engagements, as I observed before, are for the whole year *so much*; or *so much* a week for the year through, except the harvest-month, and *so much* for that month. Now, need I say, that they *must* gain by any fall of prices that shall take place during the year? Especially after I have shown how they *must* lose by a *rise* of prices during a similar period? Then, you will say, "but this can be only for *one year*." I beg your pardon: it must go on *year after year*, at any rate, as long as the *falling keeps on*. But, you will say that this must come to an *end*, and that the employer will bring them finally down to the *standard of wheat*: yes, but not in the *proportion of the fall*. For, now the ploughman is *upon the gain*, he gets a little *bolder*; mind that; and the employer gets by degrees, to cast off his insolence. It is as difficult to bring down the price of labour by *direct* means as it is easy to do it by *indirect* means. It is, indeed, done by indirect means, without the labourer *perceiving it*. He is cheated by the *name* of the sum being the same after the sum is, in reality altered. But, talk to him about taking *so much less*, and you may as well talk to a post. As to *turning them off*, it is *nonsense*. You will find them, as the employers were before, all of a mind. And, in the end, you must let them by degrees, gain that, which by degrees, they have lost.

You talk, Sir, of the "*lands thrown out of cultivation*." You say, you hear of this in *all directions*. This is an *assertion*, and nothing more; and it is one that I *do not believe*. Have the witnesses before the Committee *said this*? Come, come, Sir, I know that *they have said the contrary*! Gaffer Gooch's Committee have indeed kept their proceedings from the *public eye*; but a *little bird* has whistled in my ear, that the very first witness expressed his alarm that *future* scarcity might arise from the "*over-cropping* that is now taking place!" Is this the "*throwing of land out of cultivation*" that you hear of "*in all directions*?" Never mind the *future*, I should say to such a bull-frog: it is time, as the Yankees say, to jump over the ditch when we come to it. Let us live well now, and we shall be the better able to stand a little fasting, if the sun should happen not to shine another year.

You, indeed, hear of *no more new enclosures*, and, I hope, most anxiously, that we shall hear of many of the late new enclosures being thrown again to common. They were, for the most part, useless in point of quantity of *production*; and, to the labourers, they were malignantly mischievous. They drove them from the skirts of commons, downs and forests. They took away their cows, pigs, geese, fowls, bees, and gardens. They crowded them into miserable outskirts of towns and villages, for their children to become rickety and diseased, confined amongst filth and vermin. They took from them their best inheritance: sweet air, health, and the little liberty they had left. Downs, most beautiful and valuable too, have been broken up by the paper system; and, after three or four crops to beggar them, have been left to be planted with *docks* and *thistles*, and never again to present that perpetual verdure, which formerly covered their surface, and which, while it fed innumerable flocks, enriched the neighbouring fields. LORD LIVERPOOL, in a speech made last spring, observed, that some *persons* thought, that the enclosure-system had been *carried too far*. Who were they, my Lord? I never

heard of any body but myself who, in a *public manner*, expressed any such opinion. I, indeed, when Old Rose used to be boasting of the number of Enclosure Bills, as a proof of "*prosperity*," used, now-and-then, to show how beastly the idea was; and I proved, over and over again, that (taking in a space of eight or ten years) it was *impossible* to augment the *quantity of produce* by new enclosures; to say nothing about the mischievous effects as to the labourers.

However, the breaking up of the commons and downs was a natural effect of the forced increase of money; and, in this way, amongst the rest, that increase worked detriment to the labourer. It was out of his bones that the means came. It was the *deduction made from him by the rise of prices* and by the *not-rise of his wages*: it was the means thus raised that enclosed the commons and downs; and that put pianos into the farm-houses, and set the farmer up upon a cavalry-horse. And these, and such as these, have been the effects of that accursed paper-money, that seven vials of wrath, which you wish to be poured out upon us again!

You ask Mr. HUSKISSON, and with an apparent air of triumph, *how we are to expect* the condition of the labourer to be improved. *He* will tell you, one of these days, for he *has* brains in skull: *he* is not a block; and, that you may be somewhat the better prepared for the combat, I will give you a little foretaste of that which is to come. But, as this is, apparently, the part of your argument on which you chiefly rely, let me do you the justice to quote your own words fully. "How, then, Sir, in the midst of this diminution in the demand for labour, of this *frightful destruction of the funds by which labour is supported*, are we to expect to find the *condition of the labourer improved*? It is contrary to every principle of political economy that has ever been received, to all reason, and to all experience. *It has never happened at any time, nor in any country, that the condition of the labourer has improved, except by an increased demand for labour, and an increase of the funds by which labour is supported—the productive capital of a country.*" It has never happened in any country,—nor it never will in this,—that a permanent reduction in the demand for labour can take place, without this further consequence following—*that the supply of labour must be come proportioned to the contracted demand.*"

There is a good deal of the *dark and deep* here: a good deal of the *Audem Smeth*, who, if PLAIN had been a *canter* and a *crawler* instead of a man of *sincerity* and *spirit*, would have been laughed off the stage years ago. I do not clearly comprehend what you mean by "*productive capital of a country*," and by "*the supply of labour*." And, Sir, though it is possible that my not comprehending may be owing to my want of sufficient powers of penetration, still my not comprehending is a proof that this is a badly written passage; because writing is good for little if not to be clearly understood by persons of common capacity. In all cases *clearness* is the first quality in writings and in speeches. It is useless to have good matter, if people do not see it; and how are they to see it, unless you put in the light?

However, let me try. You mention "*funds*" twice in this passage. The "*funds*," you say, "*by which labour is supported.*" You talk about a "*frightful destruction*" of those funds. Now, what do you mean by *funds* here? Do you mean paper-money? Do you mean, that the *funds* are *less abundant*, because *prices are low*? Upon the supposition that wages come down with wheat, are not the *funds the same* as to

their power of paying the man that tills the field in which the wheat is grown? You have so long had your eyes bent on, and your mind wrapped up in, paper-money, that, at last, I verily believe you look upon it as being not less necessary to man's existence than air is. Look at the bushel of wheat, Sir. Leave the banking-house for a minute, come with me to the barn, and hear what the thresher will say about the "*destruction of funds.*" He will tell you, that the funds consist of the produce of the farm, and that, paper-money or no paper-money, there will be no want of funds, till there be a want of sun and rain. Suppose there were not only no paper-money, but *no money at all.* Would the people *starve*, think you? No; and, as to the labourer in husbandry, he would experience but little inconvenience. To talk, therefore, of "*the destruction of funds,*" is, in such a case, very little better than the prattle of VAN or of the ORACLE.

But, to come as near as I can to your meaning, the *funds*, that is to say the *money*, that is to say the *share of food*, due to the labourer, he has, for years, been receiving *only in part.* The funds which *ought* to have "*supported*" labour have been purloined from it silently and clandestinely by those *high-prices*, which a forced increase of money produced; and this I have, some pages back, proved as clear as day-light. What! will the *demand* for produce fall off, think you, because the most numerous class get a bellyful of bread and meat, one-half of which they have not had for years? And, will the *demand for labour* fall off, because the most numerous class demand and get this additional share of the fruit of labour? In all probability neither more nor less produce will be raised; but its *distribution* will be different: more will go into the mouth of the labourer, and less into the mouth of him who has so long gauged the poor creature's bowels by the rule of the parish-book. Comfort yourself, therefore, my good Sir; for there will, in low prices, be no "*destruction of the funds that support labour;*" though there has been, and will be, I hope, a great, and, to some persons, "*frightful destruction of the funds,*" by which labour has been robbed, degraded and insulted.

To pretend to say precisely how the thing will work, to pretend to delineate with precision the path and all the various windings and twistings of a great and all-affecting cause like that which is now operating upon the concerns of a people like this, would be the height of presumption in me or in any man, but we may easily, I think, foresee some of the effects that will be produced by a resolute adherence to the plan of returning to cash-payments. The first visible effect will be, and now is, the pulling down of the country bankers and discounting farmers. The agricultural societies, those nests of conspirators against the labourer, will all be dissolved, as, I see, that of *Cambridgeshire* has been, from a want of "*funds*" to pay their premiums, one of which (the *gold cup*) was for "*him, who shall, with the fewest hands, cultivate the largest quantity of land;*" to which ought to have been subjoined a general and pressing invitation to the negro-drivers of Virginia and Jamaica. These "*funds*" will now go to the labourers, who, as I have shown, will be constantly gaining by the low-prices.

The tax-collectors near Lewes, in Sussex, have sent a memorial to the Treasury, representing the impossibility of collecting the assessed taxes, unless *time be given*; and, in the same newspaper that tells me this, I see that the *farmers' subscription pack of hounds, at Bedding-*

ham, are advertised for sale! More "*funds*" for the labourer! Come, Sir, do not despond! We shall find no "*destruction of funds.*" The same newspaper refers, in a paragraph, to this advertisement as a proof of the "*distress of agriculture;*" a prettier illustration of the true import of which phrase need not be wished for! Is it not clear as day-light, that the labourer will now have to eat that which was eaten by "the *Beddingham hounds?*" And is it not better that he should have it than that it should go down the throats of that "well-scented pack?" And will it not be better for the "gentlemen" of the hunt to keep off the gout by kicking the clods about at plough than by galloping over fields, hedges and ditches?

This is the way the thing will work all over the kingdom. Food having become lower in price; fetching little comparatively at market; and money having become a precious commodity, the farmer will, as far as possible, make his payments in kind; this is invariably the effect of a lessening of the quantity of money in circulation. Where there is no money all is carried on by barter; and when there is little compared with the number and magnitude of the transactions, barter is the mode of dealing to a certain extent. Labour, as I said before, makes, even with all our taxes, *more than half the outgoings of a farm.* That, therefore, will be met, as far as possible, by payments in kind; and, as the natural and easy mode of paying in kind, is, to *board and lodge* the person to be paid, the labourers *will come back again into the farm-house*, and sit down at the same table with the master and the dame, the good effects of which I have pretty fully detailed in my letter to GAFFER GOOCH [Pol. Reg. p. 713, vol. 38]; and, if you can have read that letter without wishing for such a change, your heart must be harder than a stone, and your morality must be the most scandalous hypocrisy. I said, in that same letter, that it was the *high prices* which *drove the men and boys and maids from the farm-house.* And, it is curious enough, that, since that, a little bird has whistled in my ear, that one of the *witnesses*, who has been examined by the Grand Committee of GAFFER GOOCH, has confessed, that they *were* put out of the farm-house *when the high prices came and not before!* And, with evidence like *this* before them, will that Committee report in favour of any measure tending to reproduce *high prices!* If they were to do this, and if such a report were to be *acted upon*, what should we *then* say of the Honourable House? Where would it *then* look for a defender? But, be you assured, that *this* will not be done.

From the same cause will return the custom of furnishing *beer* to the out-of-house labourers. The farmer can brew cheaper (besides the saving in tax) than the alehouse-keeper can sell. The farmer has, in many parts, wood that costs little. It is a part of his produce; and the brewing is done by his maids, under the direction of his wife. And he will, in this way, pay in kind as far as he can. The married labourers will *brew at home* also for their wives and children; and some ale for their "*groanings*" and *christenings*, as they *used to do* universally. The spiritless enfeebling *slop*, the materials for which are flogged out of negro slaves, or screwed out of the miserable wretches of Asia, and which are almost wholly tax, will give way by degrees to the invigorating produce of our own soil. And, what should you think, now, if the Committee of GAFFER GOOCH have *evidence to this point* too! My little bird has whistled in my ear, that they have it in *evidence*, and, what is mon-

strosly good, from the mouth of the *Elder Ellman* ! who has told them, that, forty years ago, when he became a farmer, every married labourer in his parish brewed his own beer ; and, that, now, not a man did it, except he himself, in charity, gave the poor fellow the malt ! And, will the House, upon evidence like this, pass a law to reproduce and perpetuate high-prices ? Will the House do this thing !

From the same cause many *farming bankers* (for really they are not *husbandmen*) will be totally ruined, and their big-farms will become untenanted. Others will be afraid to embark in *so large a way*. Farming will not be (as it ought not to be) a *fortune-making* affair. Rich men will not want to be farmers. The speculating, discounting farming will wholly cease. Few men will be found (as it ought to be) to take to farms of *large extent*. Hence these enormous farms will be *divided* ; or, rather, they will be what they were before the infernal Pitt-system began : there will be upon an average, in a very few years, about four farmers where there is now one. The little industrious, decent, rural hives will come back to be again the basis of that *English community*, which, only forty years ago, was really “ the envy of surrounding nations and justly the admiration of the world.” In many cases, *tenants* will not, at first, be found on *any terms*. But, the owner will not let the land lie to produce thistles and brambles. He will put a skilful and trusty labourer into the farm, and will furnish the stock himself, till he can find a tenant. This will be a sort of “ farming upon *shares*,” so commonly practised in America. Some of these labourers will become farmers ; and they must, in order to occupy all the farms. And, Sir, you will see the Poor-rates *come down in great haste*, without any of the projects of that ignorant and hard-hearted fellow MALTHUS, or any of the contrivances of that son of a parson, Mr. STURGES BOURNE, who is the Chairman of the Hampshire Quarter Sessions, and who merely speaks the voice of the Hampshire Parsons. Wheat at four shillings a bushel will hang all the schemes of this “ *amiable friend*,” as Canning called him, up to dry, and to be ready preserved in the archives of the Pitt-Clubs, to be brought forth for use, if the devil should ever again have the power of causing the Pitt and paper system to return.

The farmer being taken from his cavalry-horse, having again put on the smock-frock, and having, along with his wife, taken seat at table with his ploughman and his maids, his son will, now-and-then, marry a servant-maid, and the carter will sometimes marry the farmer’s daughter. Thus will come back that community of interests and feelings which the infernal Pitt-system of paper-money has driven away. Here is the *cure*, and the only cure, for the evil of *pauperism*. The good things of the land, the food and raiment, will be more equally distributed. The class of labourers, and that of farmers will be so blended as to leave but very few, nothing but the mere helpless and profligate, to become paupers. The “ *prosperity* ” of the paper-money people ; the gay cavalry farmer ; the show ; the false glare ; these will disappear ; but the misery and pauperism will disappear along with them. England will be what it formerly was : a less *splendid* and more *happy* land. And, this, Sir, is what you are endeavouring to prevent ; but, thank God, you labour in vain.

But, say you, “ you *confine* yourself to the labourers in *husbandry*, “ and have no care about *other labourers* : do you care nothing about “ *craftsmen and manufacturers* ? ” Yes, just as much as I care about

the labourers in husbandry. They are all objects of attention; and, I appeal to my writings for the whole of my life for proof, that their welfare has *always* been the main object of my labours; that it has never ceased, for a day, to be an object of my most anxious solicitude. *Here*, at any rate, I may bid defiance to the empty and lying cry of "*inconsistency*." Born amongst husbandmen, bred to husbandry, delighting in its pursuits even to the minutest details, never having, in all my range through life, lost sight of the English farm-house and of those scenes in which my mind took its first spring, it is natural that I should have a strong partiality for a country life, and that I should enter more in detail into the feelings of labourers in husbandry than into those of other labourers. But, in my wishes and endeavours I have the welfare of *all* in view; and that is to have in view the welfare of my country; for, if that class, which is *twenty times* more numerous than all the others, be depressed, be miserable, be degraded, the country can have no *honour*, no *permanent power*; and it is infamous to call it *happy*.

The labourers in husbandry, *strictly* so called, form, indeed, a very considerable portion of the whole of the population of the kingdom. Then the smiths, wheelwrights and collar-makers, and village tailors and shoe-makers, are, in fact, labourers in husbandry; for, if they do not work *upon*, they work *for*, the farms. Now, what have *low prices* done for them? My *little bird* has come to me from GAPPER GOOCH'S Committee, and told me, that the *witnesses* one and all declare, that they have not *yet* been able to *bring down* the prices (that is *the wages*) of these retainers of husbandry! They say, that they have *tried* to *bring them down*; but have *not yet succeeded*. One of the witnesses being asked, whether these people were not *bettered*, then, by the fall of prices, answered, that they got *more than their masters*; and, being asked, who he meant by *their masters*, he said, *the farmers*. Now, this is what my little bird tells me; and I have never found him to tell me stories. If, therefore, this be *true*, here is another numerous class of labourers *benefitted* by "*agricultural distress*." And, in the face of *all this*, will this Committee report in favour of a measure to reproduce *high prices*?

Well, but is this all? What effect has low price had upon that numerous class the *house-servants* of all descriptions, male and female, old and young? Why, to be sure, to *add* to their wages. Have you *lowered the wages* of your men and maids? Very little, I believe. Have they not *gained*, then? Can they not clothe themselves better than they did, and save some little money too, to be laid by, not in old rags, or deposited in Savings Banks and moonshine; but in that gold which we *must* have, if the Ministers persevere? Now, either house-servants' wages have been reduced nearly *one-half*, since 1818, or they must have been *gaining* ever since that time. It is notorious, that their wages have come down but a very little; and, therefore, it is clear, that they are gainers by low prices. This class is very numerous. It includes gardeners, butlers, coachmen, grooms, footmen, housekeepers, cooks, and all the long train of female domestics. Here are boys, girls, persons of all ages; and here we must include stage-coachmen, ostlers, post-boys, and all the servants at inns, all belonging to the *labouring class*, and all *gaining by low prices*.

Mr. BARING has complained to the *House*, that the fellows "*out of doors*" (the phrase is a good one), particularly the *post-boys* and *stone-sawyers* (at Scrip-Castle, I suppose) will not *come down* in their wages!

He may tell *the House* of it *again*, without producing any effect! The labourers mean to get "*in doors*" once more. They have been "*out of doors*" long enough. And, is it not the same with carpenters, masons, brick-makers, and all the labourers employed in building? Yes is it. Even *printers* have not budged an inch, and I rejoice at the circumstance. It is certain, that the wages of all the labouring classes will *come down something* in time; but, it will be *slowly*; always keeping at a respectful distance behind the bushel of *wheat*; and, therefore, never coming down in the proportion of wages against wheat at high-price times. This is so, because it *must* be so: because it is in the nature of man, and in the nature of things. If the wheat were to stand where it is now, which is much about the mark of the average price of the period of *ten years immediately preceding the crusade against the people of France*, and if the taxes on their *salt, malt*, and so forth, were to be reduced to what they were at that time, wages might come down, in the long run, to the *standard of that day*; but *no lower*. And, it would be *in the long run, too*, mind; and the young men and women of the next ten or fifteen years would, *all that while*, be gaining back a part, at least, of that, which has been purloined from their fathers and mothers by the infernal paper-system.

There remains only one class of labourers to be noticed: those engaged in *manufactures*, and collected in large bodies. Now, here we may, in a few particular instances, find exceptions; but, I am persuaded, that we shall find them *few*, and, though the sufferers are entitled to our most anxious solicitude and to every possible exertion for their relief, we shall find that even their suffering, however acute, is not, for one moment, to be put in comparison with the well-being of *millions*! The whole of the population *strictly manufacturing* does not amount to *half a million* of persons, in the whole; while the *strictly agricultural* population (I am speaking of Great Britain only) amounts to nearly *five millions*. And, *why* should this *half million* suffer from *low prices*? I am well aware, that the labouring manufacturers of Birmingham are suffering severely, and I am very sorry for it, though I take pleasure in the ruin of the "*big ruffians*," who have been, so long, such bitter enemies of Reform and justice. But, Birmingham is by no means a fair specimen. Its manufacture depended, in a great measure, essentially upon *war*; and, of course, must be depressed by *peace*. War must not be carried on *for ever*, lest the makers of arms should want employment and should therefore have to endure sufferings, however severe and unmerited. This, therefore, is an exception, which, upon the whole, makes not the weight of a straw against my argument. As to the *cotton and wool* manufacture, I am satisfied, that the lot of the workmen is bettered by the *low prices*. The average wages of a cotton-weaver is now nine shillings a-week; and that is better than twenty shillings a-week during the time of high prices. It is not enough, considering the deduction made by the taxes, *more than was made* on that account before the Anti-Jacobin war. But, still it is better than twenty shillings a-week, when wheat was at fourteen shillings a bushel. The wages of the *clothiers* I do not know; but, I hear from Yorkshire, that they are better off than they were in times of *high-prices*. The *stocking-makers* are in a state of "*turn-out*." They get 6s. 6d. a-week for a man, and they demand eight shillings, and which, no matter by what means that are lawful, I wish they may get. Still the six-and-sixpence is better than Mr. Benett's *high-price allowance*: "a gallon

loaf and threepence a week to each person in a labourer's family:" that horrid sentence of the Wiltshire parish-book! The stocking-makers say, that the labourers in husbandry, in their counties, receive *double* what the stocking-makers get. This, then, is a good thing; for, they are, even in those counties, ten times as numerous as the stocking-makers; and if, whether from a falling-off in foreign trade; or, from any other circumstance, the stocking business should continue to be bad, no more persons, or few, will be bred to it; the boys and girls will go to *the land*; and even of the present stocking-weavers some will go to work in the fields; for, it is beastly nonsense to suppose, that there will be *too much food raised*. Let things take their *fair chance*; let there be no *force*, no *restraint*, no *false money*, no *false credit*; and the labourer in every line of life will have that portion of food and of raiment and of enjoyment of every kind which is justly his due.

The landlords would persuade us, that it was *high price* that fed the manufacturers. Yes, the *lords of the loom*, and of the *anvil*; but not the *labourers*, who were continually losing by the rise in prices of food, in the same way generally, only varying a little with particular circumstances, as the labourers in husbandry lost by the rise in those prices. They would fain persuade us, that, if the high prices do not return, there will be *no demand for manufactures*. No? *Why* not, conjurers and disinterested gentlemen? Why not? O! why, we landlords and banker-farmers shall *not have a quarter part so much to lay out in manufactures as we had before*. Indeed! But, will not the price of the goods come down with the price of your wheat? Yes; but, *we shall not have the money to buy them nevertheless*. Why, what will become of your money? Why, the labourers, and smiths, and wheelwrights, and collar-makers, and the rest of them, will get, all together, *so much more from us than they did formerly*. The devil they will! But, then, good Jolterheads, will not *they* have that same money to lay out on manufactures that *you had before*? Aye, aye! But there is the fundholder and the judge and the placeman and pensioner and the soldier and the sailor that we have to pay in still the same nominal amount as before. Very true, I know *you* will have to go barefooted, and to wear ragged shirts; but the fundholder and the judge and the placeman and the pensioner and the soldier and the sailor will have the money to lay out in manufactures, if you have not. How are *manufacturers* to lose, then, by the means of purchase being merely transferred from you to others.

Thus, then, Sir, I have, I think, clearly *proved*, that a fall in prices is beneficial to the labouring classes, composing, at least, nine-tenths of the nation; and, therefore, I do hope and trust, that neither you nor any other man will endeavour to cause measures to be adopted which shall tend to restore those high prices, the horrible effects of which we have so long been doomed to witness. In answer to a question, ready to start from your lips, *whether I think that the interest of the Debt can be continued to be paid without a return to high-prices*, I say, beforehand, *I know it cannot for any length of time*: I know, that Peel's Bill *cannot be carried into complete effect without a reduction of the interest of the Debt*; no, not even if all the estates be first taken from the landlords by the lords of the funds. But, what is that to this great question? All that I am anxious about, is, to see the suffering and degraded *millions* once more with bellies full and persons erect. The landlords, or the fund-lords, *must fall*, I know, by those means which will restore plenty

and spirit to the labourer ; but, as the labourer had nothing to do in the producing of this necessary alternative, and, as it has arisen out of the mutual and cordial co-operation of the landlords and the fund-lords, to these it justly belongs to endure the consequences, be those consequences what they may.

I am Sir,

Your most obedient

And most humble servant,

W. M. COBBETT.

TO MR. JOHN HAYES,

Who was imprisoned for ten weeks by the Magistrates in Lancashire, for having, in November, 1819, gone round the town of Bolton, in that County, with a Bell, to inform the people, that their Countryman, William Cobbett, was arrived at Liverpool in good health ;

ON LAWYER SCARLETT'S POOR-LAW BILL.

“ Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.”—*Proverbs*, chap. xxxi., verse 9.

(*Political Register*, May, 1821.)

Kensington, May 14, 1821.

FRIEND HAYES,

You could see no *crime*, no offence against the *laws*, no offence against a Constitution, which, as the venerable Judges tell us from the Bench, “ is the envy of surrounding nations and the admiration of the world :” you could not imagine, that, basking in *freedom* like this, there was a *crime* sufficient to put you in jail for *ten weeks*, and then to turn you out *without trial* or *indictment* ; you could not suppose it possible, that this punishment could be inflicted, under so “ *glorious* a Constitution,” merely because you went round with a bell to announce to your townsmen the safe arrival of an Englishman in England. You could, perhaps, as little comprehend by what *law* it was, that the Boroughreeve and Constables of Salford and Manchester, sent one of their runners to inform me, that, if I attempted to enter Manchester *publicly* (that is not *secretly*), they should “ *interfere* ;” and that they, at the same time, made grand military preparations, not leaving out the *cannons*. What *law* they had for these things a day may come, perhaps, for inquiring in a lawful way. At present, we will “ *stick a pin there*.” Fasten so much up in your and my memory : and, in the meanwhile, watch the progress of events, which we shall soon have a chance of doing with a *bellyful*, and therefore coolly and patiently. The blessings of “ *Agricultural Dis-*

ress," if they have not already reached you, soon will. The labourers in husbandry taste those blessings, and they cannot long be withheld from the manufacturing labourers.

In this work of watching the progress of events, it shall be my duty to assist as much as any man in the kingdom. The events are *now* becoming truly interesting. Peel's Bill is finely at work. The Bank is actually (for the present) *paying in gold*; and, if there be not *another stoppage*, all will be *right* before the end of two years. If there be *another stoppage*, that will only put off the day of salvation for a few months; and, may be, not for a day. The thing has now, by the act of our calumniators themselves, been brought into a state that it cannot, work how it will, prevent us from obtaining every jot that we wish to obtain. The THING (for, really, it is not to be described) struggles very hard.—"O! methought it was so *hard to die!*" exclaims some rascal in a play that I have somewhere seen or read. And so the THING appears to think; for it jumps and bounces and kicks and flings about like drunk or mad. I dreamed, the other night, that I was fishing on the Grand Bank of Newfoundland, and that, having got a couple of sailors to pull in my lines, while I looked down into the sea to see what I had caught, I thought I saw *Corruption* coming up, safely caught by my hooks, her head covered with vipers, a rod of scorpions in one hand, and a bundle of *paper* in the other. She kicked and tore and foamed like fury, I thought; and, fearing that she might be saved, by some chance or other, unless she were suffered to spend herself under the waves, I cried out to the sailors, "Don't pull her up! Don't pull her up! Let her down to the Bank! Let her get smothered in the Bank! Down with her, paper and all! Down with her to hell, rather than save her life!" This bawling awakened my wife, who awakened me; and, the good of it was, she thought I meant the *Grand Bank in Threadneedle-street*, instead of the *Grand Bank of Newfoundland!*

And now, friend HAYES, let me come to the subject, on which I proposed to address you; the Poor-law Bill of Lawyer SCARLETT; and I have that vanity to think, that, before I have done, you will find some reason to satisfy you, that that return to England, which gave you so much pleasure, and for the expressing of which pleasure you were so severely punished, is likely to be found worthy of the feelings which you so honourably displayed on account of it.

That a lawyer, who has gotten him a seat in the Honourable House, should have a *bill* in hand, of some sort or other, seems to be the fashion of the day. Lawyer (I beg his pardon, *Sir James*) MACKINTOSH has his bill; Lawyer BROUGHAM has his bill; Lawyer ONSLOW has his bill; Lawyer PHILLIMORE has his bill; Lawyers HORNER and ROMILLY had their bills. But, as these bills never *passed*, never were, and never are expected to pass; and as they related and relate to matters of Scotch speculation, such as that of Lawyer GIDDY, which contains a scheme for regulating the stone weight and the bushel measure by the movements of a *pendulum*, or by the *degrees of latitude*, they have always, by me, been treated as subjects for fun. If they had no possible *good* in them, they appeared to have had little of *harm*. I thought that the time of their several authors was very well employed, and, indeed, luckily employed, in so inoffensive a way.

But, the Bill, which Lawyer SCARLETT has in hand, and which he in-

troduced into the Honourable House on Tuesday last, the 9th instant, is of a very different description; for, in my opinion, it strikes at the root of the labourer's remaining rights; dooms him, in case of returning high prices, to misery indescribable, from which he would have no possible escape except in a convulsion that would shake society to its centre.

I hate Lawyer SCARLETT, mind. It is impossible that hatred can be greater, or, in my judgment, more just. And, this personal animosity, which I take pride in avowing and proclaiming, ought to make you particularly careful to believe nothing, on this occasion, which I do not prove. However, this hatred makes neither for nor against the *facts* and the *reasonings* which I shall produce against his bill; and, more especially when it shall clearly appear, that the conclusions I *now* draw are the opinions of my *whole life*; that the arguments now used against Lawyer SCARLETT are in perfect accordance with those (as far as they went) used against the schemes of Mr. WHITBREAD *twelve years ago*, and are consonant also with *my own uniform practice* towards labourers employed by myself. The *author* of the Bill I here, therefore, leave out of the question. "Gentleman Opposite," in the Honourable House, and, in the North, Acting "*Attorney-General*:" "Gentleman Opposite," and, at the same time, prosecutor *ex-officio* of some of those who were *not killed* on the memorable *16th of August, 1819*: these let him be. They have nothing to do with this Bill, which I shall treat of as wholly distinct from the character and the general conduct of its author. It, in my opinion, aims, in a state of high prices, at a greater mass of injustice and cruelty, and tends to the producing of greater and more lasting mischief, than any measure I ever yet heard of; and, therefore, if it should finally become a law, it shall not arrive at that state without my solemn protest against its being put upon record.

This Bill you will find in the Appendix, No. I. The blanks are not filled up; but the Lawyer explained them in his speeches. Read the *Bill* first; and then read the *Speeches*, No. II. I must beg you to read those attentively, otherwise you cannot clearly understand what I have to say upon the subject. The *debate* was short. It was not a *grand debate*: it was *only* about the *poor*: it was only about a scheme for *preventing the labourers from marrying*. That was *all*. It was not about Mr. CROKER's *three hundred a year*, which Lord MILTON made such a grand matter of. It was not about the conduct of a SHERIFF, who had put the "*Constitution in jeopardy*" by putting the vote in a wrong way, at a county-meeting, at one of those *farces*, as the Great Captain *truly called them*. It was *only* about a plan for *checking the population* of labourers; and, therefore, it was *short* and animated; and you will read the Lawyer's speeches through in *ten minutes*.

Well. now you have read the Bill and the Debate. You see, that the Bill contains *three Provisions*, as follows: 1. That, after the passing of the Act, *no larger sum* shall, in any parish, be levied in Poor-rates, *than was levied during the year, which ended on the 25th of March last*. 2. That, after the passing of the Act, no relief shall be given to any *unmarried* man, unless he be afflicted with infirmity of body or old age. Nor to any *married* man, for himself, wife, or *children*, unless such man was *married before the passing of the Act*. 3. That no person shall be removed from one parish to another on the ground of such person being chargeable to the parish where residing at the time of becoming chargeable.

The first of these Provisions seems to be nonsense, or, at least, of no use, if it were possible to make the second *law*. The third is of nearly the same character. It is very bad, for many reasons; and might produce great injustice to towns and villages, to which people flock in consequence of some *fleeting cause of prosperity*. But these two provisions are no more than the tasteless flour that surrounds the deadly pill which we find in the *second* Provision, which is neither more nor less than the scheme of PARSON MALTHUS moulded into the shape of a legislative enactment.

This scheme denies relief to a man who is starving for want of employment, if he have *no children*; and, it condemns to starvation even the children of those who are out of work, *if the children be the fruit of a marriage which has taken place since the passing of the Act!* This is to *check population*; at a moment when the landlords are wanting *food to be dearer than it is*; and, while immense sums are, without a *single dissenting voice*, voted yearly out of the *taxes* (paid by the labourer) for the *relief of the poor clergy of the churches of England, Ireland and Scotland, and for the relief of the poor French and other emigrants!*

I have numbered the Paragraphs of this Bill; and you will find the *scheme, the pill*, in the 7th Paragraph. To warrant the broaching of a scheme like this, a man should be prepared with good and sufficient *grounds*. He should be able to show, that the thing was *just*, and not only *just* but *necessary*; and Lawyer SCARLETT did neither of these; and, I think, I shall be able most clearly to prove, that it is both *unnecessary* and *unjust*.

We find the Lawyer's grounds stated in the *first and second* paragraphs of the Bill. We find it there asserted: 1. *That the Poor-rates have increased in amount*; 2. *That, if a check be not put to the increase, the lands in many parts of England, will not be worth cultivating*; 3. *That it is the facility of obtaining relief by men able to work that has produced the evil.*

Now, friend HAYES, I deny all these propositions. I say that not one of them is founded in truth. I say, that the Poor-rates, or, in correct words, the money, given to the poor *by others*, has *not increased*, but, on the contrary has been *wholly withheld*, and that the whole amount of the rates has been *deducted from the wages of the labourer*, including craftsmen and manufacturing labourers. If this proposition of mine be true, the *first* proposition of Lawyer SCARLETT is demolished, and his *second and third* fall of course.

Let us see, then, how the lawyer *goes to work* to show the necessity of his scheme; or, in the "in-doors" cant of the day, "to make out *his case*." He proves, from some report laid before the Parliament, that the poor-rates have been *going on increasing*, in peace (as he says) as well as in war, ever since 1750. That this is an evil no one denies. It is a horrid thing to think of. But, if it be not at all Poor-rates; if it be not sums paid *by others* to relieve the poor; and, if the sums of increase have consisted of a *deduction from wages* by means of a false and *constantly increasing paper-money*; if this be the case, though the thing is still more snocking to real, and not sham, humanity, it is not so much an evil *in itself*, as it is the sign and proof of an *evil cause*.

Not an idea of this kind enters the head of SCARLETT any more than it did the head of MALTHUS. These two worthies, whose minds seem to

have been cast in the same mould, look only at the *increase of the sum*, without penetrating into the *cause* of the increase. They snuzzle about the stem of the accursed tree without being able to get down to its root. They see the sum of Poor-rates increase; they see relief demanded by men, women, and children. "O! *make the number of these less*;" though there be only just enough now to get in the harvest! "How shall we make them less in number?" "Prevent them from *marrying*: check population?" No inquiry into the *cause* of the *increase*: no reflection: no thought: an *evil* is seen, and, to put a stop to it, *coercion*.

The increase of the Poor-rates the Lawyer, in his speech to the people *in-doors*, states to have been as follows: In 1750, taking in an average of three years, the Poor-rates of England and Wales amounted to 689,971*l.*; in 1776, they amounted to 1,530,804*l.*; in 1783, they amounted to 2,437,000*l.*; in 1803, they amounted to 4,267,963*l.*; and in 1815, they amounted to 6,129,831*l.*; and, *therefore*, unless some measure were adopted to put a stop to the *evil*, it was but too much to be apprehended that it would go on increasing *until there would be no maintenance left for the poor*! Bless us! what neither land nor cattle nor grass! Nothing left for the man to eat who raises the food! What a queer state of things that must be!

What an absurdity, upon the face of the thing, to say, that the sums given *out of the produce* of the land, to those who perform the *labours on the land*, will be so great as to leave nothing to give out of the produce! O, no! LAWYER SCARLETT! No reason at all to apprehend this, I assure you. But, as you seem to be in great anxiety and tribulation on this account; as your tender heart seems to be sinking within you, lest the produce of the lands should not yield the means wherewith to relieve the wants of the labourers, I will, in a moment, show you how they may be amply relieved without the aid of your Bill, even supposing your notion as to *causes* to be as correct as it is erroneous. Cut off the 100,000*l.* a year, granted by the people *in doors* to relieve the *poor clergy* of the rich Church of England; the 10,000*l.* to the poor clergy of Scotland; the 30, or 40,000*l.* a year to the clergy of the Irish churches; the enormous grants to make roads and canals in Scotland, *to prevent the Scotch from emigrating*, while you propose to *check the population of England*! O Lord! Cut off the 50,000*l.* a year, granted by the gentlemen *in doors* for the *relief* of French and other *foreign emigrants*, to which grants Peter Moore and Edward Ellice never object. Cut off the 90,000*l.* a year granted by the gentlemen *in doors*, for *secret service*. Cut off the 200,000*l.* a year, granted by the same gentlemen, to *yeomanry cavalry* in Great Britain and Ireland. Cut off the grants to the *British Museum*, to the *Monument* and *beautifying and embellishing Committee*. Cut off the bill of the *printer* to the gentlemen *in doors*. Thus, in mere odds and ends, a great deal more might be saved than would pay the whole of the poor-rates, great as they are. Therefore, keep these in your eye, good SCARLETT, and your compassionate bowels will no longer ache for fear of wanting the means of feeding the poor. Besides, recollect, that, since 1750, *more than twice the amount of the whole of the present poor-rates* has been ADDED to the taxes on salt, soap, candles, beer, and shoes, of the working classes. Bear this in mind, worthy compeer of PARSON MALTHUS; and you will easily see abundant means of relieving distressed labourers *without preventing them from marrying*; without making a law in the teeth of the law of God, as explained and enforced

by the Liturgy of the English Church, and not less in the teeth of the laws of nature and the dictates of humanity.

But, my friend HAYES, though this might suffice for SCARLETT, I must not, in addressing you, confine myself to this vulgar view of the matter. I must explore the subject, and come at the obvious cause of the increase of the sums paid out under the *name* of poor-rates. And, here, before I enter further into this matter, let me explain the nature of *poor-rates* properly so called. They have their origin, in their *present form*, in an Act, passed in the reign of QUEEN ELIZABETH, when the *poor* (properly so called) had been robbed of the means of relief by the several acts of confiscation of *Church-and-poor property*, and by the establishing of a *wife-having-clergy*, in the reigns of Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, confirmed by the Acts of Elizabeth.

In *all times* the really poor had a *right* to relief out of the *produce of the lands*. BLACKSTONE says, that the Poor-laws are founded in the *very principles of civil society*. And, certainly this is the case; for, when men consented to give up their *natural rights*, the object must have been the *good of the whole*; and, as misfortune, weakness of body, derangement of mind, orphanage, infancy, old age, and helplessness, are naturally incident to man, the *good of the whole* could never contemplate a state of things, in which a man in good health should be exposed to starvation, and in which help was not always to be at hand to relieve persons truly helpless. Therefore, when the lands of England were placed by law in the hands of some persons to the exclusion of others; when the lands became *property*, they carried with them necessarily the charge of providing for those *who had no lands*, and who were unable by their labour to earn a sufficiency of food. As long as the mass of the people were vassals, or slaves, to the proprietors, those proprietors took care of them of course. In later times, when men had become more free, and when Christianity was introduced, the proprietors got rid of the charge of *immediately* providing for the indigent, by setting apart, for that purpose, *a portion of the produce of their estates*. And this was done in the following manner: The proprietor of an estate built a house for a priest, built a church for the people, endowed the house with *glebe*, or land, and endowed *the church* (not the *priest*) with a tenth part of the annual produce of his estate. And, then, *this estate* was called a *parish*; that is to say, a district in the charge of a priest.

Now, mind, the endowment was not of the *priest*, but of the *church*. It was not for the *sole* use of the priest; but, a *fourth* only of the tithes were for him; a fourth to go to the support of the church generally in the diocese; a fourth to keep hospitality with; and a *fourth* to go to the support and assistance of the *poor*. Will Lawyer SCARLETT deny this? Then let him explain, if he can, the meaning of two Acts of Parliament, one passed in the reign of *Richard the Second*, and the other in the reign of Henry the Fourth.

These Acts are *silencers* of the clergy and the landlords; and, therefore, pray attend to the *cause* of the passing of them. You have seen that churches and parishes arose out of the piety and benevolence of the proprietors of estates. You have seen that they had made a provision for the poor by allotting to them a *fourth part of the tithes*. But the proprietors held in their own hands the power of always *choosing the priest*, and that power they left, of course, to their *heirs*. In time, however, *monks* and *friars*, and *nuns* came and lived in monasteries of

various descriptions, founded and supported by pious and very foolish or very wicked persons, who thought that these monks and friars and nuns could by their intercessions, either keep them out of purgatory, or get them out of it very quickly. Rich people gave money to these monasteries; others left them estates in house and land; and, in time, the cunning creatures of monks and others prevailed on a great part of the proprietors of estates (now become parishes) to leave to the monasteries, and not to their own sons and heirs, the power of choosing the parish priests!

This was a *grand stroke*; and now, mind the effect of it. A monastery, having got a power like this, chose for a *parish-priest* one of their own body; sent him to live in the parish; but made him send the whole produce of the tithes to the monastery, except a small part which they allowed him to keep for himself. Thus, of course, the poor of the parish had no means of relief. The evil having arrived at a great height, the above-mentioned two Acts were passed, to compel the monasteries to leave in the parishes, in such cases, enough to maintain the poor. Therefore, all the denials of the clergy and landlords are vain. It is clear, that a portion of the tithes belonged to the poor.

And now we come back to the origin of the Poor-rates. Henry the Eighth suppressed all the monasteries and gave away their estates to his greedy courtiers. He, of course, took away the power of the monks to choose parish priests. He gave that to his courtiers too; but he made no provision for the poor. His son and successor put the finishing stroke to the thing; for he introduced the Protestant religion and allowed the priests to marry, and, of course, they had families to eat up the share of the poor. Mary, in her short and mad reign, endeavoured to bring things back again; but, when Elizabeth came, she settled the Protestant clergy, and consolidated the robbery of the poor. However, she found that something must be done to provide for the indigent; and, not being able to do any thing with those who had robbed church and poor in the reign of her father, she gave up the tithes, at once, to the wife-having-clergy and the lay-tithe owners, and made a law to raise rates upon the whole of the occupiers of house and land; and these are what we now call the Poor-rates, and which, as Sir ROBERT WILSON manfully observed, are the right of the poor as clearly as the land is the right of the landlord.

Now, then, that we know what the Poor-rates are, let us proceed to inquire into the cause of their increase in amount. Lawyer SCARLETT says, that this "relief is scarcely considered in the light of a charity." "Scarcely!" The man is an ass that ever suffers the thought to come into his head! It is a right, "founded," as BLACKSTONE observes, "in the very principles of civil society." And, we shall presently see, that, at the present time, the labourers receive, under the name of relief, only a very small portion of what has, by the workings of taxation and the accursed paper-money system been deducted out of their own wages.

It is the misfortune of every country under a lawyer-like government, that is to say, where a lawyer-like mind has the sway, to meet every evil, not by an inquiry into the cause of the evil, but by some measure of check, or coercion, breathing the spirit of chastisement. When such a Government perceives an evil, it smites it with its power, instead of hunting out its origin, and circumventing it by a patient process. Lawyer SCARLETT says nothing about the cause of the evil; and yet, one would think, that that ought to have stood foremost in his statement. Like Parson MALTHUS, he is wholly silent upon that head; and yet, when he had

showed, that the Act of QUEEN ELIZABETH had been in force for *two hundred and fifty years* without producing a charge for rates of more than about *forty pounds a year to each parish*, that is to say, not more than the amount of the then wages of *two able labouring men*; when he had *showed this*, one might have expected him to endeavour to *account for the change*, and to show *why* it was, that the rates, since 1750, had risen to *six millions*, instead of remaining at their then amount of 600,000 and odd pounds. *This*, which is every thing; *this* which is the all-in-all in the case, the lawyer wholly omitted; and this, therefore, I shall supply.

The cause of the *increase*, as it is called, but which, in fact, it is *not*, as I shall clearly show by-and-by: the cause has been the measures of an unwise and extravagant Government *laying enormous taxes*, and using, at the same time, a *paper-money system*, which has continually been oppressing the *English labourer* more and more heavily; *deducting from his wages*, the means of carrying on wars, of paying pensioners and placemen, of paying the interest of loans, of paying even the very *Poor-rates themselves*, and, in addition to all the rest, making him contribute largely, as I shall show *fully* another time, *towards the support of the poor in Scotland*.

The lawyer begins with the year 1750. Then the Poor-rates amounted to 689,971*l.* in the year. And, the *whole of the taxes* of that year amounted to 9,250,501*l.* Was not *this*, even this, a thing to be stated, when a man was wanting to put a stop to the "*evil*" of increasing Poor-rates? The Poor-rates in 1815 amounted he says, to 6,000,000 and odd pounds: and did not the taxes amount to more than 60,000,000 of pounds.

Now, then, let us see how the labourer has been affected by this taxing and paper-money system. I have recently shown, in my Letter to *Mr. Attwood*, how the labourer has been robbed since the days of *TULL*; but, I will now take a little later period. It will be seen by a reference to that letter, that, in the time of *TULL*, the labourer received 6*s.* a week, and that wheat was then 3*s.* a bushel. Now, in 1815, the wages had *not been doubled* in the same county; and the wheat, on an average of years for many years before 1815, had been at about 12*s.* a bushel, which is *four times the price* in the time of *TULL*. But, besides this, his taxes have been *tripled*. The detail of the effects of this infernal system of paper-money upon the labourer will be seen in *Appendix No. III.*, which was written by the late *Mr. Baverstock* of *Alton*, Hampshire, and who took the materials from account-books of his father's, in his possession. It was published in the Register of 14th of Oct. 1809. The following table from it will show how the English labourer has been treated, and will also show the *true cause* of the increase of the Poor-rates:—

COMPARISON.

	1760.			1809.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Week's Wages	0	7	0	0	10	0
Flour per bushel	0	5	10	0	16	8
Bread per gallon	0	0	8	0	2	4
Bacon per pound	0	0	6	0	1	2
Butcher's meat per pound	0	0	4	0	0	8

	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Cheese per pound.....	0 0 4	0 0 10
Malt per bushel	0 3 6	0 12 0
Butter per pound	0 0 6	0 1 6
Soft sugar do.	0 0 3	0 0 10
Soap and candles do.	0 0 6	0 1 3
Pair men's shoes	0 5 0	0 12 0
Do. women's	0 3 0	0 7 6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1 0 5	2 16 9

Here is the *truth*; here is the real cause of the increase of the Poor-rates. Here, you see, that, in 1760, when the late King came to the throne, the husbandry labourer had to work not quite *three weeks* to get this list of articles; but, when the *Jubilee* was kept, the labourer had to work almost *six weeks* to get this list of the necessaries of life! I beg you to read the whole article, in No. III. of the *Appendix*, and to join me in revering the memory of the humane author, who put upon paper these proofs of the oppression of the infernal paper-money system. Observe, that a man does not want a pair of shoes so often as he wants a bushel of *flour* and a pound of *bacon* and a bushel of *malt*. These, and the cheese and butter are his *living*. In summer he wants no candles, and in winter little in amount compared with his bread and meat. Now, then, observe.

	1760	1809
	s. d.	s. d.
Bushel flour	5 10	16 8
Pound bacon	0 6	1 2
Pound butter	0 6	1 6
Pound cheese	0 4	0 10
Bushel malt	3 6	12 0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	10 8	31 2

So, you see, to get these, a man had to work, in 1760, when the late King came to the throne, NINE DAYS AND AN HOUR. But in the *Jubilee year*, he had to work, to get the same articles, almost NINETEEN DAYS!

Thus, then, in the year 1809, the English labourer was in such a state that he was robbed of one-half of his earnings, compared with his state of 1760. Talk of *increase of Poor-rates* indeed! The thing now called Poor-rates is a fund *first taken from the labourer's wages*, and then given back to such poor souls as would actually perish without relief. Neither landlords nor farmers nor any body but the labourers of various descriptions have suffered from war and taxation and loans *until now*. And *now*, when the labourer begins to take a step back again towards happiness, we have project upon project for the cure of "*Agricultural Distress*." The farmers got rich, the landlords got rich, the fund-lords, the lords of the loom and of the anvil; they all got rich; and, oh, what a "*rich nation*" it was! What a "*deal of capital*." But all came out of the flesh and blood and bones of the labourers, and particularly the *English labourers in husbandry*, who were chained to the spot and the plough, and who had no means of *combining*, of *turning out*, or of making, in any way, a stand against the horrible oppression.

The whole number of these labourers, taking in the labour of women and boys and girls, and allowing a certain portion of their labour to be reckoned as the labour of a man, does not amount to less than 2,500,000.

Then there are the smiths, wrights, collar-makers, and country handicraftsmen, who have all been kept down in the same proportion. These two classes make more than four millions, if we allow something for the *rather less* oppressed handicraftsmen in towns, and the *rather less* oppressed manufacturers. And all these have been receiving, one with another, on an average of the last thirty years, or thereabouts, *nineteen pounds a-year each less than he ought to have received*. Here are nearly *eighty millions a year deducted from the wages of labour!* No wonder, that Mr. BENETT of Wiltshire (now a gentleman *in-doors* for that county) came, with other landlords and farmers in 1814, or 1815, to a *resolution* (afterwards put into a *petition*) that they had *cheerfully paid all taxes*, and were willing still to pay all taxes, Income-tax and all, if the Government would but secure them "*remunerating prices!*" No wonder; for, as long as they had those prices, and gave "a gallon loaf and 3d. a week to every person in a labourer's family," they well knew, that the taxes *all* came out of the labourer's bones.

I beg your attention, my friend, to this remarkable circumstance. Never did the farmers, never did the landlords complain of the *taxes*, until *now*. "Give us *remunerating price*," said they! That is to say, in fact, enable us to continue to deduct one-half from the wages due to labour. I have talked to many many farmers during the last twenty years, and I never could get but a comparatively few of them to listen to me on the subject of the *taxes* and the *Debt*. There answer was, "*government must be supported*, or else what is to become of *our property*." I used to endeavour to convince them, that, sooner or later, that property would go to cram the maw of the monster. They were always for *the war*: they *laughed at reform*: and the main mass of them were always ready to persecute, even to *death*, any one who endeavoured to obtain that object. In short, their constantly increasing riches naturally made them like the thing that puffed them up; and they felt most viciously and malignantly towards every man who ever made use of *words* in disapprobation of the system; aye, that same system which is now bringing them down upon their very knees. They were the forwardest in every thing calculated to uphold the infernal paper-system. *Jubilees, rejoicings* of all sorts, *Pitt-Clubs*, hunting down, first *Jacobins*, and then *Radicals*; in every thing of the kind they took the lead, having the parsons and landlords for prompters and backers-on. "*Government must be supported*" was their motto; and their motive was, *riches to themselves*. The sort of government that was going on gave *them gain*; and, as to the labourer's perishing, they cared nothing about that.

Their viciousness, their spite, their malice, their brutality towards every one who showed a disposition to put a stop to the ruinous system were carried to lengths perfectly monstrous. The week after I had been sent to prison, in 1810, for remarking on the flogging of local-militia men, at ELY, under a guard of Germans, with a sentence upon my head of *two years in Newgate, a thousand pounds fine to the King, and bonds for seven years*, five of these big farmers were spanking along the road to Fareham Market, cracking their whips, and bawling out their big talk to each other, when, coming to a spot where a man of mine was putting up a fence to protect a little plantation that I had made in the spring of that year, they bawled out to him: "Where be the *hiron bars!*" And then set up a horse-laugh to be heard for a mile. *Four*, out of the five, of these vagabonds, who hated me, because my conduct towards my labour-

ers was a reproach upon them, have, since that day, *passed through a jail*, and are now crawling wretches, who would think themselves happy to be in my service. The fifth vagabond *staggers*, I hear; and certain I am that Christmas will see him brought down.

However, let me be just all through. If I have known brutes like these amongst the farmers, I have known, and I still know, and am sure I always shall know, many of a different description. Amongst farmers I count my best and most beloved friends. The most sensible and best men that I have known, either in America or in England, were and are farmers, and large farmers too. Their pursuits I delight in. The natural turn of their conversation is what I prefer to all others. Their very calling and state of life are calculated to make strong and wise and good men; to put a sound mind into a sound body. Such the farmers of Old England were, and, nothing but the infernal Pitt system of paper-money could have changed their character. It is with great satisfaction that I state, that those farmers whom I have had the happiness to have for *friends*, have *not been brought down*, and *will not be brought down*, by this change in the state of things. They are all of them firm as rocks. The truth is, they have *profited* from my *warnings*: they have been upon their *guard*: they have seen that the infernal system could not last for ever. Many, doubtless, whom I have never personally known, have been *friends* also, and will have profited in like manner.

To return from this digression, let me beg you, and all the Reformers, to bear in mind, that the landlords and farmers never said a word against the *Debt* and *taxes* as long as *high prices lasted*; that is to say, as long as the taxes came out of the sweat of the labouring man. Paper-money was the finest thing in the world. It created such "*prosperity*." It made *roads* and *canals* and *bridges* and new *enclosures*. It found out such lots of *new manures*. It *enclosed all the wastes*. And, so it did; but, not by conjuration; not by witchcraft; but by deductions made from the *meals of the millions*; by making the millions go *half-naked*; by making the millions sit *shivering in the cold*; by making the millions *creep under rugs laid on beds of straw*.

As for the *correctness* of the above table, we all know that the part relating to 1809 is correct; and, we have only to look at TULL's prices of 17 years before (see letter to ATTWOOD) to be satisfied that Mr. BAVENSTOCK's prices are correct; and, indeed, they are much less *favourable* to the labourer than TULL's were. In fact, I myself remember almost all the prices. I remember the gallon-loaf at 9d., and I was not born till 1766. I remember mutton at 4d. I remember bacon at 6d. And I never knew the wages so low as 7s. Hundreds of thousands of men, now alive, know, from memory, the thing to be true. But, if this be *not true*, let some lawyer or some parson show us the contrary. They cannot, and they dare not attempt it.

No wonder, then, that the big farmers mounted their hunting horses, and that *pianos* got into their houses. No wonder, that they never sought, and do not *now seek*, for a *reduction of taxes* or for anything but *high price*. No wonder that they were "*loyal*," and that they were ready to run their swords down the throats of all the poor creatures that were "*disaffected*." No wonder that they burnt "*Tom Paine*" in effigy, and felt such a holy zeal against "*blasphemers*." No wonder that the upstarts called the labourers "*the peasantry*," and made them stand, cap-in-hand, trembling before them.

Lawyers, attorneys, parsons, landlords, lords of the loom and of the anvil, bankers and fund-lords, all *throve*. New houses rose up everywhere. Scrip-castles started out of the earth. London was enlarged and embellished. The wars went on. Subsidies boundless were squandered. Even the printing for the Parliament has cost a million or two. Secret Service grants have amounted to millions since the war began. The world *wondered*, and we ourselves *wondered* (I never did after 1803) how such *prosperity* could co-exist with such *taxation*. But these wonderers did not go, as I did after an absence from the scenes of about twenty years, into the labourer's dwelling, and see the misery, which had there come to oust the neatness and happiness which I had, in those dwellings, formerly beheld! The *clock* was gone; the *brass kettle* was gone; the *pewter plates* were gone; the *beer barrel* was gone; the *brass candlesticks* were gone; the *warming-pan* was gone; the *brass-topped dog-irons* were gone; the *half-dozen silver spoons and the two table-spoons* were gone; the *feather-bed* was gone; the *Sunday-coat* was gone! All was gone! How miserable, how deplorable, how changed that labourer's dwelling, which I, only twenty years before, had seen so neat and so happy!

Some will say, and they have had the assurance to say, that these pictures of misery are *false*; or, at least, greatly *exaggerated*; and that the labourers are as well, or nearly as well off, as they formerly were. Now, then, observe, that, in 1743, we have indubitable testimony, the *lowest labouring man earned two bushels of the best wheat in a week*; and that this was his common pay. Pray mark what I am going to say. This was the state of the labourer in 1743. When we come to 1760, then we find, from Mr. BAYERSTOCK'S table, that the labourer earned in a week only *a bushel and two-fifths of wheat*. Now, mind, in 1743, there was but *very little paper-money*; for, no notes had ever been issued under TWENTY POUNDS! (See *Paper against Gold*, Letter I. page 12, new edition.) But, a war came on before 1760; and that brought out notes so low as FIFTEEN, and, afterwards, TEN POUNDS. *Prices, therefore, rose*; but, you see, the labourer's wages, though they rose a *shilling* in the seventeen years, *did not keep pace with the rise in the price of food*. Now, mind again, when Pitt's Burke-war began, out came notes to the amount of FIVE POUNDS, *country-banks* having begun to grow up in the meanwhile. Here was another pull at the labourer, and, accordingly, *the Poor-rates began to rise in an unusual degree*. Mark this well. Then, in seven years afterwards, came the ONE POUND NOTES, and, by 1815, up went the Poor-rates to SIX MILLIONS, from the SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS, that they were at in the time of TULL!

This is what Lawyer SCARLETT should not have omitted. This is what a man having anything to do with *making laws* should have gone, upon such an occasion, very fully into. This should, with such a man, have been subject of inquiry, before he brought in a *bill to check marriage* amongst the labouring classes; a bill in direct violation of the laws of God, as explained by the Liturgy of our Church; a bill so harsh in its tone, and so full of violence.

The lawyer states, and I suppose correctly, the amount of the *Poor-rates*. But, he says nothing about the *deduction from wages*. Let us see, now, how the matter stands. I shall suppose, that the Poor-rates were about the same in 1750 as they were in TULL'S time, that is in

1743. Let us divide the whole time, from 1743 to 1815, into *ages*, distinguished by the amount of the *lowest* bank-notes that were issued.

	Wages a week.	Bushels of Wheat.	Poor Rates.
	£.	s.	£
20l. note age	6	3	689,963
15l. note age	7	5	1,530,804
10l. note age	—	—	2,437,963
5l. and 1l. note age	10	12	6,129,000

Was not this a matter that Lawyer SCARLETT ought to have taken into view before he proposed an Act to prevent the labourers from marrying! His Bill, he said, "was not a *thing hastily taken up*." It had been the subject of his meditations *for years*! Bless his head! And is this all he could hatch in all that time? Could he not find a moment to look after the *cause of the evil*? Nay, could he not see it, when it stared him so directly in the face! When it came and stood right before him, and said, "Look at me, lawyer!" Strange perverseness of mental vision! Did *cause* and *effect* ever so obviously appear? Was *cause* ever so visible before? And did *effect* ever so clearly follow cause? For the *ten-pound note age* I have no sure source to get at prices of wages; but, we see the Poor-rates keep pace with the *note*; that is to say, we see the note lowered, we see that *more paper-money got out*, and we see the Poor-rates rise. The wages, observe, are taken for the common *labourer in husbandry*, and that, too, in the *western counties*. The wages were sometimes higher of late in more populous parts; but there rents and everything else were higher in proportion. TULL's county was *Berkshire*, on the borders of Wiltshire; and there, for that very Wiltshire, Mr. BENNETT, before quoted, has furnished us with the *labourer's bill of fare in the glorious time of high prices*: "A GALLON-LOAF AND THREE-PENCE A WEEK FOR EACH PERSON IN A LABOURER'S FAMILY!" That is to say, about eighteen ounces of bread a day, no meat, and nothing else of food, and THREE PENCE to find *drink, clothing, washing, fire, light, and lodging* for the week! Gracious God! And is this England! And was this what was allowed by English magistrates to English labourers in husbandry! And, at this very moment was Mr. WILBERFORCE receiving incessant plaudits for his *humane exertions* in favour of the black slaves in the colonies! And, did he never utter one word in behalf of the poor creatures, the wretched human beings of Wiltshire, who did, and do, boil the tea-kettle at each other's houses *alternately*, not being able to get fuel even for that miserable purpose each in his own house! What an "*Englishman's castle*" that must be where the kettle is not boiled! Talk of *security*; talk of *freedom*; talk of *rights* and *liberties*; talk of *glorious constitution* to a people in *this state*! It is the grossest mockery, the basest insult, that ever was offered to the mind of man.

But, have we no *other recent undeniable proofs*, that the *high prices* have ruined and starved the labourer? Listen, then, Lawyer SCARLETT, gentle, amiable Scarlett, pray listen! One witness has told GAFFER GOOCH's committee, that the *servants in husbandry were turned out of the houses, when the high prices began*. Another has told the Committee, that, *forty years ago*, every labourer in the parish *brewed his own beer*, and that, *now none do it*. A third has told the Committee, that, in *Somersetshire*, the labourers eat little, or none,

even of *bread*; and that they carry *cold potatoes to the field to eat!* God Almighty! Again, I ask, is this England! Is this the country of *roast-beef!* Is this that same nation that used to laugh at the *frog-eaters of France!* And shall we have another proposition for making *corn dear*, whether by *corn-bills* or new *issues of paper-money?* If we do but I dare not utter what my heart suggests.

If Lawyer SCARLETT had taken this view of the matter, would he have talked, or thought of such a miserable thing as his bill? Seeing that the evil had arisen from causes such as I have proved it to have arisen from, would he have thought of putting a stop to it by *checking the marriage of labourers?* We call the nation "*rich*" and "*great*:" we hear everlasting boasts of *prosperity*; and, at the same time, we have propositions before us, seriously made, to *check* the increase, actually to *check the breeding* of the people! Nations have hitherto *boasted* of their increase of population; and good ground of boast it is, when all are well fed and well clad out of their earnings. Something, therefore, must be *radically wrong*, when any man, not absolutely a fool or mad fellow, can talk and be heard talk, too, about the necessity of *checking population*. And this becomes tenfold more outrageous, when, at the same time, the Government boasts, and the nation itself boasts of *prosperity*. We have had thirty years of *prosperity* and *glory*; and, at the close of the thirty years, there is a man found to bring in a bill to *check the breeding of the labourers*, lest the land should not yield enough to feed them.

It was not *prosperity*; it was not *national wealth*. It was a tricky, showy, false thing altogether. It was means of happiness taken from the labouring classes to enrich the other classes. It was a stripping and gutting of the labourer's dwelling, and keeping him in a state of half starvation, to enable the others to build fine houses and live sumptuously. This is what it was; and this was effected by the means of a false money, in which the wages were paid. *National wealth* it was not. *Augmentation of capital* it was not. That which made a show in the hands of the *thousands* had been deducted from the labour of the *millions*. The labourer's *clock* was gone; his *feather bed* was gone; his *beer-barrel* and his *bacon* were gone; his *Sunday-coat* was gone; even his *bread* was gone, and as it is in evidence before the Committee of GAFFER GOOCH, he was "*eating cold potatoes in the field.*" But, these were not gone *out of the kingdom*. Assuming new shapes, they appeared in the splendid mansions, the luxurious furniture, the rich attire, and "*grand dinners,*" of the *gainers!* With *them* all was *prosperous*. With *them* the system was a blessing. The paper-money enabled them to extract profits as well as taxes from the labourer's bones.

We are *now*, my good friend, come to the *proof* of all this. *Gold* is *come*. It will soon get about the country. The labourer is about to be paid in *true money*. Well, and *come*. The labourer is now paid in a *true money*. And, what do we hear? Why, that the landlords, the farmers, the loom-lords, and the anvil-lords, *are ruined!* They have *now* begun to discover, that *economy* and *retrenchment* are wanted. They *now* begin to discover, that *the taxes are too high*. They *now* begin to think and to say, that the fund-lords have *too much!* We heard of none of these complaints as long as the vile paper-money enabled them to deduct the taxes and their own immense gains into the bargain out of the *wages of labour!* All was *then* right, according to them; and every man who said that it was not right was hunted out of existence.

Is it not a curious thing to behold : the landlord, the farmer, the loom-lord, the ship-lord, the bank-lord *ruined* by the *very measure* that fills the labourer's belly, clothes his back, and makes his heart glad ! It was not *augmentation of capital*. It was a deduction from the wages of labour ; and that deduction, *if Peel's Bill be persevered in*, is now put an end to ; and, *therefore* it is, that that Bill is *ruining* all the descriptions of persons just mentioned. But, mark the punishment *now* falling upon the heads of those who have thriven by this deduction from the wages of labour. Mark this. Immense sums were *borrowed*. No matter to *them* ; for, as I have shown, the *interest* came out of the bones of the labouring classes, by the necessary operation of a false money. But *now*, who is to pay the *interest* ? The labourer, in his taxes, will still pay his *full share* ; but he will get his just wages ; and will pay no more than his share. Then, there is a *great army* and *great half-pay*, and monstrous establishments of barracks and the like. What did these arise out of ? Why, out of the *discontents of the people* ! This is notorious. It has, a thousand times over, been asserted in Parliament, and Lawyer SCARLETT himself, in his speech against the poor silly Rump-tool at Lancaster, the other day, said that "*a larger army than formerly was necessary*." He said that, "*during seasons of public distress and calamity*, " it too often happened, that those who were *not the best judges*, though "*they were the most numerous and severe sufferers*, adopted opinions "*which led to consequences most dangerous*. It became necessary, "*under such circumstances, to check the measures which these persons* "*might be pursuing. Occasional symptoms of discontent might require* "*the presence of the military*."

What do we want more than this confession ? Here is the great standing army, in a time of profound peace, traced, at once, to the *sufferings* of the most *numerous class* ; and we have only to look at TULL and at Mr. BAVERSTOCK's table of the effects of the paper-money to see what was *the cause of those sufferings*. And here let us stop a moment to remark on the Lawyer's observation as to the *want of judgment* in the sufferers. What did they ask for ? Why, a *reform of the Parliament*, and such a reform as would put it in their power to choose persons to speak *their wishes* ; to make laws *for their good*. They were laughed at, and asked, whether voting at elections would give them *more food and better clothes*. They answered, *yes* ; and, well they might ; for, is it to be supposed, that men chosen by themselves would have enacted the *combination-law*, or have suffered the *combination-law* to remain in force ? Is it to be supposed, that men chosen by themselves would not have put a stop to a system that was deducting half their wages from them, making them bear all the expenses of the war and of the loans, and reducing them to cold potatoes and to rags ? Faith their "*judgment*" was sound enough, Lawyer SCARLETT, and this has been now most amply proved by events.

But, to return : the approach to *real money* and the consequent *check to the deduction from the labourer's wages are placing the saddle upon the right horse* ; and how this lately high-mettled steed winces and capers and jibs it is quite curious and diverting to behold ! He pranced about gaily before, and snorted, as if in a fright, when the poor, plodding, bare-boned cart or pack-horse came near him, approaching by stealth to pick up the orts from under his rack and manger. But *now*, that gold is bringing things to rights again ; now, that the *payment* of the army is

coming, in fair proportions, on the shoulders of all the community, it will soon be discovered, that the army is *too large*. And, observe, that the *soldier and sailor gain along with the labourer* from the rise in the value of money. They are the *sons and the brothers* of the labourers. It is impossible, that the soldier and sailor should, *in this way*, be benefited, without that benefit being felt by their kindred and friends. So that, as the paper-system worked in all sorts of ways *against* the labouring classes, the gold system, the honest system, the truly loyal system, will work in all sorts of ways *for* those same classes. Even the *gallant yeomanry cavalry* will soon be found *unnecessary*; for now the expense of maintaining them will not come out of the sums deducted from the wages of labour. This burden amongst others will fall upon *all classes* alike, except the class of fund-lords and others who live on the taxes; and though the labourer will bear his full share, still that will not much hurt him. The gallant yeomanry will have *nobody to keep down*, if the honest gold-system be persevered in. Nay, it is quite within the compass of possibility, that the Government will have to rely on the labouring classes for the means of being able to set the gallant yeomanry's threats at defiance, which *threats* have actually begun to make their appearance *in print*.

This is a thing well worthy of particular attention. It is a striking corroboration of the correctness of my statements and reasoning. Indeed, what can be more striking than the fact, that those very *yeomanry cavalry*, who were quite pleased with a state of things, in which they paid much *heavier taxes* than they pay now, and which state of things enabled them to *deduct half the wages of labour*, are become raving mad, and even *threaten* the Government, when they see danger of *being no longer able to make that deduction*! The publication which I more immediately allude to, is one by the *younger John Ellman*, a big farmer in Sussex and son-in-law of another big fellow of the name of BOYCE, whom PITT used, they say, actually to associate with during his WALMER excursions. This ELLMAN, about three weeks ago, addressed a letter, in print, to LORD LIVERPOOL, which, after a long and senseless heap of stuff in favour of another and *more efficient Corn-Bill*, he concludes in the following words:

" My Lord, there is also another subject, which is a *delicate* one to touch on, but a *sense of duty* compels me to remind your Lordship, how frequently we see *the most loyal of men*, driven by loss of property (even though occasioned by their own imprudence), into despair, and attributing all their misfortunes *to the Government* of the country. If then, my Lord, we see such daily the case, where misfortunes have arisen from a man's own acts, is it not to be *feared* that *many of the yeomanry*, whom ruin, not chargeable on themselves, must overwhelm, unless relief be given, *will charge their ruin on the Government*? Can your Lordship suppose that the yeomanry alone are free from *natural infirmities*? If there is any one class of society to whom we are indebted for *the safety of the empire*, during the most eventful period of the late war, it is to *the yeomanry*, who, ever loyal to their king, by their example and influence with the *peasantry*, rendered the attempts of *instigators of mischief* at once nugatory and hopeless. But, my Lord, I hope better things. I cannot believe that their *services are forgotten*, and will be so required as to suffer them to fall without one single effort to save them. I have this very day attended our weekly market at Lewes, and to hear the universal complaints and predictions of speedy ruin, is enough to appal the heart of any one who has *embarked his property in agriculture*. There is but one general inquiry—Will Government do anything for our relief? To this I answer, that it is, in my opinion, *impossible to believe that the Government will not assist us*. And although ruin has already overtaken so many, I cannot believe but that

Parliament will interpose its *powerful arm*, and save the remainder from destruction; in *which case*, I *boldly* assert, that however the feelings of some may have been *temporarily changed*, when occasion calls, the Government of this country will ever find the yeomanry at their post, *ready to repress disaffection*, preserve our *invaluable Constitution*, and defend that *property* which Government is *so imperiously bound to interpose and save.*"

It is not worth while to waste time on this variegated bunch of stinking flowers, taken from the parterre of ignorance and impudence. These fellows "*saved the empire*," did they? Why, then, though they staid at home, armed cap-a-pied, to keep down the labourers' mothers, wives, sisters and children, while the labourers were abroad shedding their blood for their king and country; why, then, I say, if these fellows "*saved the empire*," the "*empire*" *is saved*, and a pretty sort of *salvation* it is! But, mind, this agricultural-ass *fears* that "*many of the yeomanry may charge their ruin on the Government*," if the Government do not give them relief; that is to say, high prices; and, in conclusion, he says, that some of them have been "*temporarily changed*;" but, that, IN CASE (this is the condition, mind!) the Government *give them high prices again*, he "*boldly asserts*," that the yeomanry will be *found at their post*. Aye, at their post! That is to say, at their old work of *deducting wages from labour*, galloping over "*disaffection*" for cold potatoes and water, and preserving the "*invaluable constitution*" of paper-money, which gave them that "*property*" which consisted of gains extracted from the labourer's bones. "*Bold*" Ellman; "*loyal*" Ellman, who have been "*temporarily changed*" by the change from high to low prices; lofty agricultural-ass, LORD LIVERPOOL will give you *no answer* to carry to Lewes, but I will give one in his Lordship's stead: "*Bold*" Ellman; "*loyal*" Ellman; the Government has the *people*, the *millions*, at its back; and it can "*boldly*" bid you go to the devil, and make to the King of Hell a tender of that "*loyalty*" which depends upon a continuation of a privilege to grind and insult the labouring man; and, if you want an introduction to his Majesty, here's a *lawyer*, long acquainted with the Court, who, I'll engage, shall give *you* a character, if you will give *him* a fee.

Friend HAYES, have I not said enough, and more than enough, to show, that the very foundation of Lawyer SCARLETT's scheme is wholly rotten? Have I not shown, that there has been no *increase of poor-rates properly so called*? Have I not proved, that whatever has been paid in that shape, has come out of the wages due to labour? Have I not proved, that it is, in fact, the deductions from labour, that has paid all the taxes for many years past? Have I not proved, that it *was* from *this fund*, and this fund *only*, that came the expenses of the war and the interest of the debt? Have I not proved, that it was the drawing of the food and apparel and goods of the *millions* away, and putting the amount of them into the hands of the thousands that gave the *false glare of prosperity*? Have I not proved that all this, and all the degradation of the labouring classes, and all the consequent temptation to crime, proceeded from, and were the natural and inevitable effects of, the accursed paper-money, and were in nowise connected with that wise, humane, and just code, called the Poor-laws of England, which, as I have shown, did no more than restore to the labouring classes *rights* and *property* of which they had been robbed? All this I have proved; and, therefore, I might, if I pleased, leave Lawyer SCARLETT and his Bill to go quietly and silently

off the stage, and let them sink into that oblivion, to which assuredly they are finally destined.

But there is something, which, as to *point of time*, gives this Bill a peculiar character of *absurdity*; or, else, a character of *cruelty* equally peculiar. Of all times in the world, why choose *this time* for the introducing of such a measure? It is notorious, that the labouring classes are *better off than they were*. It *must be* that this change has been worked by the *fall of prices*. Those prices are still falling; the *deduction of wages* is ceasing; the labourers are getting their due again. And, behold, just at this very time, when the bubble of paper-money has burst, forth comes Lawyer SCARLETT with a "*Whereas,*" *lest the relief given to the poor should finally leave the poor without relief!* Upon the very face of things, without supposing Lawyer SCARLETT at all capable of entering into an inquiry as to *causes*; this was the time, if he really had been thinking about the thing *for years*, for waiting a *little longer*, to see what turn things would take; to observe that "*general working of events* (beautiful, *statesman-like* thought!) of which my good Lord CASTLEREAGH so very recently talked. But, no! in true lawyer-like way, the *brief was ready*, and out it must come.

If the Ministers hold *firm* to their solemnly-declared resolution (and, if they do not, everlasting shame will fall upon them, while what is called "*public credit,*" will be blasted, and blown to air); if the Ministers hold *firm*, the labourer in husbandry will be as well off this day twelvemonth as he was *forty years ago*; for, though he will still have to pay heavier taxes than he paid then, this will, in some degree, be compensated for by the *higher wages*; for, mind, the master will *never be able to get him down in proportion to the fall in the price of food*. Only this very morning a chimney-sweeper, who had swept my kitchen chimney, came to my study (none of the rest of my family being up) to be paid *eighteen pence*.

"Eighteen pence! Is not that a good deal?"—"I have had that price *for years* for sweeping that chimney."

"Yes; and that's the very reason why you ought not to have so much *now*."—"Why so, Sir?"

"Why? Why eighteen pence will now buy twice as much bread as it bought then."—"I *don't know anything about that*, Sir; but, then think of the *soot!*"

"Soot! what is the soot *to me*. You have it now, and you could no *more* than have it before."—"Aye, Sir; but I used to sell it for 20d. *a bushel*. I used to have it bought up faster than I could get it; and *now* I have got waggon-loads, and cannot get 7d. for it."

"So, then, as sweep you gain, and as soot-merchant you lose?"—"Just so, Sir."

"Here, then, take your 18d. But (calling him back), what do people *do* without your soot now?"—"I don't know I'm sure; but, I *'spose* they have got no money now things be *low*, and that they pay men in *virtuals*, and till the ground more and don't buy soot."

"There! there!" said I, "say no more: you are no sweep: you're a philosopher. Go; go to SCARLETT! for God's sake go to SCARLETT!"—"Scarlett!" said he.

"Aye," said I, "it is not anything of that *colour*; it is a *man*; and *his dress* very much resembles yours, except his *wig*, which ought to *have* under it a little of what you have got in that black head of yours."

—"O!" said he, drawing down his chin, turning up the whites of his eyes, and smiling, "I 'spose you mean a lawyer!" And, giving himself a gentle turn, as much as to say, "no thank ye!" off he walked to his soot-bag with his 18d. in his pocket.

For proof of the truth of this anecdote, and, indeed, for instruction in matters of political economy, I refer Lawyer SCARLETT to Mr. JAMES MITCHELL, a very respectable chimney-sweeper, No. 7, Jennings's-buildings, Kensington.

However, there needs no positive evidence; there needs no matter of fact, to convince us, that the wages will *keep behind* food, while the food is going down, as they did while the food was going up. This is so clear, it is so obvious, it arises so directly out of the nature of things, that it must be so. Things certainly will, in consequence of this, be in a *disturbed state for awhile*. The breaking of farmers; the transfer of real property and of occupation; the shifting of the profits of labour from one class to the other: these will necessarily occasion a sort of unfixtness and a species of silent struggle; but, before next November; after the harvest has brought all hands into play once more, all will be to rights. Thousands upon thousands of young men and women and boys and girls will be taken into farm-houses next Old Michaelmas Day. They, at any rate, will no longer be "the *people out of doors*;" and I do not think that that contemptuous appellation will be given to the people of England for one year longer! Wheat in *Darlington Market* (County of Durham) sold, on Monday, the 7th instant, at from 4s. 6d. to 4s. 9d. a bushel. At *Norwich* it does not bring more, I believe, on an average, than 5s. In *Sussex* it scarcely exceeds 5s. 6d. In *Hampshire* little is got beyond 5s. I said, long ago, that, if the Ministers *stood firm*, wheat would be at 5s. a bushel *by the first of June*; and I am satisfied, that the average price of the kingdom does not, at this moment, exceed the five shillings. Is any man, is even Lawyer SCARLETT, stupid enough to imagine, that wages will come down in this proportion? O, no! The tables are turned; and the lately gaining employer and landlord will find, that they never can bring down wages in any thing like the proportion of the fall in the price of food. His affairs *will not wait!* The *work must be done*. Cattle must be fed, corn must be cut, housed, and threshed; land must be ploughed and seed sown. Dinner must be cooked at gentlemen's houses. Affairs cannot *wait*; and wages, in their fall, will keep far behind provisions. Many of the present farmers will be broken up by the struggle. But, as to the *main part*, they will accommodate themselves to the times. The very rich ones, who have made such a *show*, will be too proud to come down and to do justice to the labourer. They will *retire*, as a prudent winner does from a gambling-table. There will be no more gambling farming; no more adventurers; no more anticipation and accommodation work. And, from a stoppage to these will arise a *dividing of the farms*, which, at the moment that I am writing, is actually going on. The *new farmers* must come out of the *labouring classes*; and thus things will work their way back. There is, at present, in *large towns*, a struggle between the *retailers of food* and the *consumers*. Flour is sold to the London bakers at about 40s. a sack, and yet, the quartern loaf is kept up to 9d. almost generally. We have a man *here* who sells at 7½d., but this is not general. For my own part, I would, as we did once in New Brunswick, bake my bread in the ashes, or live on puddings, rather than give 9d. while I ought to give, at most,

no more than 6d. However, this is a matter that will settle itself in time; but, here again is a proof of the difficulty of bringing down, by *direct means*, the prices of any thing of which labour forms a part. We must have the *baker*. We cannot wait. And so it goes all round; ploughman, cook, footman; they must be had; and, if one be turned off, another must be got *immediately*; and all are of the same mind.

Thus, then, things are working to *reduce the Poor-rates*; those rates must, from the nature of things, be *reduced*. Even they will fall *slowly at first*; but, in the course of two years they will be so small as to be, as in former times, unworthy of attention. Therefore, Lawyer SCARLETT comes *too late* with his *celibacy-bill*; his bill for *checking breeding*; or, at least, for keeping up the population by "*love-children*," as the country girls very delicately, feelingly, and justly call them. When Henry the Eighth persisted in forbidding priests to marry, somebody told him, that "if the priests could not have wives, *the wives would have priests*." This, under the operation of Lawyer SCARLETT's Bill, would be very much the case with the young fellows and the girls. His Bill, therefore, to be of any effect, must go further, and make England as famed for *singers* as Italy. He must, at once, declare the labourers to be *live stock*, and authorize those operations upon them, to which male and female pigs are compelled to submit; and, in that case, I think, PARSON MALTHUS might with propriety be made *operator-general*.

O, no! Lawyers may sport, and they have sported, with our civil rights and liberties; they can sport with the *laws of the land*; but Lawyer SCARLETT cannot abrogate or explain away the *laws of nature*. He cannot stifle the fire of youth; he cannot still the emotions of the heart; he cannot arrest the progress of the propensity of those emotions. His rough and harsh lawyer-like mind may conceive the idea; but, here *coercion* will fail, and the attempt, if the Ministers were weak enough to adopt it, would cover them also with that ridicule, which is at present the projector's exclusive possession. Yet, even the attempt, absurd as it is, yields, in that respect, to the point of *time* chosen for making it! The Lawyer came too late; the Ministers had adopted a train of measures that must of necessity render the Bill wholly unnecessary, null, and void of all effect and meaning: and, in this state of things, when the *cause*, and the *only cause*, of the evil was doomed to *cease*, out comes Lawyer SCARLETT with his "Whereas, and for *remedy thereof*!"

"Like Martin Marr-all, gaping on,
When music and the song were done."

DRYDEN thought, I dare say, when he had invented a lover, whose mistress was fond of good singing, and who, in giving her a serenade aided by the voice of a disguised singer, while she looked out of the window, opened his own mouth and stretched it about to make her believe the voice was his, but who let her discover the cheat by his forgetting to cease to wag his chaps when the song was over; when Dryden had got this character upon paper, he thought, I dare say, that he had pushed credibility to its utmost extent: but, Dryden had never heard of a Lawyer SCARLETT and a Bill to put a check to the breeding of the labouring classes.

Let us hope that this Bill is the last of the unnatural offspring of that accursed paper-money system, which has, as I have clearly proved, starved and degraded the labouring classes of England. Many thou-

sands, who have supported this system, have not been aware of the manner in which it worked, and from these I will not be so unjust as to exclude the Ministers themselves, Pitt and all; for, it is impossible to believe, that human beings could have *intentionally* invented and fostered so cruel and hellish a system. The Ministers are now doing all they can do to restore us to happiness; for, to talk of *happiness*, national *prosperity* and *happiness*, while the *millions* are in a state of starvation and degradation, is almost blasphemy. The Ministers, in spite of all the base endeavours to intimidate them, have given us *gold* and a return to a *just balance for the labourer*. This it was *their* duty to do. If the landlords pay *too much to the fund-lords*, let them obtain a law for their relief. If they find the army, the pensions, the salaries, the grants to clergy, to emigrants, to military academies, to yeomanry cavalry; if they find these too expensive, too high to be paid in gold; let them appeal to the Parliament for relief. But, let them make no attempts to bring the labouring classes back under the harrow, the lacerating, the torturing harrow of paper-money.

As for me, who has so much to *forgive* as I have? Who has been so persecuted by this long train of Pittite Ministers? Yet, so grateful do I feel for the good now done to the labouring classes, that I freely forgive them; yea, *Sidmouth* and all; and I am not a little pleased at the thought, that he who made a jest of "the revered and ruptured Ogden" has withdrawn himself from all participation in this forgiveness-demanding merit. The Ministers may, nay they *must*, have been *deceived*: they were dazzled with the *splendid effects* of a plunder of the labouring class. I myself, in the early part of my writing life, was deceived in the same way; but, when, in 1814, I re-visited the English labourer's dwelling, and that, too, after having so recently witnessed the happiness of labourers in America; when I saw that the *clock* was gone; that even the *Sunday coat* was gone; when I saw those whom I had known the most neat, cheerful, and happy beings on earth, and these my own countrymen too, had become the most wretched and forlorn of human beings, I looked seriously and inquired patiently into the matter; and this inquiry into the causes of an effect which had so deep an impression on my mind, led to that series of exertions, which have occupied my whole life, since that time, to better the lot of the labourers. The unprincipled, malignant, and brazen villains, who fatten under the wings of corruption, have accused me of *inconsistency*. There are the *thirty-eight* volumes of the Register. Let them say, whether I have not constantly been labouring for nineteen years to effect such a change as should tend to restore the labouring classes to a state of happiness. Let those volumes say whether I have been *fickle*; whether I have changed and chopped about. Let those volumes say, whether the great and ever-prevailing burden of my complaints has not been, *the ruin, the starvation, the degradation of the English labouring classes by the means of taxation co-operating with an infernal paper-money system*. For many reasons have I hated and detested the system. I have hated it because it gave a predominance to suddenly-acquired wealth; because it caused Jews, jobbers, loan-mongers, East India adventurers, and all sorts of vermin, to come and domineer over the people; because it destroyed English hospitality; because it took from the people their natural magistrates, and put unfeeling wretches in their stead; because, to answer its fiscal purposes, it took away, in numerous cases, the trial by jury; be-

cause it hardened all the laws; because it made thousands the victims of irresistible temptation to imitate the base fabric of paper-money; because it engendered a race of spies and informers so abhorrent to the English heart: for these, and many other reasons, I have detested the system; but, my great and never-ceasing subject of complaint has been, *that it starved and degraded the labouring classes of England.* To this great sin of the system I have hung like a bull-dog: for the whole nineteen years I have never once quitted my hold. And, at last, I see the object of my labours about to be accomplished. I have never been actuated by any *party* motive; never have felt hostility to the Government, *as government*; never have I desired to see, but always have desired not to see, a *revolution* in the bad sense of that word. But, I have been, and I am, for *anything* that will restore the labouring classes to that happiness, which I, in my youth, saw them enjoy, and which I enjoyed with them. If the labouring classes be to perish, perish, I say, the whole nation!

Neither will take place if the Ministers hold firm. The labouring classes will again be happy, and then my happiness is complete. Not as a straw in comparison with the stack do I think of all my own sufferings and losses. Let the Westminster Don, let "*England's Glory*" chuckle at the comparison between his *three months'* walk in the King's Bench, and my two years in Newgate and thousand pounds fine and seven years recognizances; let him hug himself in the thought that the *seventy thousand pounds earned with my pen* have been squeezed from me and my family by those various acts of oppression and fraud, which afforded him the occasion to promulgate through the newspapers, as soon as my back was turned, an insinuation that I had *decamped* on account of a debt, the very existence of which he was bound in honour to keep secret; let him and his satellites, at their approaching *Rump Dinner* to celebrate "*purity of election,*" congratulate each other on the pluck that they had at my skin after the feathers were stripped off; let him promulgate private letters; let him write answers and not send them, but place copies of them to be shown at a shop in the Strand. Born to an immense estate, loaded with the accumulating wealth of ages, wallowing in money, holding, to use his own words, an enormous "*retaining fee*" in the cause of *the people*, let him pass another five-and-twenty years of big words and little deeds; and let him, if again placed before a jury of landlords and big farmers, endeavour to save himself by saying that he was a *friend of the Corn Bill*. Let him do all this over again, and anything further that his mind, or the kindred minds of Place and Adams, Cleary, Jackson, and Wright, can suggest: let me see the labourers happy; let me be rewarded by an approving silent look from them; and let him, O God! let him slide out under the apologies, and be loaded with the praises of SCARLETT!

I am, friend Hayes,

Your faithful friend

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

APPENDIX.—No. I.

**A BILL TO AMEND THE LAWS RELATING TO THE RELIEF OF
THE POOR IN ENGLAND.**

1. Whereas the Rates for the Relief of the Poor have of late years greatly increased; and if some timely check be not provided to prevent the further increase thereof, there is reason to apprehend, that the lands in many parts of England, over-burthened by the charge of maintaining the Poor, will not be worth cultivating.

2. And whereas the habits of industry and frugality are most essential to the well-being, comfort, and independence of the Labouring Classes; but the too great facility of obtaining relief, by those who are able to work, is calculated to encourage idleness, extravagance, and imprudence—the sure forerunners of poverty, misery, and vice.

3. And whereas also the Removal of the Poor who are unable to maintain themselves to the places of their settlement, is attended with great oppression to them, as well as great expense, trouble, and litigation, to the different parishes and townships from and to which they are so removed; and it is not reasonable that those who have by their labour contributed to enrich one place, should be removed to another, and often very distant place, where there is no demand for their labour, there to be maintained in sickness, and in seasons of scarcity and distress.

4. For remedy thereof, and of the several matters aforesaid; be it therefore enacted, by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after

no greater sum shall be assessed, raised, or levied, for the Relief of the Poor, in any parish, township, or place, in England, for any one year, than the sum assessed for that purpose in such parish, township, or place, for the year ending on the

5. And to the end that the amount of the sum so assessed for the last year, ending as aforesaid, may be better ascertained; be it further enacted, That the Constable or Constables of every parish, township, or place, maintaining its own poor, shall, at some Quarter or General Sessions of the Peace, to be holden within

after the passing of this Act, bring and deliver to the Clerk of the Peace for the district within which such parish, township, or place shall be, a Certificate in writing, signed by the Overseers of the Poor of such parish, township, or place, or some of them (who are hereby required, upon demand, to sign the same), of the aggregate amount of the sum so assessed for the last year upon such township or place, for the relief of the Poor; which Certificate the Clerk of the Peace is hereby required to receive and cause to be entered fairly in a book to be provided for that purpose, for which entry he shall be entitled to have, and take from the Constable bringing such Certificate, the sum of

and no more, to be allowed to the Constable in his accounts; and the Clerk of the Peace shall, and is hereby required, at all times hereafter, upon application of any person whatsoever, to furnish a copy of any such Certificate as may be required, upon receiving the fee of for his trouble.

6. And be it further enacted, That before any Rate, hereafter to be made for the Relief of the Poor, shall be allowed and signed by any of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, such Justices are hereby authorized and required to inquire into the amount of the rate or rates already made for the current year, and to ascertain that the same, together with the amount of the Rate so to be allowed and signed, does not exceed the total amount limited by this Act; provided always that in case it shall be made to appear to such Justices, that there is any increased charge in the County Rates which are payable out of the Poor Rates, which may require an additional assessment beyond the assessment for the relief of the Poor for the year last past as aforesaid, it shall be lawful for such Justices, in that case, to allow of such excess only as shall be equal to such increase of the County Rates.

7. And be it further enacted, That it shall not be lawful for any Church-

warden, Overseer, or Guardian of the Poor, or any other person having authority to administer relief to the Poor, to allow or give, or for any Justice of the Peace to order, any relief to any male person whatsoever, being single and unmarried at the time of asking such relief, by reason of age, sickness, or bodily infirmity, unable to obtain his livelihood, and to support his family by work.

8. And be it further enacted, That from and after the time that it shall not be lawful for any Justice of Peace, or other persons, to remove, or cause to be removed, any poor person or persons, against the will of such person or persons, from any parish, township, or place, to any other, by reason of such person or persons being chargeable to such parish, township, or place, or being unable to maintain him or themselves, or under colour of such person or persons being settled in any other parish, township, or place, any law or statute to the contrary notwithstanding. Provided always, That nothing in this Act shall in anywise be deemed to alter any law now in force for the punishment of vagrants.

APPENDIX.—No. II.

Mr. SCARLETT rose and said, that as the House seemed disposed that he should then state the grounds of the Bill which he intended to introduce to amend the Poor-laws, he would do so as shortly as he could. He was aware of the great magnitude of the subject. No subject, indeed, could call for more deliberate consideration. Any measure on a subject so important, was certainly deserving the support of a liberal and enlightened Government, and he was not without apprehension in bringing forward the present Bill without the previous sanction or countenance of Ministers. If he had thought that the measure, or any thing like it, would have been brought forward under the sanction of Government, he would not have obtruded it on the House. If he had any reason to believe that any member of the Committee appointed some years ago to inquire into the state of the Poor-laws, and whose Report contained so much valuable information on the subject—if any member of that Committee had shown any disposition to act upon the suggestions contained in the Report, he (Mr. Scarlett) would have altogether abstained from the subject. The subject of the Poor-laws had for many years occupied his attention. The measure which he proposed was not the result of hasty consideration, nor the effect of any deliberation of his since the Report of the Committee had been published. He had not an opportunity of seeing the valuable information which they had imparted on the subject until after he had proposed his Bill; it was, however, a matter of great satisfaction to him to find that the views which he had taken of the question were supported by the Committee. The great evil which resulted from the Poor-laws was, *that an unlimited provision was settled for the poor.* (Hear, hear.) The effect of that unlimited provision for the poor, to reason on it *a priori*, was, *that it operated as a premium on poverty.* (Hear.) The House would not be at a loss to see that it would *necessarily create idleness, licentiousness, and immorality.* (Hear, hear.) It was the condition of human nature to labour; nothing could be more unfortunate to a country than a system of law which *disconnected the ideas of labour and profit*; yet such was the immediate effect of the Poor-laws, they gave refuge to *indolence*, they operated so as to remove inconveniences which should always be allowed to *follow vice*; they *degraded the character* of the man who received relief under them, because they lowered him in his own estimation. They certainly had the tendency to involve in their fatal circle the whole population of the country. The House had but too much reason to fear that this evil would go on rapidly increasing; the time would come, it was fast approaching, when parishes would be found not sufficient to support their population. Indeed, at the present moment, there were parishes in England where the land was not worth more, after paying parish-rates, than *the price of the labour expended on it.* He would now proceed to state the result of the inquiries which he had made, and first as to the effect of those laws on the feelings of the people. The relief was *scarcely considered in the light of charity*, there was *nothing of grace about it*: it was bestowed *without compassion*, and received *without gratitude.* (Hear, hear.) There was another consideration which was paramount to all others, namely, *it dissolved between the poor*

and the rich—those ties which had formerly bound together the different orders of society; there was no longer gratitude on the one hand, or real charity on the other; the poor received without thanks what they were entitled to receive, and the rich gave without compassion what they were compelled to bestow. On looking to the result of the law, the House would find that the increase of the poor-rates was so rapid, that unless some check was given to them, they must ultimately, and that at no very distant period, absorb all the landed property of the country. By the Report of the Committee on the Table of the House, he found that in the years 1748, 1749, and 1750, the average for the three years amounted to 689,971*l.* In 26 years after, the poor-rates increased to 1,530,804*l.*; in 1783, they increased to 2,437,000*l.*; in 1803, they increased to 4,267,963*l.*; in 1813, they increased to 6,129,000*l.* Thus, during the period he had stated, the poor-rates increased half a million for the first thirteen years, half a million for the next seven years, one million for the seven succeeding years, and one million for the five subsequent years. In 1815, the last year included in the Report of the Committee, the amount of the poor-rates was 6,129,831*l.* It was an important fact that both in peace and in war, the poor-rates went on progressively increasing; and if some measure were not adopted to stop the evil, it was but too much to be apprehended that it would go on increasing, until at length *no maintenance would be left for the poor.* The honourable and learned gentleman next read an extract from a Report of a Committee of the House of Lords, on the state of the parish of Namptwich, in Cheshire. In the year 1816 the parish-officers addressed a public letter to the inhabitants, in which they stated that the increase of resident paupers from 1781 to 1815 was from 50 to 90. The increase of out paupers for the same period was in the same proportion. In 1781 there were six bastard children charged on the parish. In 1815 they increased to thirty-seven. Yet the *price of corn* was nearly the same at *both periods*, and wages *considerably higher.* The House, he was satisfied, would agree with him in thinking, that a dependence on parochial relief caused a diminution of individual exertion, an inattention to economy, and a relaxation of morals. It was remarked, that in proportion to the liberality of the parish was the increase of paupers, the increase of vice and dissipation. Parochial aid extended to persons supposed not able to find employment, was found to be attended with consequences most injurious, most destructive of the best habits and the moral character of the people. It took away the necessity of labouring—men to indulge in idleness became paupers. Thus the feelings of the people were gradually blunted, and the labouring class, formerly considered with so much justice the very strength and pride of the State, were in danger of becoming a disgrace and a burden. The evil was one of the most alarming kind—an evil which Parliament would be anxious to remove, unless in removing it the country should be exposed to still greater danger. The evil consisted in an unlimited provision for the poor; the obvious remedy was to limit that provision. The first measure, therefore, which he would wish to submit to the House was, *to declare a maximum*; the rates of the last year, though *not the highest*, were nearly so; and it was perhaps the best period to select, because the nominal value of money had more nearly approached its real value than in the preceding years. He would therefore propose to fix as a maximum, the rates of the year ending the 25th of March, 1821, and accordingly to declare it to be unlawful to pay any larger sum for Poores'-rate than was assessed off the land for the year ending the 25th of March, 1821. The next question was, the propriety of enforcing a different system in administering relief. It never was the intention of the Parliament that passed the Statute of Elizabeth, to relieve persons who were able to work and who preferred a life of idleness. The object of the statute was to relieve those who, by age and infirmities, were unable to labour. That wise and humane principle was departed from in modern times, and incalculable mischief was the consequence. At the present moment, persons who were married, and had large families depending in some degree on parish relief, could not be fairly deprived of that relief. Time should be allowed to enable those persons to recover themselves; but the evil had been carried to so great an extent, that persons marrying looked forward as a matter of course to have their second child supported by the parish. He would be glad to know why such persons ought not to practise those industrious and economical habits which all other persons in society were compelled to practise. It was for the purpose of stopping the progress of this evil, that he proposed as the second part

of the Bill, that after the passing of the Bill, no parish officer or justice of peace should be authorized to give relief to any person who, at the time of the passing of the Act, should be unmarried, either for himself or for any member of his family, unless such person should be afflicted with infirmity of body or old age. The poor and industrious man was now obliged to provide for the idle, and the natural effect was, that he was inclined also to become one of the idle class, whom he saw often provided for better than himself. His third measure was one respecting which there was likely to be a great difference of opinion, though he had given it so much consideration that he did not think his own mind could be shaken respecting it. It was to repeal the laws authorizing the removal of persons chargeable to a parish. (Hear.) The present system originated with the 13th and 14th Charles II., the effect of which was to restrict the free circulation of labour, and subjected the labourer, if he could not from any temporary cause, find bread in the parish where he resided, to be removed to the parish where he was born, or where his father or grandfather was born, though perhaps there was a certainty that he could not find employment there, and that he must remain a pauper all the days of his life. A more oppressive law was not to be found in any code in Europe. (Hear, hear, hear.) It in fact made poverty a crime. If a law was now proposed, specifically and avowedly subjecting a man to be banished from one place to another, because he could not find employment from sickness or any other cause, or could not get enough to feed his family from the dearth of provision, the man would be deemed not only mad, but inhuman. (Hear.) Yet this in reality was the law as it existed under another name. (Hear.) This law had been found so oppressive, that many attempts had been made to modify it by exceptions—as, for instance, when a man had been hired for a year in a parish, or rented a tenement of 10*l.*, or paid parish rates or served parish offices. It was said by Dr. Burn, that there were more decisions on this Act than on any law in the statute-book. The Doctor might have said—more litigation. (Hear.) There was probably more litigation created by this law than by all the laws from Magna Charta downwards. An artificial, absurd, and oppressive system had been created, and it became half the business of society to execute it. He (Mr. S.) therefore proposed to make a provision, that it should not be lawful to remove any man from the parish in which he resided, as the ground of his being chargeable, or likely to become chargeable. He expected that the manufacturing towns would object to this, as they had done to the provision for making two years' residence a settlement. Under the present system, when there was any cessation of employment in a manufacturing town, the labourers were scattered all over England. From Manchester, for instance, he had seen loads sent to London by the coach, and some even to the West of England. He should take the town of Manchester as an example, because he was best acquainted with it, and because the Poor-laws were very exactly administered there. The effect on that town was, that in Manchester the rates were less than in any agricultural parish in England. Their highest rate, which in 1816 was 8*s.* 6*d.*, and at the same time a great mass of county rates from the northern part of the county was thrown in the town. Their rates now were 4*s.* 6*d.*, or four-fifths of the rent, while many parishes in the south and west of England, with agricultural population, paid 20*s.* in the pound. This effect, leaving the poor entirely out of the question, was not just. The poor, who had enriched the town of Manchester by their labour, were sent away on any cessation of trade, to burden agricultural parishes that had derived no benefit from them. (Hear, hear.) By abolishing this system, the strongest motive would be given to economy in the administration of the Poor-rates. He knew an instance of a large factory at Manchester, where not a man had ever become chargeable to the parish, because a regulation was made by which all persons employed there *subscribed to a fund to protect themselves against casualties*. But what would be the effect even upon Manchester? In 1815-16, Manchester paid for the poor of other townships which it maintained, 2,527*l.*, of which probably great part would be returned to it. But, on the other hand, Manchester paid to other towns 1,472*l.* : 272*l.* for removals; 200*l.* for a charge, he should be tender of counsel's fees: 200*l.* for solicitor's bills and other expenses, which with these, amounted to 2,332*l.*, leaving a balance of only 192*l.* in its favour; and in the next year, which was the greatest ever known, the balance only amounted to 600*l.* This was an approximation to the increase of charge which might be thrown by his measure on such a town as Manchester; but even if it were

10,000*l.* a year, it was but fair that it should pay for the maintenance of the labourers by whom it was enriched. The law for the removal of the poor of other countries he did not now intend to meddle with, though he had an opinion respecting it; but he should remark, that on account of the injurious manner from which the settlement-laws operated upon the English labourers (for in the manufacturing towns all expedients were resorted to to prevent them from getting settlements), a great population of Scots and Irish had been collected at Manchester. The Irish poor formed a large body, and the sums applied to their maintenance varied from 1676*l.* to 9000*l.*; but it was remarkable, that from *the habits of that excellent and industrious people, the Scots*, there were only four families that had ever required relief. The Honourable and Learned Gentleman then recapitulated his three measures:—1. To fix a maximum of the Poor-rates; 2. To deny relief, except to the impotent; 3. To take away the oppressive laws of settlement and removal. He knew, he observed, that it had been held out that the fear of removal operated as a check to pauperism. This check would not be needed when his other measures were adopted. The proper check was the fear of poverty. That there would be times when there would be need of relief for poverty, beyond what his measures would supply, he admitted, but to remedy this, they might trust to what had never been known to fail—the benevolence of the country. Temporary distress should be met by temporary remedies, but they should not perpetuate a law which went on increasing the evil which it professed to remedy. He concluded by moving for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to the relief of the poor in England. (Hear, hear.) Leave was given to bring in the Bill, which Mr. Scarlett accordingly brought in; and on moving that it should be read a first time, the learned gentleman took occasion to animadvert upon some observations which had been made as to the principle of the measure. A gallant friend of his had observed, that it was calculated to affect the rights and interests of the poor; but he could declare, that if it had any such tendency, or if it was calculated in any degree to interfere with the independence of the poor, no man would be more unwilling to introduce, or to support it than himself. But he had quite a contrary impression; and as to *the rights of the poor*, he thought it *a most fatal maxim to inculcate, that the poor had an unlimited right to parochial aid.* (Hear, hear, hear.) The propagation of such a maxim was indeed but too likely to interfere with that object which his gallant friend desired, and which he was anxious to promote, namely, *an advance in the wages of labour*, by a reduction in the Poor's-rate; for it was a remarkable fact, that in proportion as the Poor's-rate was low, the wages of labour were high, as appeared from a comparison between Yorkshire and Lancashire, and the counties of Surrey and Sussex. In the two former counties, it was a fact, that while the Poor's-rate was only 2*s.* in the pound, the average wages of the husbandman were from 18*s.* to a guinea a week; whereas, in the latter counties, where the Poor's-rate was from 12*s.* to 15*s.* in the pound, the wages of the husbandman were comparatively very low. There was also this remarkable distinction between those counties thus differently circumstanced with regard to Poor's-rate, namely, that land of pretty much the same quality sold upon much more advantageous terms in the two northern counties, than in the counties of Surrey and Sussex. Here the learned gentleman read a statement which he had received from a Mr. Walker, who had resided for four years in a parish near Manchester, where the Poor's-rate, under proper management, had been so materially reduced, that there was reason to hope the parish would be subject, in some time, to no rate at all, if that system of management were regularly pursued.

The Bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on the 24th, and to be printed.

APPENDIX.—No. III.

Allon, October 11, 1809.

SIR,—Having often heard my father expatiate on the happy times at the beginning of the reign of the present King, I have been led to look a little into the price of the necessaries of life at that period, and to judge for myself; and though, often as it has been dinned into my ears by the lives-and-fortunes, last-drop-of-blood, and last-shilling men, that nothing was ever so delightful as living under our glorious and happy Constitution, and our beloved king, and

existing circumstances, I cannot help thinking that my father was right, and that my neighbours, nay, the great and valuable majority of the nation, who know nothing of the riot and luxury in which their turtle-fed superiors (as they are called) live, will, after they have perused the subjoined comparative table, agree with me in opinion, that the sons have not half the real comforts (I am not here speaking of the loss of political rights and comforts) their fathers possessed; but have begun to suffer; are in an actual state of suffering, and will continue to suffer even unto the third and fourth generation, unless there be a speedy and general radical Reform of all abuses in Church and State. That no reasons may be wanting why the approaching accession should not be considered as a memorable era, I wish to call your and your readers' attention, and to impress on your minds, the state of things when George the Second died, when George the Third came to the throne, and when he enters into the 50th year of his reign. I am for marking the day as it ought to be marked. I would have my table read in every parish-church in the kingdom, and, by the king's permission, printed at the back of the Form of Prayer.—George the Second left us it is true, a debt of about 90 millions. It is now upwards of 600. Since that time we have had twenty years of peace, and thirty years of war. And we have *spent in the last year only* (of which 70 millions were raised by taxes), more than the national debt was in the year 1760. Then, see how the poor-rate and paupers, state and parish paupers, have increased. The number of parish poor was then about 280,000, and the Poor-rate about 1,200,000*l.* The number, in the 49th year of the reign of George the Third, in that part of the United Kingdom called Great Britain, is *upwards of a million*, and the Poor-rate upwards of *five millions*—both increased, and are still increasing in an equal ratio with the national debt. But here comes the pinch. It now costs a labourer in husbandry *ten days' labour* to buy a bushel of flour, costing 16*s.* 8*d.* taking the average of wages at 10*s.* per week. In 1760 it cost him only *five days' labour*, the bushel of flour then being only 5*s.* 10*d.* and wages 7*s.* a week. Oh! but say the Jews, and Jubilee-men, and fat-headed contractors, he lives as well as he did heretofore,—the parish makes it up to him; and so it does, as the nation makes it up to you, but he loses his independence, his comfort, and his happiness; his very nose is brought to the grind-stone,—while you, Sir Balaam, fare sumptuously every day, gain what he loses, and turn the handle of the grind-stone. Luxury and dependence are more cruel scourges than the wars which beget them, whatever the whole crew of bloodsuckers, bloated, three-guinea-gormandizing gluttons, who with *Mauvoorn* and the rest assembled at Merchant Tailors' Hall on the 25th of October, may think, if they ever think at all, to the contrary.

*Comparison of the Price of the Common Necessaries of Life in the Years
1760, 1809.*

	1760.	1809.
Wheat per quarter	£2 0 0	5 0 0
Malt ditto	1 8 0	4 0 0
Flour per bushel.....	0 5 10	0 16 8
Bread per gal.	0 0 8	0 2 4
Bacon per lb.	0 0 6	0 1 2
Pork	0 0 4	0 0 9
Butchers' Meat.....	0 0 4	0 0 8
Cheese per lb.	0 0 4	0 0 10
Malt per bushel*	0 3 6	0 12 0
Butter per lb.	0 0 6	0 1 6
Soft Sugar, do.	0 0 3	0 0 10
Soap and Candles, do.	0 0 6	0 1 3
Pair Men's shoes	0 5 0	0 12 0
Ditto Women's ...	0 3 0	0 7 6

Rejoice, O! ye people! Let us throw up our hats, and bawl out toasts and songs!—Z.

* The duty is now 4*s.* 4*d.* per bushel.

TO MR. COKE,

ON THE QUESTION OF LARGE FARMS AND SMALL FARMS* AND
ON THE FALL OF THE SYSTEM OUT OF WHICH THEY HAVE
ARISEN.

“Woe unto them that *join house to house, that lay field to field, that there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.*”—ISAIAH, ch. 5. v. 8.

(*Political Register, May, 1821.*)

SIR,

Kensington, May 22, 1821.

I have lately been accused in that herald of stupidity, conceit and impudence, the *Morning Chronicle*, of exciting a *prejudice* against large farms as being a cause of oppression and misery to the labouring classes. If, by prejudice, the “unaccountable” Mr. PERRY mean *dislike*, he is so far right; for, it is my object to excite a *dislike* to large farms as a system. This “unassailable” gentleman, as he is called by his brother Scotchman, Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, blames me also for not wishing for an abolition of the *Poor-laws*; and bids me look at *Scotland* as an example for us to follow!

* The reader will find some very sensible remarks on the benefit of small farms, in the work of the Rev. Mr. DAVIES. He says (page 102):—“The fatal consequence of that policy, which deprives labouring people of the expectation of possessing any property in the soil, must be the extinction of every generous principle in their minds. Therefore, 1st. Allow to the cottager a little land about his dwelling, for keeping a cow, for planting potatoes, for raising flax or hemp. 2dly. Convert the waste lands of the kingdom into small arable farms, a certain quantity every year, to be let on favourable terms to industrious families. 3dly. Restrain the engrossment and over-enlargement of farms. The propriety of these measures cannot, I think, be questioned. For since the destruction of small farms, and of cottages having land about them, has so greatly contributed to bring the lower peasantry into the starving condition in which we now see them, the most effectual means should be taken without delay for checking this practice, and counteracting the mischief it has already done. The mischief is universally felt. For whilst this practice has been reducing the generality of small farmers into day-labourers, and the great body of day-labourers into beggars, and has been multiplying and impoverishing even beggars themselves, it has perhaps elevated the body of farmers above their proper level, enabling many of them not only to tyrannize over their inferiors, but even to vie with their landlords in dissipation and expense.”—*The Case of Labourers in Husbandry stated and considered, &c.* By DAVID DAVIES, Rector of Barkham, Berks. London, 1795.—ED.

It is my intention, Sir, to address you upon these subjects ; and I choose your name on this occasion, because you are, I believe, the best landlord and the best husbandman in England, which, after all, contains the best of both that are to be found in the world, not excepting dear, generous, ingenious, industrious and moral Scotland ! In 1815, I addressed you in a very angry tone ;* and I had a *right* so to do ; for, you, in standing forward for a Corn-Bill, though actuated by no selfish motive, lent your name and all its weight to support the accursed system of paper-money. You and Mr. Western did this, too, in the face of all my *proofs* ; not my *assertions*, but my *proofs* that a Corn-Bill could do the husbandman *no good*, while it must of necessity *expose him to hatred*. And what did I see as the consequence of your rejecting my advice ? I saw you *hooted* by the people ; and Old George Rose, yea the old purser himself, greeted as "*the friend of the people!*" I told you, then, that the Old Lady of Threadneedle-street was at *her tricks*. I bid you look to her works as the *only cause* of the ruin of the farmers. This truth is *now* become clear to all men ; and it would have been clear to all men long ago, if men like you had *spoken out*, and made your attacks upon the real, and not the imaginary cause of the nation's calamities. *Now* it is, thank God, impossible to disguise the cause any longer. *Now* every one sees, that it is the infernal Pitt-system of paper-money that has turned all the natural manifold blessings of England into just so many curses.

It is the natural and inevitable tendency of paper-money, no matter of what description it be, to *draw property into large masses*. Not to *create* property, as the Scotch Baronet, Sir JOHN SINCLAIR, and as the deep and dark SCOTCH REVIEWERS, with their aids, the dunderheaded Scotch Economists, CHALMERS and COLQUHOUN, have pretended : no, not to *create* anything valuable ; but, to *draw valuable things into great masses*. One of its effects, therefore, is to *lessen the number of occupiers of land* ; and this effect it has produced in England to an extent of about *three-fourths* ; that is to say, where there were about fifty years ago *four* farms, there is now only *one*. More than three-fourths of this change has been produced since the Pitt-paper became afloat. And, if we could make the enumeration, we should, I am convinced, find, that paper-money, large farms, fine houses, pauperism, hangings, transportings, leprosy, scrofula and insanity, have all *gone on increasing regularly together*.

That paper-money, and, indeed, that money of no sort, can *create* anything valuable, is evident ; and that it cannot *cause* it to be created, on a *general* scale, is also evident ; for, all valuable things arise from *labour*, and, if an addition to the quantity of money sets labour in motion in one place, it draws it from another place ; that is all that it does. If its nature and operation be such as to cause new and fine houses and carriages and "*grand dinners*" to make their appearance, it takes away the means of furnishing the houses of the most numerous class, robs them of their bedding, their food, their drink and their raiment. Nothing is *created* by it. It is not value *in itself* ; but merely the *measure of value*, and the means of *removing valuable things from one possessor to another*.

But a *paper-money*, while it removes things from one possessor to another, is a *false measure* of value. It is *always* a false measure ; but it is

* See these *Selections*, Vol. IV, p. 320.—Ed.

in some states of it, *more false* than in other states of it. When not convertible into gold at the will of the holder, it is false altogether; and, as I have shown, in my Letter to JOHN HAYES, is a robber and despoiler of the labouring classes.

By its *amassing* quality it has drawn many farms into one. It has taken from useful industry, particularly in *husbandry*, its fair chance. It has given to dashing adventure that which naturally, and of right, belonged to patient labour. This is the manner in which it has worked: as it became, from its quantity, *depreciated*, it gave unusual gains to the occupiers of land at the *expense of the labourer*, as I have demonstrated in the Letter to HAYES, on Scarlett's Check-population Bill. These gains were a *temptation to covet the occupation of land*. Those amongst the then farmers who were the *largest* gained most, and more than the small ones in *proportion* too, because the small as well as the large had *families* to support, and while the former required a *considerable portion* of their produce to be *consumed by themselves*, the latter required but a *small portion* of theirs for that purpose; for, as to *house-servants*, the large farmers soon ridded themselves of them, while the small farmer's own family were his principal servants. In short, the small farmer was half a labourer, and suffered, in the one character, from the foul and fraudulent workings of the paper, very nearly as much as he gained on the other.

The necessary consequence of this would be, and was, the small farms, as their leases expired, falling into the hands of the large farmers, who *grew over* the small farmers by degrees, till, at last, they totally destroyed them; just in the same way, as naturally and as regularly, as the strong wheat plants overtop, shade, and finally kill, the weak ones. Some of the small farmers stood it longer than others; and some few still remain; but, they are the little and almost grainless *under ears* of the crop; and, if the infernal system had *lusted a little longer*, these must have been destroyed too.

That this was the *fact* you know well; but, another word or two as to the *process*. The head-farmers not only availed themselves of the powers of their necessarily accumulating gains, they further availed themselves of the powers of *anticipated* gains. The paper-money system enabled them to *borrow*, at any moment, to *retard their sales*; so that the little farmer always *sold cheaper than the large one*. This must always be the case to a *certain extent*; because it is a very true saying, that *money makes money*; but, formerly, neither little nor big had a paper-money-mill to go to, and now the *big had* and the *little had not*; for, besides the natural timidity of the little farmer, his means and his connections were of a kind not to enable him to borrow.

The paper-money-mill was always ready at hand to *enable the large farmer to take the farm over the little one's head*. Stock, capital; none were wanted. All was ready at the paper-money-mill in the neighbouring town. No hesitation was required. The thing was done in a moment; and, as all taxes and all additional rents came out of the deduction which the depreciation continued to make in the wages of labour, the new tenant made the old one his labourer, added another hundred a-year to his profits, and reduced the former farmer and his family to be "labouring poor;" or, as ELLMAN calls them, "*peasantry*."

But, besides this, a *new race* of farmers sprang up. Attorneys, bankers, merchants, big manufacturers became *farmers*, and not a few of the *Lords and Gentlemen*, owners of lands, who had, certainly, a *legal*

right to do what they pleased with their estates; but, who will find, in the end, that they did not pursue the wise course. Even *fashion* helped the accursed paper-money system in this its pernicious work. The *cattle-shows*, the *sheep-shearings*, had *good motive*; but were unwise. Those lords and gentlemen did not recollect, that the sheep-shearing, at which they assisted, was *instead of a thousand sheep-shearings* that formerly took place! Their sheep-shearing was a *brilliant* thing. It *dazzled*. It was *magnificent*, and, in *itself*, munificent; but, if the hospitable host, in retiring from the festive board, had been met in his bed-chamber, by the ghosts of only a hundred thousand part of those who formerly held sheep-shearings, and who had been brought to the death of paupers by the system which created the *grand sheep-shearing*, he would, unless his heart were as hard as a stone, never have tasted joy again. I assure you, Sir, that I say this without any desire to aim a blow at you. You have been deceived by the *false glare*. You saw assembled around what you thought the effect of *improvement in agriculture*, when it really was the effect of a false, fraudulent, amassing paper-money; that brought before your eyes the prosperous *tens*, and that kept the starving *hundreds* carefully hidden from your sight.

So much, then, Sir, for the *suppression of small farms* and for the *cause* of that suppression. And, pray, Sir, what *compensation* can be found in any of the effects of the change for the *moral* evils; to say nothing of the starvation and misery, which the change has produced, and of which, perhaps, I shall speak more fully by and by? Suppose the present farmers to be in number 100,000; what compensation can their skill and improvements give the nation for the breaking-up of 300,000 small farms, and reducing the holders to the state of paupers? If it had, forty years ago, been proposed, in Parliament (or, at least, in any *other* assembly in the world) to adopt measures for raising up one hundred thousand families to wine and made-dishes, and, for that purpose, to reduce three hundred thousand families to water and potatoes, would the proposer have escaped instant indignation and abhorrence? It is *supposed* (and, I think, falsely) that large farms *produce more*, in proportion, than small ones. But, if we were to admit this to be true, what compensation is here for the desolating, for the mighty mischief which that addition to the produce occasions? If the additional produce take away a great part of the former produce along with it, and both go into the mouths of the idle and leave the labourer to starve, is not this additional produce a dreadful evil? But, even this additional produce is imaginary, as I shall now endeavour to show.

If you take ten farms of a hundred acres each, and allot to them a given number, say 50, labourers, and a given number of horses, say 50 of them also, the *land* will (with equal skill, care and industry in the farmers) certainly produce less marketable food than if it were all in one farm, having employed upon it the 50 men and 50 horses; for, leaving *capital* out of the question, *great strength* can, in the latter case, be brought to bear upon *any particular point at any time*. As in the case of an army, *ten fives* embodied into fifty have *more than ten times the force of any one of the separate fives*. And this is the view, which the Scotch Economists have taken of the matter. They have never cared a straw about anything but the "head manufacturer of corn" (as they call him) and his *gains*, his quantities *brought to market*.

But, if we consider, that here, on the ten *small farms*, there are *ten*

wives and about *forty children*, all living upon the farms, and all bestowing, in this case, labour which they would, otherwise not bestow; if we consider, that a woman, though she cannot *leave home*, can do something *at home*; if we consider, that even small children, not fit to go to work for *hire*, can do some little thing about a farm-house or garden, with their mother at their elbow; if we consider, that poultry, eggs, bees, seeds of various sorts, fruit, herbs, and many other things, are the produce of *care* and almost of *care alone*; if we consider these things; and if we could take all the stock, all the poultry, all the eggs, all the stalls of bees, which were formerly to be found on the *ten farms*, and carry them to the yard of the one farm, we should quickly discover, that, even as to the quantity of human food produced, the *ten* very far exceeded the *one*, even leaving out of the amount the *good living* and the *morals* of the *ten-farm system*.

So long ago as 1804, I went round a little common, in Hampshire, called *Horton Heath*. "The better day the better deed," and, on a Sunday I found the husbands at home. It was when the madness for *enclosures* raged most furiously. The Common contained about 150 acres; and I found round the skirts of it, and near to the skirts, about 30 cottages and gardens, the latter chiefly encroachments on the Common, which was *waste* (as it is called) in a manor of which the Bishop was the lord. I took down the names of all the cottagers, the number and ages of their children, the number of their cows, heifers, calves, sows, pigs, geese, ducks, fowls, and stalls of bees; the extent of their little bits of grounds, the worth of what was growing (it was at, or near Michaelmas), the number of apple-trees, and of their black cherry-trees, called by them *merries*, which is a great article in that part of Hampshire. I have lost my paper, a copy of which I gave to Mr. WINDHAM; and, therefore, I cannot speak positively as to any one point; but, I remember *one hundred and twenty-five*, or *thirty-five stalls of bees*, worth at that time *ten shillings* a stall *at least*. Cows there were about *fifteen*, besides heifers and calves; about *sixty pigs* great and small; and not less than *five hundred head of poultry*! The cattle and sheep of the neighbouring farmers grazed the Common *all the while* besides. *The bees alone* were worth more annually than the Common, if it had been enclosed, would have let for, deducting the expense of *fences*. The farmers used the Common for their purposes; and my calculation was, that the cottages produced from their little bits, in food, for themselves, and in things to be sold at market, *more than any neighbouring farm of 200 acres*! The cottages consisted, *fathers, mothers, and children, and grandfathers, grandmothers and grandchildren, of more than two hundred persons*.

Why, Sir, what a system must that have been that could lead *English gentlemen* to disregard matters like these! That could induce them to tear up "*wastes*" and sweep away occupiers like those that I have described! "*Wastes*" indeed! Give a dog an ill name. Was Horton Heath a waste? Was it a "waste" when a hundred, perhaps, of healthy boys and girls were playing there of a Sunday, instead of creeping about covered with filth in the alleys of a town, or, at least, listening to the ravings of some weekly-penny hunting hypocrite? Was it a "*waste*?" No: but, *it would have been a waste*, if it had been "*improved*."

Small farms, compared with large, are, in a great degree, what these cottage-establishments were compared with the land of Horton-heath, if

it had been *enclosed*. If the 150 acres had been moulded into a farm, the produce, when all brought to *one homestead*, would have made a considerable *show*. There would have been waggons going to *market* with *corn*; there would have been *barns* and *ricks* and *stables*; and unreflecting persons, as they rode along the road, would have exclaimed, "What *improvement*! This was a *barren* common only three years ago!" They would not have thought of the two or three hundred pounds, paid to Old Rose and others to pass the Enclosure Bill, nor of the expense of fencing. Nor would they have reflected, that the fencing materials, and that all the labour, brought to this spot, must have been brought *from* some other spot. And, as to the two or three hundred head of cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and geese, to which the *barren* common afforded an outlet, and a part living, that would never have once come into their heads; while the sweeping away of the cottagers and all their property would, if possible, have been still less thought of.

It is precisely thus with the large-farm, or paper-money-farm, system. It makes a *show*. It pulls down several farm-houses, or guts them, and turns them into hovels; and it brings the materials, or the means of keeping up repairs, and heaps them upon one spot. It makes new roads and canals and fine hedges and rows of trees; but, it does *not add to the quantity of human food produced*. There are many articles, which are the produce of *care* only, *poultry* and *honey* especially. Poultry, indeed, must have *some* corn; but, they *need* comparatively little, and *geese* want none for the far greater part of the year. It is *care* that chiefly creates poultry and eggs; and, as to *honey*, it is wholly the produce of *care*. But, remove the care from the scene whereon it is to be employed, and, of course, its effects cease. Hence it is that *honey*, formerly so great an article of produce in England as to make *Metheglin*, the object of an *important tax*, is now produced in quantities comparatively contemptible. The *Metheglin*, which used to cheer the farm-house and the cottage, has been abolished, and, for *fifty* who used to have that, there is now *one* who has *port wine*.

And, can any man look at these things with *complacency*? I am sure that you cannot. It is very laudable in you, and in other great landholders, to condescend to attend personally to the improvements in agriculture; I mean improvements in the true sense of the word. It is a mark of good taste, and it is a pursuit attended with more pleasure, perhaps, than any other. But, if the thing pursued cannot be accomplished without producing the fall, the degradation and the misery of *millions*, it is *not improvement*. The *land* may, and will, look *finer*, and the *country* may present a blooming face; but, the *nation* is in a state of *decay*.

To enumerate the moral evils of the rise of large farms would require the pages of a very large volume. There were always *some* large farms: it was not only natural but beneficial. There ought to be ranks and degrees in husbandry as well as in trade and in all the other classes and callings which make up a community. The greatest farmer ought to approach nearly to a gentleman, and the least nearly to a labourer. But, we have now a thing out of order, out of nature, a thing created by a monstrous cause, and monstrous in itself. Instead of an agricultural population connected, the highest with the lowest, by links almost imperceptible, and having interests and feelings in common, we have now a

few *masters* and a great number of *slaves*, each having an interest directly opposed to that of the other, and as distinct, to all intents and purposes, as the Virginian, or Jamaica, farmer and his slaves.

I shall be told, perhaps, that many *large farmers* treat their labourers very kindly, and even take care to see, that they are supplied with a sufficiency of *food* and *raiment*. I believe this, and I have heard, that *your estates* are remarkable for this kindness and benevolence. But, Sir, the Jamaica farmer does the same by his slaves. From a different motive, perhaps; but he *does* it. This renders slavery less cruel; but, still, a state of life which contains a *compulsion to work* without a moral *possibility* of saving something for old age, is slavery, call it by what name you will; and, one of the consequences of such a state of things, is, that *a large standing army is required in time of profound peace*. The *social tie* being broken; the tie of *content* being no longer in existence, its place must be supplied by *force*. Hence our two *armies*, the army constantly on foot, composed of labourers who have sought bread in the ranks; and the army of farmers, landlords and traders, who are called *yeomanry*, and one of whom has recently openly avowed, in a printed letter addressed to the Prime Minister, that, *if the Government will give these yeomanry high prices*, they will still be at their *post*, ready to chop down the "disaffected."

Here we have the cause, the *real cause*, of the existence of these immense armies. And, therefore, it is nonsense to complain of the *amount* or the *expense* of these armies, without complaining of that state of things which has produced the necessity of having them. It is little better than *cavilling* to make motions and speeches about the *armies*, as long as that system exists of which these armies essentially form a part. Out of this system, this false system, this dazzling and degrading system, have also arisen the *police* and the *secret service* departments. These are *novelties* in England. Can it have been "*prosperity*" that gave rise to these and to all the *new prisons*, with "*governors*" instead of jailers? Can it have been "*prosperity*" that caused votes of a million of money out of the taxes to build and support a single "*penitentiary*"? Can it have been "*prosperity*" that has filled England with *mad-houses* upon the palace-scale? Can it have been "*prosperity*" that has caused a thousand volumes to be published on "*prison discipline*"? O, no! It was paper-money, co-operating with taxation, that caused all these things. And, there is no return to happy days for England, but through the extinction of the cause. PITT boasted of "*prosperity*" when he saw big-manufacturers and bankers swelling into Baronets and Lords; and Mr. CURWEN boasted of "*prosperity*" when he met five hundred big farmers at a Holkham sheep-shearing. Neither seems to have reflected, that it was *false glare*, and that it engendered police, secret service and army establishments as necessarily as putridity engenders maggots. It was the *painted sepulchre*; and this is what neither seems to have thought of. If we approve of large farms and all the glare of the system; if we call those proofs of prosperity, we have no right to complain of the other parts of the system. Paper-money is the common parent of the whole brood, large farms, enclosures, fine houses, cotton lords, anvil lords, banking lords, army, yeomanry cavalry, police, secret-service, Power-of-imprisonment Acts, Six-acts; all spring from the same cause; all must go on "*prospering*" together, or *all* must fall.

Now, then, Sir, *how* are they to fall? How are we to *return*, or is

return impossible? These are questions of infinite moment. My opinion is, that we **MUST RETURN**. I am of opinion, that a return is not only to be *wished* for; but that it will and *must* take place, in spite of every thing that can be done to prevent it. The system has reached its highest possible point; and its own weight is now bringing it down. We are not in "a *transition from war to peace*;" but in a transition *from paper-money to gold money*. And, as the transition from gold to paper was the cause of big farmers, cotton and anvil and banking lords and fund-lords, palace-like houses and streets, "grand dinners," pauperism, immense armies, police things, secret-service things and Six-Act matters; so, this new transition will *cause them all to disappear*, and, perhaps, in much about the *same order* in which they arose! Here will be, then, *when the return has been completed*, an everlasting lesson to all the nations of the earth!

The return has already been *commenced*. The big-farmers, the cotton and anvil and banking lords, are *falling*. The fund-lords will follow. The palace-like houses and streets will be uninhabited. The "grand dinners" will cease, and, indeed, are fast ceasing. *Pauperism* will go; it cannot *live* without the former. It is already *going*. The farmers, unable to deduct the rates from the wages of labour, *cannot pay them*; and, what is *quite as good*, the labourer will receive four times their amount in additional quantities of wheat for his work. Accordingly, I hear, from very good authority, that the rates, in the *country*, are falling very fast; and I read, in the BRIGHTON HERALD of the 19th instant, that the overseers there are about "to make the present quarter's poor-book a *three-shilling* one; though the last was a *nine-shilling* one." Aye, to be sure: labourers are now getting *directly*, in the fruit of *wages*, what they before *got back* from those rates, which consisted of *deduction from their wages*!

This, *this*, Sir, is the thing to *look at*! Let there be no *more stop-pages* at the Bank; let the Bank be *compelled to pay for ever after this time*, and you and I shall see the *Poor-rates vanish*, without the aid of profound Lawyer SCARLETT'S Check-population Bill! We shall see all the attorney-farmers and banker-farmers and cotton-lord and anvil-lord and ship-lord and fund-lord farmers fall out, or creep out, of a connection with the once more honest pursuits of husbandry. We shall see the colonel-farmers and general-farmers and admiral-farmers and commissary and contractor-farmers and purser-farmers; we shall see all the right honourable and most noble *farmers*; we shall see them all leave the tilling of the land to the husbandman; and which will not be the least honourable part of the change, we shall see compassionate and profound parsons and lawyers, whose genius may lead them that way, giving surgical lectures to the operator on pigs, lambs, colts, and calves.

This, *this*, Sir, is the thing to *look at*! The *Poor-rates*, and not the rents and the Government revenue! The *meal of the labourer*; and not the "grand dinner:" *potatoes and water*; and not the *turtle-soup tokay*: the *labourer's cottage*; and not scrip-castle and Regent-street: the labourer's Sunday coat and his shirt and his wife's gown and stockings and shoes; and not the silks, laces and diamonds of enormous London. Away will go, as the poor-rates fall, all the new race of farmers; all the "*counting-houses*," and "*clerks*," and glove-wearing "*apprentices*" on farms! Good God! that such things should have arisen! And, that, too, out of little bits of paper with an old hag's picture at the

corner of them ! Away will go all the *paradings* and "*roll-calls*" of the labourers on the farms. Away will go the surveyors and land-agents ; and, though last not least, away will go the *Scotch bailiffs*, who have already swallowed the last of those *daily bottles of port-wine* that ARTHUR YOUNG allowed to each : away they will go, with their heavy-thonged whips, not *back* to dear Scotland, but to Virginia, Jamaica, or Hindostan.

The *fall in the amount of the Poor-rates* is the grand matter ; and this we shall assuredly see by *Michaelmas*, if the Bank *continue to pay in cash* ; for all depends on *that* ! By next Easter the Poor-rates will have fallen *one-half* in amount, unless we have a very unseasonable summer so as to make a scanty crop of wheat ; and even that will not keep them to within *two millions* of the present mark, if *gold continues to come out fairly*. This will be the *proof* of the nature and tendency of the *late system* ; for such I hope I may venture to call it. Let us but have the *gold* ; and the fall in Poor-rates will unravel the mystery of folly and iniquity.

And then what will follow ? Why, an end to the big standing army in time of peace and the gallant yeomanry army will moulder away too ! They will no longer be *wanted*. Young ELLMAN will find no "*disaffected*" to keep down ; for his wretched "*peasantry*" will disappear, as Mr. BIRKBECK found they had *disappeared* in France. They in that country, went off with the Debt and the Gabelles and the feudal tyranny. And they will here go off with the paper-money, banker-farmers and Scotch bailiffs. And the wretched "*peasantry*" having disappeared, the big army and the gallant yeomanry cavalry will follow pretty quickly. Nay, I have this upon the *word of a king*, and of *our own king too* ; who has told us, in his speeches, that the people have been made *discontented and refractory* by "*a few designing and wicked men who took advantage of the distresses of the people to inflame their minds.*" His Ministers have sworn this a hundred times over ; and have said, that the *armies*, and even the *secret-service* branch, were rendered necessary by the discontents caused by those *designing and wicked men*, who took *advantage of the distresses*. Now, what did I say, in answer to this : "*Put an end to the distresses* ; and then the *designing* rogues will have nothing to "*work upon.*"

The Ministers are *now*, at last, following my advice. They are causing gold to come out. They are causing *prices to fall* ; they are putting a stop to the *deductions from the wages of labour* ; and, of course, they are removing those sufferings, of which the "*designing*" and "*wicked*" trash-merchants "*took advantage.*" Consequently the *designing men* will now design in vain ; for, however some persons may despise *belly-discontents*, they are, after all, much more easy to work on with effect than the discontents of the *mind* ; and this is not only the *fact*, but it is reasonable and right that it should be so. The army, therefore, and the gallant yeomanry will not be wanted. Their situation will be like that of cats in a country where there are no mice and rats : (poor pussy !) or, like that of priests amongst a people who have cast off the devil ; and, what that is, the French clergy know pretty well. In short, to keep them up would be *nonsense*, and would not and could not be ; for no Minister upon earth would desire to expend millions a-year upon a thing that could, in no possible way, be of use to him.

Here, then, Sir, would be a saving ! This would be worth talking of.

The *Policers* would drop off in like manner; for, be you assured, that there would be less crimes, just in proportion to the addition to the labourer's meal. To see so many "governors" become mere jailors again; to see so many *Olivers* and *Edwardses* thrown out of employment; to see so little work going on in the *Old Bailey*; to see such a "frightful destruction of capital" (to borrow a phrase from Mr. *Attwood*) as would be occasioned in the trade of the law by a thousand or two of Acts about printing and publishing and contriving and training and meeting and dispersing and conspiring and forging and treasoning and smuggling and commissioning and stamping and auditing, all becoming a dead letter; to see the player-men and player-women, no longer supported by "prosperity," ceasing to keep footmen and ride in landaus and treated as "vagrants according to the Act;" to see the "poor clergy" of the rich Church of England no longer "relieved" by taxes arising out of the labour of others; to see the *French emigrants* no longer fed and clothed from the same source; to see hundreds upon hundreds of Jews, with their big arched noses and big round eyes, sailing off, being no longer able to convert the sweat of English labourers into gold: to behold these things, and, in addition, to see no more sums raised out of the labour of "loyal and dissolute" English labourers, to be sent to create work for the "industrious and moral Scotch:" to behold these things, to see such a change, may, perhaps, shock the minds of many; but come it will, if the Ministers adhere to their virtuous resolution, and give us the gold.

This is all that is wanted. I ask for nothing more. But, this is an indispensable condition: it is that on which everything turns. This, therefore, is a matter as to which I am uncommonly anxious. A correspondent reminds me, that Lord *Liverpool* said, in a late debate, that "the question of paper-money or gold-money was still open to Parliament; and that the present Bill (the one-pounder Bill) was merely an experiment." I did not (God knows my heart and soul!); I did not want to be reminded of this. I saw the words but too plainly in print, and they made an impression upon me which I would fain have disguised even from myself. A nasty article in the *Courier* has tended to add to my alarm. But, at any rate, there is the Bill which is to immortalize Mr. *Peel*, Member for the University of Oxford! That is not "open to Parliament" I hope. That, for God's sake, is not, I trust, "an experiment." If it be, all that I can say, is, that confusion, uproar, horrible convulsion will be the end of the drama! My wish has always been to let the thing end quietly; and this is the way in which it will end, if, as we approach the close, the millions shall be well off. *CASTLEREAGH* said (the report says) during the debate on "England's Glory's" unaccountably-delayed motion, that (in the year 1819), "the danger of treason had disappeared before the THUNDER of Parliament." O, ye gods many (for to thunder ye must be gods)! if ye thunder, pray let your bolts be made of gold! He said, that "England's Glory" would "never be able to revive the confusion, if the manliness and wisdom of Parliament continued to manifest itself as it ever had done." Now, if, instead of these last words, he had said, "as it is now doing by causing gold to come out," he would have been perfectly correct. For, what materials for "confusion" can there be, if the millions become well off? Make them well off; let them have two bushels of wheat for a week's work in husbandry (other branches will give more in proportion); and the very elements of confu-

sion are annihilated. Taxes will press still; but *bread* and *meat* are the main things, and, if a labourer in husbandry have the price of two bushels of best wheat for six days of labour he will be content. Handicraft and manufactures will soon afford more; and they *ought*; because the husbandman has many advantages, in which the labourers at the loom or the anvil do not participate. He has (or would have), garden, pig, sometimes cow, poultry, bees, and many other things which they can seldom have.

This, then, is the true way to prevent "confusion." This is the way to "*thunder*" upon us. This is the way to *crush* "treason." It is the belly that grumbles. Thunder on it, ye gods, loaves as big as a bushel! It is the paper-money that sets the "*designing men*" in motion. Thunder down, O, ye gods, bars of gold and boxes of sovereigns! This is the true and only way to go to work with effect; for, as to thundering out *paper*, whether in oblong snips or in folio volumes; whether in *notes* or in *acts*, it is of little use; and, can, at best, only obtain a *chance* of tranquillity, and that only for a limited time. But, give us gold, that will give labour its due; that will keep the belly-full and the back warm, and I, who by some, have been supposed to be classed amongst the *designers*, would as soon undertake to move Portsdown-hill as to bring to that hill a tenth part so many people as were assembled there in February 1817.

I have always not only *avowed* this, but I have always put it in the *foreground*. Why did we cry for *Reform*? Because the people were suffering, and because no hope was entertained that the Parliament, as now constituted would afford us relief. I never signed any petition, with others, or by myself, to Parliament, relative to *Reform*, which did not contain a prayer for a *reduction of the interest of the Debt*; and, I have always ascribed all the evils of the country to *paper-money*. In the Reform petition which I signed on Portsdown-hill, the sufferings from the paper-money are clearly set forth, and redress as clearly prayed for. And that petition will be found in the Journals of the House of Commons. To be sure it was the *sufferings of the people*, that I, for my part, *took advantage of*; and that it was my duty to do, with a view of inducing them to *labour for their deliverance*; and not for *mine*; for I was not in a situation to *suffer*. "*Taking advantage, indeed!*" This is pretty talk. You see the degradation of the people long going on; you see them silently sinking into the deepest misery; you, at last, see them beginning to be roused by the acuteness of their suffering; and, because you explain to them what you, at any rate, deem to be the cause of their suffering, and call upon them to apply for redress, you are to be accused of "*taking advantage of their sufferings.*" *Advantage!* A pretty advantage to be *thundered up!*

However, in spite of the thunder, I am quite sure, that I did not "*take advantage*" in vain! "*No well-directed effort is lost;*" and I now see the effects of all mine. I am satisfied, that, had it not been for *me* Peel's Bill would never have *been passed, or thought of*; and, I only repeat the general sentiment "*out of doors,*" when I say, that, had it not been for *me*, that Bill would have been *repealed months ago*. I only am the echo of thousands when I say, that it was my writings about the *May-morning* that produced the present gold payments, and, that, if they *continue*, I shall have been the cause. This is "*egotism,*" is it? Well, then, let it be such: and I will laugh at those who thus call it. I have as much right

to claim the merit of those measures as ever father, or (more safely) mother, had to call a child her own.

And is there anything *wrong* in my having this influence? What is the *press for*, if not for such purposes? I do not pretend to say, that I *recommended or dissuaded from*, any one of these very important measures. That was not the way to go to work. Suffice it that I *caused* them to be adopted, and of this I am thoroughly convinced. So far am I from blaming the "thunderers" for adopting them, that I applaud them for it; and, whatever I am able to do in support of them shall be done, being convinced, that if these measures be persevered in, we may safely leave every thing to Lord CASTLEREAGH's "*general working of events.*" And, if they be not persevered in, the end of the drama will come almost as soon, only *the catastrophe will be of a different sort*, a sort that I should greatly dislike. I hate the dark and deep, the gloomy and sublime. My taste is farce, and I wish to see this famous piece close with the "gods" in good humour.

We are got, Sir, very far into the *fifth Act*. Incidents, all tending to help out the plot, crowd in upon us apace. The thing that engages us at present is, the question, whether the *interest of the Debt shall be reduced*, and to what extent, if at all. The big farmers, the cotton-lords, the anvil-lords, the bank-lords and the ship-lords, seem to be pretty well *provided for*. They have all fallen, dead as herrings, before the fund-lords, and the tug is between the *fund-lords and landlords*. About this struggle, as far as the parties themselves *exclusively* are interested, I care very little. The labouring classes, if gold keep coming out, may stand and look on, and cry "*Pull devil! pull baker!*" as we used to do at the puppet-shows. But seeing that gold cannot continue to come without making the battle dreadful, and decisive one way or the other, there is some reason to fear, that the Ministers, in order to avoid the danger that this deadly fray might create, may be induced to give up their public-spirited and just resolution to make the Bank pay in gold. If this should be the case, all our calamities will return, for a season at least. The labourer whose head is just getting above the mire, would be re-plunged; and something very far from a farcical catastrophe would be the consequence.

Without, therefore, caring one straw about the interest of the two parties; without caring one straw which of them sinks and which swims, I certainly think it would be best for the nation at large if the interest of the Debt were to be at once quietly reduced. I know that the thing is *just*. I have always contended that it was just. I have, beginning with the year, 1803, had to endure nineteen years of abuse for having endeavoured to convince the nation of the justice, and to prepare it for the adoption, of this measure. I have now re-published, under the title of "*Preliminary part of Paper against Gold,*" my *arguments*, published between 1803 and 1806 inclusive, to show the justice and necessity of this very measure. But, faith! I must be quick in my motions *now*, or I shall see others very far outstrip me in the race. *Converts* are proverbially zealous; and I should not be at all surprised, if some of them were soon to represent me as a poor chicken-hearted half-way going fellow.

In a late Register I mentioned a *parson*, who had begun to thunder away for a reduction of the Debt; and that too, in a "*cheap publication,*" coming out from Mr. HATCHARD's in Piccadilly, who is also the book-

seller of the Prime Minister. This was pretty well! I have now before me a publication by a "*Barrister*," coming out from the shop of Mr. RIDGWAY in Piccadilly. This barrister is not so personally bold as the parson; for he does not put his *name*, which the parson bravely does. But that which he wants in personal bravery, he amply makes up for in boldness of mind; for he comes, souse, to the point at once. He insists that the fundholders have *no legal right to any interest at all*, and out of *mere favour*, he would, *for the present*, allow them *two-thirds* of what they now receive. His arguments in support of his proposition against the legal right of the fundholders, are, in my opinion sound and good; and I think that the allowance of two-thirds, even to begin with, is a proof of this lawyer's generosity.

It is, therefore, Sir, perfectly true, that, as Mr. PERRY "*laments to say*," this notion of the necessity and justice of a reduction of the interest of the Debt is daily gaining ground, "*in doors*" and "*out of doors*" too. But, why does Mr. PERRY lament to say this? He used to be a great stickler for the "*patriots of the soil*." However, that was when they had the power of *giving him a place of twelve hundred a year*; and a man, especially a Scotchman, is allowed to change sides with the change of his interest, without being liable to the charge of "*inconsistency*;" which charge, if I may judge from the language and conduct of Mr. BROUGHAM, is applicable to those only, who change their opinions without being paid for it.

Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, during the debates on the Six-Acts, wished for certain provisions in the Bills, which would have made a *distinction* between certain writers and publishers; between these sedition-mongers and his friend and brother Scotchman Mr. PERRY, and all that "*respectable*" class, amongst whom was to be found Sir James's own brother-in-law, DANIEL STEWART, principal proprietor of the *Courier*. But Sir James particularly named his worthy countryman, Mr. PERRY, whom he described as an "*unassailable, unaccountable* being, exercising almost *despotic sway* over the minds of his readers." And, now, Sir, this "*unassailable being*" is one of that hopeful fraternity, the *East India fundholders*; and in that capacity he very lately seconded, at the India House, an address to the jocund describer of the "*revered and ruptured Ogdén*." This address, which was, in all probability, written by the "*unaccountable being*" himself, was in the true Scotch style; obscure as far as the language went; but gross and fulsome in the flattery, resembling nothing that one can form an idea of, except the words uttered by an Austrian boor before he licks the dirt from the shoe of his Lord.

From this little circumstance, however, and from knowing that this Mr. PERRY has a son in India, together with a knowledge of the circumstance that the *former partner* of PERRY, a Scotchman named SPANKEY, is now in the very high office of *Advocate-General* at Bengal; from these facts we come at something like the probable motive for Mr. PERRY's having turned from the "*patriots of the soil*," to join the patriots of the 'Change; for it is very easy to perceive that all the fundholders, whether English or Indian, or Jewish or Arabic, or French or American, are embarked in one and the same boat. Let us hope, however, that this "*unaccountable*" Scotchman has not the "*despotic power*" over men's minds which is ascribed to him by the Honourable Scotchman "*in doors*." Poh! he has no power at all! Those who do

not think him worth despising, shrug up their shoulders when his wishings are mentioned, as much as to say, "'tis a poor literary dotard."

Having my parson and my barrister at my back, coming forth to join me, one from the bookseller of the Prime Minister, and the other from the bookseller of the Whigs, I may surely now go boldly on! The two parties in the struggle seem to be surveying each other with steady countenance, though with anxious heart. All that we have hitherto heard pass between them has been nothing but an exchange of *long shots*, which persons not skilled in this species of warfare, might mistake for *salutes*! It will not long go on thus. We shall soon see the hostile squadrons bear down upon each other. Perhaps the report of GAFFER Gooch's committee may be the signal for fight. Just at present the parties seem to be clearing the decks and watching the winds, each wishing if possible to get the weather-guage. To give you my own opinion, Sir, I do not think that there will be any thing like a *general engagement* during the present Session. It is the *next Session* that will be interesting! The landlords will then come up, some riding and some on foot, properly charged, properly primed and loaded; and then you will hear speeches in praise of "*public credit*" and of "*national faith*" sufficient to put in motion the risible faculties of a stoic. At last, however, the heroes of national faith will, I think, have to give way, and to see a reduction of the interest of the Debt take place.

Yet, this will be such a blow to the whole system. It will make such a *noise all over the world*! It will give such a shock to the whole thing all taken together. It will so completely annihilate the bait which now retains the money of foreigners in the funds, that, one can hardly believe that the Ministers will be brought to do it, if, by *any means whatever*, they can possibly avoid it. It will be a trying session, Sir, such an one as this country never saw; and such you may be assured, as it never will afterwards see.

With such terrible dangers and difficulties staring them in the face, whether they reduce or do not reduce, I am really afraid, that the Ministers will recoil; that the two parties will shake hands; that Peel's Bill will be repealed, and that, "*the paper-system for ever*," will once more become the cry of the day. It is true that there will be the *feast of the gridiron* to endure; but what is *shame* compared with a danger that menaces *life itself*. For, the system *dies*, and almost instant death, unless the Bill be repealed. I know that even the repeal of the Bill will give it a most terrible shock. It will be like No. 2 of the apoplexy. But, it may receive No. 2, and yet *linger* along a good while, and thereby, retard the nation's restoration to freedom and happiness.

However, *time* will tell us all about it; and in the meanwhile, let us, like prudent men, enjoy the good that we possess. There is some gold; and there is bread tolerably low-priced. These things are valuable. Let us enjoy them; and let us also, console ourselves with the reflection, that while we have good reason to *hope*, that we shall be better off than we are, and we are *sure* that we never can be worse off than we have been. I say WE, because I never do and I never can separate myself, in this view from the labouring classes. I never can think myself *well off* while they are oppressed. I never can be contented, never can be easy, must be "*disaffected*" and "*designing*"; always "*rebellious*," as my good Lord CASTLEREAGH calls it, as long as the millions of Englishmen are degraded and in misery. And what man *can* think that he *ought* to be *contented*,

while nineteen out of twenty of his countrymen have just cause for *discontent*? Of what value is abundance in the midst of famishing millions? There may be men, though, I trust, the number of them is small, who can enjoy themselves in such a state of things; but, from all I have heard, Sir, *you* are not a man of that description. Nay, I will not think so badly of any part of my countrymen as to suppose that even the *parsons*, generally speaking, can have viewed this degradation and misery of the millions without pain. As to the gentlemen "*in doors*," in both places, they have never, until now, *seen* the *cause* that was at work to degrade and starve the people. If they had, they would, long ago, have directed their "*thunder*" against that, and not against its victims. They, like Pitt and his successors in office, have been *dazzled with the glare*. They have thought that it was a picture of *real prosperity* that they saw. A considerable part of them have been born since the system had produced much of its mischiefs; and nearly the whole of them are yet too young to have attentively observed, and to be well acquainted with, the state of the millions forty years ago. Then, again, the men of *business*, the *real managers*, and, in fact, the rulers, have been the *Roses*, the *Longs*, the *Addingtons*, the *Percevals*, the *Hobhouses*; old navy-pursers, small lawyers, stock-brokers, and the like. So that there is little room for *wonder*, that we have gone on increasing in "*prosperity*," till, at last, we are beset with difficulties and dangers from which there is no escape without cutting our way through.

A very fair specimen of the notions that have prevailed was given by Lord HARROWBY, when he brought in the Report about *Peel's Bill*. He said, that the *paper-money* had saved us, had obtained *our victory* over Napoleon. It did obtain *that* victory; for without it a million of foreign bayonets could not have been hired for the fight. But, are we *saved*, Sir! Ask GAFFER GOOCH! He will say we are far from being saved. Is it being *saved* to owe a debt, the annual interest of which absorbs more than twice the whole of the rental of the kingdom? It is *now* that the *great* begin to see, because they begin to *feel*, the deadly effects of a paper-money. "*Strength* it is in the *beginning*," as PAINÉ said, "*but weakness* in the *end*." Could this nation *now go to war*? And, what, then, is the figure that it makes in the world? Do we think that we can disguise our state from that world? The world is much too sharp-sighted not to see through all our attempts at disguise, and much too curious not to enjoy the circumstances that induce us to make such attempts.

The danger, and the only danger, is, that we shall continue *making these attempts too long*. To *cut our way through at once* is the wise course. I am well aware of the *effects*. I know it would leave thirty thousand houses tenantless in and around London! But, I also know, that three hundred thousand farm-houses would arise again out of the same number of hovels. I know that the *rich* would diminish greatly in number. Many thousands of them would be no longer rich; but, from the same cause, *millions* would rise up to competence. I know that Bible-societies, School-societies, and Tract-societies would disappear; but I also know, that mendicity, hypocrisy, misery, and crimes, would be reduced to the standard of forty years ago; and, perhaps, to that of seventy years ago; nay, perhaps, to that of the reign of Queen Anne. What! cause the nation to *retrograde* a century! Who, Sir, and especially what proprietor of a large estate, would not, at this moment, give one of his *limbs* to see England in the state in which Queen Anne left it? England

then had her numerous farms and her happy husbandmen. She was then *really strong*: she is now *really weak*. The *strength* of a country consists, not so much in the *number* of her people as in their *ability* and their *public spirit*; not so much in the *amount* of its valuable things as in the *distribution* of them. If our rulers had viewed the matter in this light, they never would have expended *seventy millions* on the last war against America. It was not the *numbers*, it was not the *masses of commercial wealth*, that saved America. It was the easy circumstances, the public-spirit of the yeomanry, the *real yeomanry*. The traders of Baltimore were ready to surrender to the army of Ross, when the farmers from the back part of Pennsylvania arrived, after having rode, some of them, two hundred miles at their own expense. The traders of New Orleans even wished to surrender to PACKENHAM; but the *yeomen* from Tennessee and Kentucky, coming from, at nearest, two hundred miles, took possession of the city, punished many of its inhabitants for their cowardice, made others *work* to assist in the defence, and quickly destroyed, or drove away, the enemy. Perhaps, and I have, indeed, good authority to state the fact, there was *not a dollar* given to these yeomen, in either case, whether for coming or returning. Horses, arms, clothes; all were *their own*. But, if America had been a country of *large farms* and a poor and wretched "*peasantry*," how, with an empty treasury, and with two thousand miles of frontier, was the country to have been defended?

Frightful, therefore, as it may, at first sight appear, to think of whole streets and squares of lofty and elegant mansions uninhabited and crumbling down, it is to me, at least, *more frightful* to think of the necessary final consequences of a perseverance in a paper-money system; in a system which draws wealth into masses, and spreads misery over the land; which gives the Government the support of the thousands, and alienates from it the hearts of the millions; which calls for an enormous standing army in time of peace, and which makes the nation tremble at the thought of war. *Cut our way through!* That is the only wise course; and, if we have not the courage to do that, instead of being the "*envy and admiration of the world*," we shall become an object of its scorn and contempt.

In conclusion, Sir, let me observe, that, as to the *fault*, the *blame*, there is no *political party* to which a share does not belong. All have supported, and even applauded the system, except the *Old Tories*, who have long been extinct. All, indeed, of late years, have been deceived. The great deceiver, Pitt, deceived himself. The Lord Chancellor has recently observed, that he several times talked with Pitt about Catholic Emancipation; but never could get from him "*any clear explanation of what he meant, or wished, to do, or have done!*" I'll warrant him he could not! And the same may be said as to *all Ministers*, for forty years past, with regard to the paper-money system. It *served* them; it *served their turn*; it caused revenue to flow in; it gave an appearance of "*prosperity*;" and, as to *ultimate effects*, they never thought about them. One would have thought, that the increase of the size of London, coupled with the increase of the poor-rates, were sufficient to set a Minister *a-thinking*, at any rate. But, the glare dazzled them all; and the character of the Government, its very mind, became totally changed. *Solidity* used to be the great characteristic of everything belonging to England. *Plenty, great store of good things, and little*

outside show. To think nothing *gained*, unless it was *made fast* and to *last for ever*, appeared to be the turn of the minds of all Englishmen, and to be the ruling maxim of their Government. What a metamorphosis have they undergone under the hands of Dutch fund-makers, Jews, and all sorts of paper-money vermin.

All, therefore, have a share in the *blame*; all *political parties*, and *every man* who has been in Parliament for the last forty or fifty years; for no one of those men has ever made an attempt to eradicate, or even to expose the true cause of the evil which is at last come upon us. The *disputes* have been as to the *more* or *less*, but all have, expressly or tacitly, given their support to the thing itself. Now a step has been taken towards its destruction and towards a return to national happiness and to the English character; and I hope that men like you will not be found to endeavour to impede the march of the Ministers in this direction. To carp at their *expenditure* is not only useless, but *inconsistent*, as long as they are to pay the interest of the Debt, and as long as *high prices* grind the labourers to the earth, fill their hearts with bitterness, and make them a barrel of gunpowder that only waits for the match. To go on with paper-money system, there *must* be a *great standing army in time of peace*, which, besides its direct repulsive force, is necessary to draw off, and to clothe and feed the most sturdy and resolute part of the suffering labourers. It is in vain, therefore, to find fault with the *expenditure*. It is demanded by the system, and must be made as long as the system lasts.

Lord GREY said lately, and he said truly, that a change of Ministry would be of no use, without a *total change of system*. It was a pity he did not *explain* himself. But, if he meant anything short of a total change of the *money-system*; if he meant anything short of turning the paper-system into a gold-system, he certainly did not mean enough. That change has *begun*, and a million times more important it is, than any estimates, Six Acts, or anything else. Let Peel's Bill go into effect, and it must produce a destruction of the Pitt-paper system. This will, indeed, bring "woe unto them, who have joined house to house and laid field to field;" "of a truth, saith the Lord of Hosts, many houses shall be desolate, even *great* and *fair*, without inhabitants;" but, the small farms will again rise up, the cottages will smile, and England will be once more happy, tranquil, safe and truly great.

I am, Sir, with very great respect,
Your most humble and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT

THE LANDLORDS' FORTUNE-TELLER.

Political Register, August, 1821.

LANDLORDS,

Kensington, August 7, 1821.

I can wait no longer for the *Evidence*, taken by the Committee, who were appointed to inquire into the allegations in the *petitions of the agriculturasses*. The Committee made their *Report* to the "*Grand Council of the Nation*," to the "*collective wisdom*," as Mr. Perry calls it, and the "*collective wisdom*" resolved to have the *Report printed*, at once, and to leave *time* for *Luke Hansard* to print the *Evidence*. Luke prints at a *low price*, I suppose; and, therefore, has not been able to make much dispatch. The "*collective wisdom*," separated before Luke could finish the job, which I could have got done in *forty-eight hours*! And now, the *collective wisdom* will hardly be able to see this *Evidence* before the wisdom is in a state of *collection* again.

Nevertheless, this *Evidence* is a matter of *great importance*; for, whatever might be the character and views of the parties giving it, they suffered a great deal to *leak out*. They, at any rate, described *their state* and that of *their labourers*; and, before any sound opinion can be given on the *Report* itself, the *Evidence* must be read, or, at any rate, *its substance must be stated*. Viewing it in this light, I notified to my readers my intention to *republish* the whole of the *Evidence*, and to write a couple of *Registers* on the *Report*, referring, as I went on, to the *Evidence*. But Luke not having *got on* with the printing, I have been compelled to give up this design; and to betake myself to my *little bird*, who has given me a great deal of intelligence about this same *Evidence*, and, from his bill, I have *made minutes of the greater part of it*. So that the effect of Luke's *slow-printing*, will be found, at last, to have thrown no bar in my way as to this discussion.

I shall take the *Report and the Evidence*, and, from them, *tell your fortunes* as true as a hair. I shall show you, not the *way downwards*, for that you must see, or feel, if you be as blind as a dobbin; but, shall show you the *depths* into which you are descending, and the torments you have to endure. "*Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I will, therefore, laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them; and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.*" Proverbs, ch. i. v. 25, 26, 32.

These words, as applicable to you from me, I quoted at the time when the "*stern-path*" men had compelled me to flee to a foreign land. At that time *you* laughed. *You* laughed when the Lancashire Reformers were *dispersed* by a military force, or marched into a prison, only for being assembled to petition for Reform. *You* laughed and applauded at the Manchester and Oldham affairs of 1819. *You* laughed when JOSEPH

SWANN was sent by the Justices of Cheshire to be imprisoned for FOUR YEARS AND A HALF. You laughed when the Lancashirers threatened to *interfere* if I attempted to enter their town. You laughed when a man was sent to jail for ten weeks for going round a town to announce that I was come home in good health. You laughed when *Six-acts* were passed. O! how you *laughed*, how you *mocked*, how you showed your bright *wit*, upon all these occasions! Well: I never *cried*: I was sure that the time would soon come for *me* to laugh: that time is come: laugh I do, and laugh and mock I will.

However, I shall discuss your case with *seriousness*, with this express reservation, that, when I speak of the sufferings of *you* and your petitioning *understrappers*, it is, if you please, to be clearly understood, that I rejoice at those sufferings for two reasons, first, because you have been enemies of reform; and, second, because I am convinced, that those sufferings are absolutely necessary to the well-being and the freedom of the nation at large, and to the stability and security of his Majesty's throne.

I am by no means going to take part with the *fund-lords* (except on certain conditions); but, I mean to argue the case *fairly*, to do which no man, as far as *feeling* goes, is better qualified than myself, caring, as I do, not one single straw, which class suffers most. I hate the *muck-worm*; but, I am to consider, not my own natural propensity, in this case, but, what is best for the King and that part of his people who get their living by honest means. In one short phrase, I am to consider, under the success of *which* of the two classes we are most likely to obtain a *repeal of Six-acts* and an *abolition of the boroughs*. And, really, when I look at the *cause* of these, I do not see so clearly the efforts of the *muck-worm*. I cannot trace these, and especially the latter (which is by far the greatest evil of the two), to the *muck-worm*. Therefore, in this respect, I must, in my conscience, say "Good *muck-worm*, harmless *muck-worm*; I will not hurt thee, *muck-worm*."

It is now evident to *all* of you, even the most silly (and, God only knows how silly that is), that you must be *wholly broken up*, or that the interest of the Debt must be reduced, and "*public credit* and *national faith*," become the subject of farces and ballads. This is now evident to *all* of you, except, indeed, those against whom statutes of lunacy have *already* been issued. The question, therefore, is, whether under these circumstances, it be better that you should be wholly broken up, or not. And to answer this question, we have simply to ascertain, if we can, whether your being wholly broken up, will, or will not, *tend to give us a reform*.

To answer this last question we shall want a little time: time to see how the physic of manifestly approaching ruin and misery *works upon you*. If it make *reformers of you*; then, indeed, we may lend a hand to keep you from being *wholly broken up*; but, *mind*; *mark it well*; *ponder well on my words*: if you do not become *reformers*, every stroke that can be given *in favour of the fund-lords*, will be given, and that, too, with hearty goodwill.

I can see your wishes clearly enough. You wish to see *some* reduction of army, salaries, places, sinecures, pensions, and the like; and *then*, to turn to the *fund-lords*, and say; "Come: we have seen *other things* reduced: and, *now*, you must reduce." I beg your pardon! This will not do. The money has been *borrowed*. Your *lands are pledged for the interest*. None of your shuffling. Deduct one single farthing you can-

not, until *every thing else* be taken off that is not *absolutely necessary* to the bare existence of Government. The clergy begin, for instance, to complain, that *they* are paying *too much* to the fund-lords. Now, let us see how this matter stands. The clergy (besides all their tithes and other income) have had given to them about *a million and a half of money* since 1800. Perhaps it may be nearly *two millions*. Whence did this money come? Answer me that question. Where did this money come from? Out of your estates? Out of the *revenue*? No such thing. *Loans* have been made *every year all the while*. There was not money enough arising from the revenue to *pay* with; consequently that which was *given away*, came out of the *loans*! Ah, ah! What, you *start*, do you, Mr. Parson!

Now, look at this matter, and say, whether the nation will ever bear to see the clergy *keep this money*, whilst those who have *lent* the money shall suffer a *reduction* of the interest of the million and a half lent! This would be so flagrantly *unjust*; it would be such an outrage on all the principles of justice and honesty, that it never could be tolerated. O, no! Before the interest of the Debt can be touched, the church must *refund*, to be sure!

This is only *one item* amongst *hundreds*. It is easier for you to *talk*, then, than for you to *do*, in the way of causing a reduction of the Debt. Suppose, for instance, a man, have, in the course of the last thirty years, had *thirty or forty thousand a year given him*, and has been getting together an enormous estate with the money. It is, as in the former case, clear, clear as day-light, that this estate has come *out of the loans*. And, can it be possible, then, that the interest of those very loans would be *reduced*, while he *kept the estate*?

These, my lords of the soil, are little *spices*, little *foretastes*, of what you have to expect from us of the *reform* school. We shall never, be you assured, sanction any reduction of the interest of the Debt, until we see the matter clearly settled with Burke's *executors*, who have now received, since his death, *fifty-five thousand pounds of principal money*, on account of pensions granted to him to be payable after his death! What! are these fifty-five thousand pounds, which, for the reasons before stated, *must* have come out of the *loans* to be *kept by these executors* (who are not named to us), and, while they *keep the principal*, is the *interest on the loans* to be *reduced*?

It is quite surprising what we shall be able to do, when we come to *look things up* a little. We are not so poor as we think ourselves. At any rate, until we have *hunted up* all our odds and ends; till we have made a *muster* of our means, I, for my part, shall never be for a *reduction of the interest of the Debt*; that is flat and plain, and that I will stand to; and I ought to have as much, at least, to say and do in this matter as any two hundred of the very best of you. If you talk about *reform of Parliament*; and talk about it, and *begin to call for it too*, BEFORE you call for a reduction of the interest of the Debt; that will, in my view of it, *alter the case altogether*. A sacrifice that we might be willing to make for the *general good*; a sacrifice in which *all* would participate, and by which all would be ultimately benefitted, would be cheerfully endured, while a sacrifice made of great numbers for the benefit of a few only would be intolerable.

MR. BARING was thought "*rather strong*," when he compared the Horse-tax repealers to a "*band of robbers*;" but, really, if there be

persons, who, after having borrowed, or approved of borrowing, money to carry on what has been carried on, and who now expect to get out of the paying the interest in full, without a reform of the Parliament, they must, if not very dishonest, be very great fools. The case is this : the money was borrowed of the fund-lords for the purpose of keeping down persons accused of having *designs on rich men's property* : falsely accused, but that is no matter. Money was borrowed, for instance, to defray the expenses of keeping down the *Radicals*. Very well. They have been *kept down* ; but, will those who approved of the loan and of the object, think (now the desirable object is obtained) of refusing to pay the interest of the money borrowed for that object ?

Thus, you see, my lords of the soil and boroughs, there is a *great deal to be said* upon this subject. I have *always been*, and I *am now*, for a reduction of the interest of the Debt, the reasons for which I have, over and over again stated ; but, I am not for it *for the benefit of a few*, and those few *the most opulent too* ! Rather than this, let Jerusalem triumph ; let the orange-boys walk over the fox-hunters : for, as I once before said, we, the mass of the people, should have a *better chance* with the orange-boys. I dare say that the orange-boys would be *for a reform* ; but, at any rate, I know this, that, if they were not, we should lead them the life of a dog : and all your money-loving fellows like *quiet*. They will wink at, and even assist in, severities and cruelties of any kind and to any degree. The wretches have approved of every act of injustice and cruelty committed within the last five years. They would *see a whole people flayed alive* for the sake of obviating a chance of losing their money, or any part of it. But, they are less *vigorous* than you : equally cruel, but *less vigorous* : the difference is that between the cuckoo and the kite.

This *Number of the Fortune-Teller* is intended merely as introductory to those that are to follow. I intend, that the Numbers shall extend no further than *four*, in the course of which I shall examine *the Report* and also the *Evidence* ; and shall *tell your fortunes* with great exactness. This Number, therefore, is merely a *flourish* previous to the charge. Though even here I have been unable to refrain from touching on matters that might have been reserved for a future stage of my work. In my next I shall take the *Report* by the throat, and show how little is required to satisfy the singularly moderate desires of the "collective wisdom."

WM. COBBETT.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS, ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(Political Register, September, 1821.)

LETTER I.

LANDLORDS,

Worth, Sussex, 1st September, 1821.

1. In a former Register I opened this subject, in what I called the *first Number* of a series of articles. Since that day, I have obtained a copy of the *Evidence*, subjoined to the Report of the *Agricultural Committee*, of which Committee Mr. GOOCH was chairman. I had, before, obtained *extracts*, and had made minutes; but upon examining the *Evidence*, at full length, I find what I before possessed to be very imperfect as to some weighty particulars. Indeed, the papers now before me furnish, if my mind be equal to the task, matter for the most instructive essays, on the management of a nation's affairs, that writer ever penned and people ever perused. We have here, though mixed up pell-mell; though thrown together like all sorts of grain with all sorts of chaff, with the addition of dirt and dust and muck and dung; all the materials for showing, *how it is* that a people is rendered happy or miserable, contented or discontented, loyal or disaffected, by *the measures of a government*.

2. Will you, *the Landlords*, read these Essays with attention and patience? No; not you, indeed; but, the Essays will live to bear witness of your great injustice and of your greater folly; and, the historian, when he is giving an account of the *revolutions* of these times, of the sappings, the underminings, the explosions, of these days, and especially of the silent *fall* of the *old* and silent *rise* of the *new*, proprietors of the land, will, for the *causes* of so apparently unaccountable an event, refer to these very Essays.

3. The Report and Evidence make a closely-printed folio volume of 479 pages. These have been laid before the House of Commons by a Committee, appointed, in *March* last, to examine into the allegations of numerous petitions complaining of *distress in the affairs of agriculture*, which Committee made their Report and brought in the Evidence on the 18th of June. The Members of the Committee were,

Mr. Gooch.
Lord Castlereagh.
Mr. F. Robinson.
Lord Althorp.
Mr. Bankes.
Mr. Brougham.
Mr. Huskisson.
Sir E. Knatchbull.

Mr. Estcourt.
Mr. S. Bourne.
Mr. Tremayne.
Sir Wm. Rowley.
Mr. Calthorpe.
Mr. Hunter Blair.
Mr. Irving.
Sir T. Lethbridge.

Mr. S. Wortley.
 Mr. Baring.
 Sir H. Parnell.
 Mr. Wodehouse.
 Mr. Western.
 Mr. H. Sumner.

Mr. Littleton.
 Mr. Alderman Bridges.
 Mr. N. Calvert.
 Mr. Ricardo.
 Mr. Curwen.
 Mr. D. Browne.

4. Now, before I proceed to an *examination* of these papers, which are, on account of the subject, of the greatest possible public importance, it seems necessary to give a *general description* of the Report and of the Evidence, if any such description can reach things so uncommonly heterogeneous in their matter and confused in their manner.

5. What the Report ought to have been is clearly enough pointed out by the tenor of the petitions, which complained of *distress* amongst the *farmers*, and which prayed for *relief* generally, or, particularly, by means of a tax on imported corn. Now, the first thing to ascertain was, whether the distress *really existed*, and, if it did, to *what degree*. Next, whether the distress were *temporary*, or *permanent*, and this should have brought out a clear explanation of the *cause*, or *causes*, of the distress. Then would have followed, whether any relief at all *could* be given *by the House*, and if it could, whether it *ought* to be given; and here would have come in a clear view of the manner in which the several classes of the community were affected by the return of low prices, and in which they *had been effected* by high prices; and the *causes* of those low and those high prices ought to have been clearly laid before the House; in order that it might have seen, what ground there was for hope, that relief would come from the *mere operations of time*; or, if it could see no such hope, what measures, other than those called for by the petitioners (if those were not proper to be adopted) it would be necessary to take into its consideration.

6. Instead of this, what have we? Numerous statements, many of them foreign to the subject, a set of arguments and opinions, not at all tending to the elucidation of the matter in question, but manifestly in mere *opposition* to the opinions, the apprehensions, and the prayers of the petitioners; a smoothly-written and badly-arranged essay on prices of farm-produce, as affected by seasons and by currency, and on the degree in which property, and landed property especially, is affected by those prices. As to the *objects*, they manifestly are, to prevent the passing of another corn-bill; to create a belief that the distress is less than it has been represented; to cause it to be believed that the distress is merely temporary, that it has reached its highest point, and will speedily pass away; to lull the farmers (and more especially the landlords) by a hope of a reduction of taxes sufficient to afford them relief; to excite horror against all attempts to obtain relief by a reduction of the interest of the Debt, and, above all things, to cause it to be believed, that the evil, be it what it may, *is not to be ascribed to the Government*.

7. The *manner* of the Report, its way of going to work and of proceeding, is such, that, to take the paper in its *own order* would be to give rise, not to any clear comprehension of its matter, but to a confused mass of ideas respecting that matter. So true it is, that a man may write smoothly, and even with clearness when we look at the several parts of his performance in a detached state; and, at the same time be destitute of compass of mind sufficient to place the thing, as a whole,

clearly in the mind of the reader. Such is the case of the writer, or writers, of this Report; for, like a being mentioned in the Scriptures, they seem to have been many. Probably Mr. HUSKISSON, under the direction chiefly of the *stern-path* politicians, though there is, here-and-there, a passage, which seems impossible to have come from the brain of any living soul, save that of the hole-digging thunderer himself.

8. Clearly to state in detail the *meaning* of such a performance is no easy matter; and it is still more difficult to give to its errors and absurdities a full exposure. The divers matters are so *mixed up*; they are made to *run so much into one another*; there is, in short, such confusion, that it requires no common degree of labour to separate them in such way as to reduce the assertions contained in the mass to any thing like *distinct propositions*.

9. This, however, is what I must endeavour to do; or, it will be wholly useless for me to attempt an exposure of the errors and the fooleries that lie so thickly spread before me.

10. Come, then, landlords, let us *state the case*: let us ourselves rise above the fog. The case is this: the farmers in name, and the landlords in fact, complain of *distress*; that is to say, of a falling-off in their *gains*, or *incomes*. They ascribe this to *low prices*, and seek a remedy in a *tax on foreign corn*. The Reporters, that is to say, those who concur in views with the Ministers, say, that the remedy will be found without a new corn-bill; without a repeal of Peel's bill; and without that which they call a breach of national faith, *I say*, that a tax on foreign corn, and that a new corn-bill of whatever description, would do *you and your farmers no good*; but, that, without a repeal of Peel's bill, or, without what is called a breach of national faith, *the present landlords must lose their estates*.

11. The Ministers are aware of the *great extent of the belief in the soundness of my opinions*. They are well aware of the many thousands of sensible men, who think precisely with me upon the subject. They are not ignorant, that many, and even a great many, *even of the landlords*, while they piously wish the prophet at the devil, do, nevertheless, firmly believe in the prophecy. Therefore, the great object of the Report is, to persuade you into the belief, that the prophecy is false, and that Peel's bill, full interest of the Debt, and all may still go on, and that you, the present landlords, *will not lose your estates*.

12. I am happy in the thought that I am able to *prove* to you, that the contrary is the fact; notwithstanding the uncommon pains that have, for years, been taken to *quiet your alarms on this score*, and the pains not less extraordinary that have been taken to *excite your alarms on another score*. Acquired cunning has long been co-operating with native ignorance and impudence for the accomplishment of this combined object, which, if it be accomplished, will hardly be able to tell, to which of the three it is most indebted, seeing that I myself should, without great time for making the estimate, be very loth to say which, in my humble opinion, has been most conspicuous in this series of efforts, lack of sincerity, lack of modesty, or lack of brains.

13. However, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof; and, therefore, without looking further back than the bulky book before us, let us now see what this production contains. It contains, expressly or in substance, certain *assertions*. It will be of advantage to state, as briefly as may be, *all these assertions*, before I proceed to remark upon any one of

them ; and, that you may clearly see your fate, and begin by times to enjoy a foretaste of your ultimate degradation, I shall endeavour to separate the divers sorts of seed and grain and pulse, or, more properly speaking, the divers sorts of chaff and husks, that I here find mixed up together, and to place each sort in a parcel by itself.

14. Observe, the *tendency* of the Report, its direct tendency, the point of which it never loses sight, is, to persuade you, that, though Peel's Bill be not repealed, and though the interest of the Debt be not reduced, *you will not lose your estates*. In support of this there are divers statements and arguments amounting to certain *assertions*. Some of these are correct and many more erroneous. These assertions I shall first state ; then make my remarks on them, one by one, in regular order ; and, by the time that I have done, you will, I think, *find your fortunes told to a hair*.

15. The *Report itself* I have published before, in the form of the Register. I have, in that publication, *numbered the paragraphs*, for the sake of *easy reference* when I came to write on it ; as I now number the paragraphs of these Essays, or Letters. In stating the *assertions*, just alluded to, I shall put against each *figures* denoting the paragraphs of the Report, which, expressly or substantially, contain the assertion against which the figures are placed. This will save a great deal of room and time which must otherwise be spent in *quotations*. The assertions are, then, as follows :

- i. That the Farmers and Landlords are of a *manly character*, and a *most meritorious* class of the community. 5, 83.
- ii. That, at present prices, an arable farm can *yield no profit*, but must be productive of *loss*. 2.
- iii. That consumption and revenue have *not fallen off*. 3.
- iv. That the distress is not *so great* as has been imagined. 4, 5.
- v. That *abundant harvests* have contributed to the distress. 12, 13, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 84.
- vi. That *sudden transition* from war to peace is not yet over. 20.
- vii. That *other nations* suffer in the *same way* that we do. 19, 20.
- viii. That distress of *this sort* is *nothing new* in our history. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.
- ix. That taxation *does something*, but *not much*, in creating this distress. 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66.
- x. That the interest of the Debt *ought not to be reduced*, and that the fundholders have a *right* to what they get. 85, 86, 87.
- xi. That Peel's Bill *ought not to be repealed*. 87.
- xii. That rents will not fall *so low* as some expect ; that prices will not fall *so low* as some predict ; that agriculture will *not decline* ; that our *prosperity in war* has added to the *capital to feed agriculture with* ; that things will *right themselves* ; and that the Landlords will be *as prosperous as before the late wars*. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 54, 58, 87.
- xiii. That the *ascendancy* of the landed interest, as *evinced by the practice of the Constitution*, is most beneficial to the country. 55.

16. Such are, in substance, the assertions of the Report. I have purposely omitted all that it says, *pro and con*, all its *pros and cons*, about *Corn-bills* I have omitted, as being wholly unworthy of the notice of any

rational being. And, as to the "evidence," relating to Corn-bills, that is to say the opinions of farmers, landlords and corn-dealers upon this subject, I should no more think of commenting on them than on the chattering of so many pies. Leaving this shocking gibberish aside, let us proceed to examine these assertions one by one.

1. *That the Farmers and Landlords are of a MANLY CHARACTER, and a MOST MERITORIOUS class of the community.* 5, 83.

17. This would, at first sight, appear to be a mere instance of *coazing*; a thing quite beneath a Committee of the House of Commons, to be sure, and unworthy of serious notice. Nevertheless, I cannot let it pass; for, I think it as little deserved as any praise that ever was bestowed in the world, not excepting that which, I, in my days of darkness, used to bestow upon "Glory." What, I should be glad to know, makes this the "most meritorious class of the community"? Have they greater merit than manufacturers, artisans, sailors, soldiers, or any other class? In what does their peculiar and pre-eminent merit consist? This, therefore, is mere vulgar parlance; and unworthy of any document having an official character about it. It is familiar, common, low, unseemly, and if not absolutely mean, wholly destitute of propriety. And, as to the *manly* character of the Farmers and Landlords, where are we to look for a proof of that? Is it to be found in their *crying* petitions; or in any part of that conduct, which, by supporting the several sets of Ministers for forty years past, through thick and through thin, has been the principal cause of that long series of unwise, thoughtless, desperate, and, in many cases, unfeeling measures, which have at last produced this very distress of which these men complain? If other classes have been guilty of the same tame and dastardly acquiescence; even that does not justify this eulogium, which, as it was wholly uncalled for, wholly unsuited to the occasion, is also wholly unmerited by the facts of the case.

18. It is possible, but I am almost afraid to entertain a supposition that reflects so little credit on the writer of the Report; it is possible that this eulogium; this *manliness*, this *merit*, might refer to the conduct of these persons as *armed men*! If this be the case I deny the thing in still more positive terms. Against *whom* did they arm? Was it against the *enemy*? Was it to fight in Spain or in Flanders; in Egypt or in Holland, that they mounted their untaxed horses, and received out of taxes in great part paid by their labourers, from two to four hundred thousand pounds a year? In short, *who* did they ever fight with; *who* did they ever draw their swords upon; against *whom* did they ever defend anybody, and if they did ever defend anybody, *who* was it they defended? They have, in this their military capacity, occasioned the expenditure of *millions* of the public money; and have thus received and swallowed up, a part of the *loans*, which have so accumulated into that Debt, of the oppressive effects of which they now feel only a part of their share. I deny, therefore, that we possess any proofs of any particular *manliness* of character in them; and I am persuaded, that, taking them as a body, and allowing largely for honourable exceptions, they are the least, instead of the most, *meritorious* class of the community.

11. *That, at present prices, an arable farm can yield no PROFIT, but must be productive of LOSS.* 2.

19. This is a very strange assertion to make! Upon the face of it, it

cannot be true. But, I will take the very words of the Report here. The Committee state the proposition in the following words:—"That, at the present price of corn, the returns to the occupier of an arable farm, after allowing for the interest of his investment, are by no means adequate to the charges and outgoings; of which a considerable portion can be paid only out of the capitals, and not from the profits, of the tenantry."

20. This is really very bad writing. There is an affectation of that mysterious technicality, which, in plain English, is neither more nor less than *slang*, and which is incomprehensible, without great trouble, to men of common understandings. It is difficult to know, indeed, precisely what the Committee do mean here. From the concluding part of the sentence, one would be led to suppose, that the *charges and outgoings* of a farm ought to be paid out of the *profits* of the farmer; but, the *profits* consist of that which *remains clear*, after all the outgoings of every description are satisfied. This, therefore, is a blundering description of the case; and the meaning is, as stated above, that an arable farm, at present prices of corn, yields no profit, but is productive of a loss.

21. Even, however, with this explanation, the description here given by the Committee is very inadequate. The "*investment*," as it is here affectedly called, but, which, in better language, would be called, the *live and dead stock* of the farm, must bear an exact proportion to the price of corn and other produce; and, observe, the *rent* must bear the same proportion too, that is to say, if the farm be *now to be entered on*; and this we must infer is the case supposed; or else, it should have been stated, that, at the present price of corn, no profit could be made; and a loss must be sustained, with a *high-priced stock* and with *high rents fixed some time back*. For, without this inference, or this qualification, the representation is not only manifestly untrue, but altogether ridiculous; seeing that it amounts to this: that, though the farm-stock and the rent be in proportion to the price of produce; and though the farmer only bear along with the consumers, his share of tithes and taxes, he cannot farm to any profit, but must farm to a *loss*. Now, if this be the case with him, at this time, it must be the case with him at *all times*; and thus the statement becomes downright nonsense.

22. If I take a farm to-day, it matters nothing to me whether farm produce be high-priced or low-priced. If my fat sheep, when I have them, will sell for only twenty-five shillings a-piece, my lean stock of sheep that I have to buy will cost me only fifteen or sixteen shillings. If my best wheat will sell for only four shillings a bushel, four shillings a bushel is all that I have to give for my seed wheat. Thus, when my produce is low-priced, there requires little to expend in that stock, which is here affectedly called my "*investment*." At whatever price I shall sell my produce, I feed and pay my labourers and keep my family till my crop comes in. My wagons, carts, harness, horses, in short, all my stock, and my rent too, all bears, and must bear, an exact and just proportion to the price of that which I shall produce upon the farm.

23. I am heart-sick, then, when I hear the Committee talk of the price of corn being *too low* to pay me interest for my stock and to defray the outgoings of my farm. If a thing like this were possible, a farm would be *worth nothing*; a freehold estate would be a burden; chaos would be come again. Therefore, the Committee must mean, that the farmer *must lose*, if he be bound to a high rent, and if he have

bought his stock in when it was at a high price. Yet, even in this case, the Committee would not be correct; and this brings me to speak of those payments which the tenants are here said to make out of their *capitals*. Several of the witnesses were asked about their *losses*. The greater part of them asserted that they had been *great losers* of late years; and upon being asked how they found the means to get along with all those losses, they said they made up their payments out of their *capitals*. They were not frequently asked how they came by those *capitals*; but some of them volunteered in observing, that they were *poorer* than they had been by *many thousands of pounds*. This was a great deal too much for a *farmer* to lose; and I do hope, that the times are coming when we shall hear of *no more such heavy losses*, sustained by *husbandmen*, who have lately been perked up into "*agriculturists*."

24. But, what were these same *capitals*, out of which the losses were made up, and which losses occasioned the complained-of *poverty*? Why, when the thing comes to be inquired into, we find that the losses of men who had any thing of their own, were merely imaginary. That it was not *loss*, in fact, but *cessation of enormous gain*. We find that the loss was on the *stock*; not that there was *less stock*; less horses, less cows, less sheep, less wheat, less hogs, or less any thing else, but that these were *estimated at a less amount* by these same losers. Mr. Wm. LOTT, for instance, of Milton near Blandford in Dorsetshire, who presented to the Committee, ruled and figured accounts, which, in small print, fill *ten and a half folio pages*, and which are surpassed by nothing except those masses of figures which go annually from the Houses of Parliament to the trunk-makers; this Wm. LOTT; this jewel of all bull-frog farmers, had been a *great loser*. Being asked at what period his losses commenced, he said from about 1814. Then followed this: "Can you at all estimate what your aggregate loss has been?"—ANSWER: "I think, in the year 1813, I could have retired with ten thousand pounds, or from that to *twelve thousand pounds*; and now, I should think, not more than half the sum, or, at least, not two-thirds."—QUESTION: "This loss has occurred on your own farm?"—ANSWER: "Yes; and in the *diminution of the value of stock!*"

25. Here we have it. This is very nearly what they all said, under one form of words or another form of words. They were *poorer*, they said, because their stock, if valued now, would not amount to so much nominally, as it would have amounted to, if it had been valued five or six years ago.

26. Now, if one can speak comfort to such disconsolate persons, does not Christian charity demand a performance of the duty? Mr. Wm. LOTT, will you not forgive me for all that I have said about bull-frog farmers, and will you not say, that the Radicals, to keep whom down, I dare say, you have an untaxed horse, a sharp sword and a well-loaded pistol; will you not say, that, after all, the Radicals, though everlastingly guilty of "*sedition*" and "*blasphemy*," are not such bad sort of fellows, if I who am deemed the prime apostle of Radicalism, can console you, can heal that wounded heart of yours, by convincing you that, you are just as rich as you were before 1814; and that the eight thousand pounds which you confess your stock and capital are now worth; that those eight thousand pounds are just as good, if not better, than the twelve thousand pounds which you think you possessed in 1813?

27. Mr. Wm. LOTT, the most disconsolate of all disconsolate farmers,

listen for one moment, and I will give peace to your distressed soul. You have, I dare say, many scores of pretty long-tailed ewes. Now, if one of those ewes will sell for thirty shillings at Apple-Shaw Fair; and if those thirty shillings will purchase as many and as good stockings for your wife, as forty-five or fifty shillings would have purchased for her in 1813; and if the thirty shillings will go as far now in the purchase of all the necessaries, conveniences and elegancies of life, as forty-five or fifty shillings would have gone in 1813; if the thirty shillings will now buy as much malt and hops, and even as much land (equal in quality) as the forty-five or fifty shillings would have brought in 1813: if this be the case, are not the thirty shillings of this day *as good* as the forty-five or fifty shillings were in 1813! You will take a moment to think; you will turn your head on one side; you may, perhaps, blush a little at your folly; but you will not have the grace to leave off calumniating the Radicals; much less will you think of sending me a score of ewes as an atonement for your sins of political hostility and Agriculture-ass ignorance.

28. Thus, then, this is a very gross error which the Committee have adopted. They have proceeded upon the notions of these vulgar men, who had nothing but the *money-price* of their stock in their eye, and who wholly left out of view the powers of *exchange against commodities*, possessed by that stock. An ox is an ox; and is he not of the same *real value* now that he was four or five years ago? What signifies it whether you call him *fifty-pound ox* or *twenty-pound ox*, so that he still be of the same age, and has still the same weight? Thus it is with regard to every kind of stock; and the change in prices makes not the smallest difference in the real value of the *property* of the farmer.

29. If, indeed, the farmer be in *debt*, when the low prices come; if he be bound to a *high nominal rent*; then the low prices operate against him; for then he has to give a larger quantity of his produce than he expected to give, and than he contracted to give, in payment of such debt and such rent. He must go on hastily to his ruin, if the rent be very great in proportion to his means; or if the rent be on the scale of very high prices, and of long future duration.

30. This, however, was a view of the matter which the Committee do not appear to have been disposed to take, and for reasons which one may, perhaps, be permitted to conjecture. To have laid down the distinction between a farmer *in debt* and a farmer *not in debt*; between a farmer *now entering on a farm* and a farmer already bound by contract of *some years date*: to have laid down this distinction would have been at once to open the sores, the deadly though disguised wounds, *inflicted by the paper-money system*. This was a thing not to be done at any time, and particularly when "the *healing* hand of time" was, in the close of the Report, intended to be so pathetically invoked.

31. If the Report had said, that, *under no circumstances*, the farmer could *gain so much* now as in times of high prices, the statement would have been correct enough; because, as I shall have most amply to prove hereafter from the Evidence itself, the principal part of what the farmer gained before, the system of paper-money enabled him to squeeze out of the flesh and blood and bones of the labourer; but to say that a farmer must now *necessarily lose*, is to say that which upon the very face of it is, to the last degree, absurd and perfectly monstrous; for, if the fact were such, nobody would rent a farm, and the lands must be thrown up for a

scramble. Scramble, did I say? Why should people scramble for that which would be *good for nothing* when they have got it? Why prosecute poor SPENCEANS? They were accused, and so were the Reformers, too, most falsely and most maliciously, to be sure; but no matter for that, the *accusation* against them extended no further, than that they aimed at a *division of the lands*, declaring the lands to be "*the people's farm.*" To what tremendous uses were these harmless though wild expressions turned! How were they trumpeted forth! What *alarm* were they made to spread! How many thousands of riders did they bring forth capering upon *untaxed* horses! And, *now*, here we have a Committee of that very Parliament, who enabled the Ministers to commit the Spenceans to the *Tower*, upon suspicion of *high treason*; we have a Committee of that very legislative body, presenting to it a Report that sets out with a proposition, which, twist it and turn it how you will, declares the lands of England incapable of being cultivated, *except at a loss to the cultivator*; that is to say, declares those lands to be *good for nothing*!

32. In the next LETTER I shall proceed with the rest of the propositions, or *assertions*. I have numbered the paragraphs of this letter, in order that I may, as I proceed, refer to them with facility. It is my intention to make these Letters form a part of each succeeding Register (unless something arise which demand *immediate attention*), till I come to the close of the subject, I shall, for the future, have the *Essays* of the Register *stereotyped*, that they may never, hereafter, be *out of print*; and, when this series of LETTERS is concluded, I intend to have *them* bound in a volume by themselves, so that they may form a distinct work, and may be had without encumbering the purchaser with other matter that he may not want.

WM. COBBETT.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS,

ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(*Political Register*, September, 1821.)

LETTER II.

LANDLORDS,

Kensington, 18th September, 1821.

33. At the close of the last Letter, being paragraph 32, I gave the reasons for *numbering the paragraphs*. I should now proceed with my examination of the propositions contained in the Report of the Agricultural Committee, which propositions are all distinctly stated in paragraph 15 of Letter I. [SELECTIONS, p. 139 of this Vol.] But something has oc-

curred, which demands immediate attention; and something, too, which appertains to the very essence of this most important subject.

34. In Worcestershire there has been a meeting of the YEOMANRY, belonging to the Agricultural Association of that county. These gentlemen, with Sir THOMAS WINNINGTON for their chairman, have passed certain *resolutions*, which resolutions I look upon as of such great importance that I shall insert them here at full length, and then add such remarks of my own as the case appears to me to require.

35. It will be seen that the resolutions not only relate immediately to the subject of agricultural distress; but that they contain some very pertinent strictures on that very Report, to elucidate which these letters of mine are intended; and that, in short, these resolutions go at once to the *root* of the evil. That which goes to the root of an evil, may with strict propriety be called *radical*; these, therefore, are Radical resolutions. I insert the whole of the advertisement as I find it in the Worcester paper; begging my correspondents at Worcester to accept of my best thanks for having transmitted me copies of this paper. I applaud their *discernment*, upon this occasion. They saw at once the *importance of the thing*; they also saw how exactly it corresponded with my predictions; and their justice urged them to put me as soon as possible in possession of the facts.

Worcester, September 8th, 1821.

At a numerous and highly-respectable MEETING of the YEOMANRY belonging to the AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION of the County of Worcester, held at the Crown Inn, in this City, pursuant to public advertisement, Sir THOMAS WINNINGTON, Baronet, in the chair:—

I. Resolved unanimously,

That the Committee of the House of Commons, to which the Agricultural petitions were referred, has admitted the existence of the evils, complained of by the Agricultural interests, to have been fully proved.

II. Resolved unanimously,

That while the Committee thus admits the evil, it denies the efficacy of, and the propriety of granting, the remedy sought for in those petitions; and it more than insinuates, that the change in the value of the Currency, brought about by the Act of the 59th Geo. III. commonly called Mr. Peel's Bill, is the principal cause of the Agricultural distress; and, at the same time, clearly expresses an opinion, that the prices of produce and labour, and consequently rents, will go back to the level from which the paper currency raised them.

III. Resolved unanimously,

That this Meeting is of opinion, that the prices of produce and labour, and also rents, became, generally, *doubled* during the existence of a depreciated paper currency; that the increased taxation of the country was founded upon such *doubled* prices, and that the great bulk of the National Debt, and of all private debts and obligations, were contracted in property and labour measured in those *doubled* prices.

IV. Resolved unanimously,

That the Committee, contemplating this reduction of prices, ruinous as it has already been to thousands, and overwhelming as it must ultimately prove to all, attempts to justify it on the ground of rigidly adhering to *good faith*, a principle which this Meeting at once recognizes; but this Meeting is at a loss to understand, how it consists with good faith, that the property of the landowner and cultivator, and the prices of produce and labour, should be brought back from the level to which they had been raised by a depreciated paper currency to the ancient bullion standard, while the charges to the fundholder, the sinecurist, and the placeman, contracted in a similar paper currency, are exempted from a similar reduction.

v. *Resolved unanimously,*

That it appears to this Meeting, that not only will good faith be violated by attempting, under such circumstances and in so partial a manner, to return to the ancient bullion standard, but that the measures in progress for accomplishing this object will be found as impracticable as destructive; inasmuch as the ruin of the productive classes of society must, in the end, recoil upon the unproductive, by making it impossible much longer to pay either the interest of the Debt or the charges of the Government.

vi. *Resolved,*

That while we consider a great part of our distresses to have originated in the foregoing causes, we are still of opinion, that the admission of foreign grain, *duty free*, in this country, adds grievously to the difficulties of the landed interest, by allowing the foreign grower to reap the benefit of supplying our markets, without contributing any share of our taxes and burdens.

vii. *Resolved unanimously,*

That this Meeting, duly impressed with the value of the zealous endeavours and meritorious exertions of George Webb Hall, Esq., beg to return him their sincere thanks.

viii. *Resolved unanimously,*

That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Thomas Sherlock Gooch, Esq. M.P.; Sir Edward Knatchbull, Bart, M.P.; J. C. Curwen, Esq. M.P.; C. C. Western, Esq., M.P.; and to those other Members of the Legislature who with them have eloquently and ably advocated the cause of Agriculture.

ix. *Resolved unanimously,*

That the cordial thanks of this Meeting be also given to the Committee at Henderson's, for their great and valuable services.

That these Resolutions be inserted in the two Worcester newspapers, and also in the Farmers' Journal; and that a Petition, founded on the above Resolutions, be presented to the House of Commons by the Members for the County.

(Signed)

THOMAS WINNINGTON.

The Chairman having left the Chair,

Resolved unanimously,

That the best thanks of this Meeting be given to him for his kindness in taking the Chair, and for his able conduct in the same.

36. LANDLORDS, I hope you will have read these resolutions with attention, and if you have, can you forbear to exclaim, "What! *forget Cobbett!* Not thank him, without whose writings these resolutions could not have been passed and promulgated, without exposing the Association of Yeomanry to be knocked in the head with stones torn up from the pavement in the streets of Worcester! What! not thank *him*, who and who alone, has taught the principles upon which these resolutions are founded; who has put into the mouths of this Meeting, even the very words that they make use of; who has taught the country to be prepared for the passing of such resolutions, and for the grounding of petitions on them! Not thank him, on whose pen these Yeomanry must still rely for success in their endeavours to preserve themselves from ruin; and who has only to take part against them to cause their petitions to be blown to the devil, and themselves to be hooted to a degree that would make them glad to follow those petitions! What! thank GAFFER GOOCH; thank those poor gentlemen, Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL, Mr. CURWEN, Mr. WESTERN, Mr. WEBB HALL, and the Committee at Henderson's Hotel! Thank these poor inefficient things that have failed in all that they have attempted; that have brought ridicule and contempt on the cause of the Landlords and Farmers; these men who did not dare to utter even a whisper relative

“ to the *real causes of the distress*, as stated in these very resolutions ;
 “ to thank these puny insignificant creatures, who have no more power
 “ to sustain the cause than so many mice ; to thank *them*, while not a
 “ word is said of him, who has the power to make that cause succeed,
 “ or, so to mar it as to render the distress of the complaining parties a
 “ hundred times greater than it now is, before any relief should be
 “ applied !”

37. There appears to be an inveteracy, an absolute incurableness in the stupidity and false pride of this description of persons. However *their thanks* would have been received by me with much less satisfaction than I derive from beholding one of their labourers with an increased bulk in his hunch of bread and cheese ; and, at any rate, I shall not, in the part which I shall take in this great matter, be influenced by any considerations of a private or personal nature. My great object is, as it always has been, since I have understood the subject, to *better the lot of the labouring classes*. Provided that be done ; provided that be the natural tendency of events, or of measures, I care very little what *other* effects those events or those measures may produce. I wish not to belong to a nation, of which nineteen-twentieths are “*poor*.” I think myself dishonoured by being one of a nation of paupers. The people of England are, I know well, the most industrious and persevering in the world. They deserve to live better than the people of any other nation. Until of late years this has been their way of life. And never will I cease my efforts, as long as I am able to move a pen, to restore them to that state of merited pre-eminence.

38. Provided this object be accomplished, I care little about the other effects of the events and measures which are at hand ; and, the whole of my conduct during the *approaching struggle*, will be regulated by the answer which reason, at the several stages of the struggle, will give me to the following question : “ Which is best ; what is best, for the labourer and the artisan and their families ?” The answer that reason will give me to this question shall be my guide. If reason tell me it is best for the landlords to fall, fall they shall, as far as I have the power to send them down. If the decision be that the muck-worm ought to come down, the muck-worm shall have the heaviest blows that I can deal him. At present, I confess that I have not sufficiently considered the matter, to be able to say decidedly and with satisfaction to myself, whether the millions would be most benefited by the fall of the landlords or by that of the fundholders. One or the other must come down. Not Omnipotence itself, without abrogating its own laws, could preserve both in a state of prosperity. This, therefore, is impossible. But I am very diffident in deciding which of the two we ought to wish to see fall ; for, if the landlords be resolved to *relax in no degree* that power which they now hold in excluding the people from their political rights ; then I should say, that, it would be better for us to try our luck with a new race ; for how can Jews or Turks or anything else, deal more hardly by us than we have been dealt by for many years past by the present arrogant owners of the soil !

39. Leaving, therefore, my decision as to this momentous question to be dictated by further experience and further reflection, I shall now beg the reader to observe well the substance of the five first of those resolutions of the yeomanry of the county of Worcester, which I have before inserted.

40. These yeomen have read, I am very certain, my Registers for some time back, and particularly my *New Year's Gift to the Farmers*. [SELECTIONS, p. 47 of this Vol.] Of this Register *two large editions have been sold*; and it has doubtless been read by many thousands of the parties interested. I hold it to be *impossible*; completely impossible, for any Farmer or Landlord, even of the meanest capacity, to read that Register with common attention, and not arrive at the conclusion, expressed in the resolutions before us, that it is Peel's Bill, which is the principal cause of what is called agricultural distress. God knows how long I had been endeavouring to din it into the ears of the nation, that it was the *rise in the value of money* which was ruining the Farmer and Landlord. From the beginning of the year 1814, up to the month of December 1820, I had been at work in all manner of ways, to endeavour to impress this doctrine upon the minds of the nation. In 1814, when the Corn Bill question was first agitated; in 1815, when that Bill was passed; in 1816, when a Bill was passed to add to the import-tax upon seeds; in every one of those years how often did I tell the nation, that it was the *Bank* that was at work; that it was the Old Hag that was playing her tricks; and that it was not the importation of corn and superabundant harvests. How often did I appeal to the common sense of Mr. COKE, Mr. CURWEN and Mr. WESTERN; how often did I tell them that there was no real remedy but in a reduction of the Debt, the sinecures, the pensions, the grants, the salaries, the army, the staff, the barracks and the monstrous establishments of military academies, so abhorrent to the laws and usages of England! How often did I tell them, that to ask for a Corn Bill as a remedy was to disguise the real evil, and was, in fact, to give the Ministers, the most efficient support. In 1817 I drew up that petition, which was signed on the Hill of Portsdown by four thousand men, who prayed, in that petition, for a reduction of the interest of the Debt, and also for a reduction of the barracks, the staff, the army, the salaries, grants, pensions and sinecures. In 1818, though absent from my country, I sent a petition to the House of Commons, which a very great landholder thought "*too long*" to be presented; and in that petition I prayed for a reduction of the Debt and of the salaries and other things above mentioned.

41. In short, from the moment of the first appearance of what is called *agricultural distress*, I traced it to its true causes, laid those causes clearly before the nation, and called aloud for the adoption of such measures as would have prevented that immense mass of ruin that we have witnessed already; that greater mass which we have yet to witness; and that indelible national disgrace, which we now exhibit to the sneering world, in the notorious fact, that *we are unable to go to war*, even if a French ship were to sail up the Thames, and batter down the Docks of the Royal Yards of Woolwich or Deptford!

42. Amongst the *rewards*, that I received for these services, which millions could not pay me for upon any just principle of valuation, have been implacable persecution by the whole body of the Government; laws brought in avowedly to crush me; malignity without a match from individuals even of the party opposed to the Ministers, one of which opposing party having been base enough to propose the *punishment of transportation*, to be made applicable to a case which was notoriously and *peculiarly mine*! To enumerate all the acts of implacable, mean, dirty, dastardly, shameless hostility, practised against me; would be to fill a vo-

lume; nay, fifty volumes would not suffice. One particular instance of this horrible baseness I must, however, mention here in detail.

43. In the month of March I was at an inn in Warwickshire, staying a little while for the benefit of change of air: during that time, the landlord of the inn was *threatened* several times, as he told me, by the Landlords and Farmers of the neighbourhood, unless *he turned me out of his house*, they would take their custom from him! When I had stayed as long as I pleased, I went away; and directly afterwards the following advertisement appeared in the Coventry newspaper:

44. "*Merriden, 18 March, 1820.*—We, the undersigned inhabitants of Merriden and its neighbourhood, in order to manifest our *abhorrence and detestation of the principles of Cobbett* and his adherents, do hereby publicly express our *astonishment and disgust* at the conduct of the proprietors of the Bull's Head Inn, in having entertained him for so long a time, *contrary to our general feelings and loyal spirit*; and further declare that we neither have nor will have any *connexion with Cobbett.*"

"Aylesford
E. Finch
W. Somerville
Thomas Smith
Joseph Gibbs
John Beaufoy
Robert Bunney
William Zachary
Humphrey Harper
Thomas Johnson
Benjamin Lees
John Sabin
J. Alsager
H. B. Bellison
W. Sahin
William Repton

John Dodwell
Samuel Thompson, sen.
Samuel Thompson, jun.
Thomas Phillips
John Loveitt
Thomas Oldham
George Proctor
George Downing
S. Large
Elizabeth Wiggin
Thomas Shuttleworth
William Gibson
John Guise
John Perks
Wm. Taylor, *Constable*
Robert Taylor, *ditto.*"

45. It is hardly necessary to say that the first fellow upon this list is the EARL of AYLESFORD; that the second is his uncle EDWARD FINCH, and who is a groom of the bedchamber, with a salary of five hundred pounds a year, while, at the same time, he enjoys the emoluments as a colonel of a regiment in a standing army in time of peace. One of the others was *adjutant of the Warwickshire Yeomanry Cavalry*. The rest are a parcel of farmers, and I see that there is one who is a *farm woman*. In consequence of this advertisement, I addressed a letter to this fellow AYLESFORD, which I concluded in these words: "You would do well, I believe, to shift your fears from me to the Fundholders, who, if I mistake not, will soon let you see, that there is something in the world more dangerous to you than '*the principles of Cobbett.*' If my principles had been acted upon, instead of the principles of my bitter foes, you would, at this day, have had no cause to fear that which is to come. My principles, long ago upon record, would have effectually prevented all the present dangers. But you '*abhor and detest*' those principles: take, therefore, the *consequences*, while I stand by and *laugh*. Good bye. Look after your hares and pheasants; and wait for the visit of the *Fundholders.*"

46. How prophetic! This fellow is now receiving the visit of the Fundholders; he is now taking the consequence of his abhorrence of my principles; and I am standing by laughing! It is all come true. It is all accomplished; and that, too, in the short space of eighteen months. We are told that we are to love our enemies; but there is a *condition*

attached to this : they are to *repent*, and make *atonement* first ; for, otherwise this would be the most immoral maxim ; the most unjust precept that ever was inculcated. God says : " An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ;" and this is the rule ; the plain unmystical rule that I pursue.

47. However, to dismiss the fellow and his crew of undersigners, little did they imagine, that, in far less than eighteen months, the yeomanry of a neighbouring county with a Baronet and great landowner at their head would publicly meet at the county-town, and there discuss, adopt and proclaim, in the most solemn manner, "*the principles of Cobbett*;" those very principles that this *thing* and his wretched followers had denounced as objects of their abhorrence and detestation !

48. The Worcestershire gentlemen appear to have come to their senses. They say this, that prices became doubled during the existence of a depreciated paper-money ; that the Debt was principally contracted on the scale of those double prices ; that the "*good faith*, of which so much has been said, is not intelligible to them, if the Fundholder, the "*sinecurist* and the placeman be not to experience a *reduction* ; that the "*Bill*, commonly called Mr. PEARL'S Bill, will be found as impracticable as "*destructive* ; and that, an attempt to enforce it will make it impossible "*much longer to pay either the interest of the Debt or the charges of the "Government."*

49. Well said ! out with it, dears ! come ; take t'other glass of warm water, and *bring it all up* ! You have been ill for a long time with this overloaded stomach. Let us have it all out now since you have begun. Don't be ashamed. I'll stand by you if you behave well, and swallow your physic kindly. However, I must say that here is a pretty good beginning ; and I venture to predict, that, before this day twelvemonth, the dose and the vomit will *go round*. If they should, *let the Fundholders look to their affairs* ; for, though you could not carry a *Corn Bill* ; that foolish, that unpopular, that odious measure, which was sure to raise up merchants, manufacturers, and all the labouring classes against you ; though you could not accomplish this, you will, if you go rightly to work, accomplish the other, and that, too, amidst the cheers of those, *who*, in the other case would have hooted you, and, if they could, have knocked out your brains ; that is to say, of those of you who had any in your skulls.

50. LANDLORDS, these Worcestershire gentlemen have learnt from me to ridicule that "*good faith*," which, as you well know, I have been ridiculing for something more than nineteen years, and which "*good faith*" meant neither more nor less than this, to give the Fundholders three bushels of wheat and three pounds of bacon for every one bushel of wheat and one pound of bacon that they had lent them ! It was time, long and long enough ago to put an end to such "*good faith*" as this. Nevertheless, I was abused like a hang-dog for proposing to put an end to it ; and, upon one occasion, CASTLEREAGH called it a *reasonable design*, in speaking of the resolutions of the Reformers respecting the necessity of putting an end to this cormorant devourer. It is curious enough, that one of the charges against the *Reformers*, contained in the *Lords' Report*, which was the prelude to the ever-memorable Power-of-Imprisonment Bill ; it is curious enough, that, in this Report, the Reformers were accused of representing the Fundholder as a "*rapacious creature*;" and that, during the last Session of Parliament, Mr. LITTLETON, who is a great landholder, represented the Fundholder as a "*mon-*

ster of consumption." *Monster of consumption* is a little more violent than *rapacious creature*, and yet Mr. LITTLETON was not even called to order.

51. The gentlemen of Worcestershire come to this conclusion; that Peel's Bill ought to be done away, or, that the interest of the Debt, the sinecures, and salaries ought to be reduced. This is what I have been saying ever since the Bill was passed; but I have also said that the Bill *cannot* be carried into full effect unaccompanied with such reduction. This is also now said by these gentlemen of Worcestershire; for they say, that the Bill is *impracticable* without the reduction. This is precisely what I wrote home the moment I read the substance of the Bill. These gentlemen, therefore, are pledged to the GRIDIRON as well as myself. I give them a general invitation; or, rather, I hereby summon the whole body, with Sir THOMAS WINNINGTON at their head, to attend me at the Feast of the Gridiron, whenever, and in whatever part of the kingdom, I shall choose to hold that feast. Sometime before it takes place I shall depute persons, of which Sir THOMAS WINNINGTON shall be one, to hold my *court of claims*. I will have one man to hold my pen; another my paper; another my ink and so on; and I'll utter and publish such parcels of bombast as the world has scarcely ever witnessed before.

52. Mind, this festival is to be held in any of these three cases: first, if Peel's Bill be repealed; second, if the interest of the Debt be touched in any shape whatever before the month of June 1823; third, if the whole thing go off like a barrel of gunpowder at any time before that month. These are the cases in which the Feast of the Gridiron is to take place. I wish this to be clearly understood: because I do not wish to keep my disciples with their horses saddled for any great length of time. If they hear of a *change of Ministry*; not through the Morning Chronicle, for Mr. PERRY is so keen of place; the scent is so strong in his nostrils, that he goes breast-high and often over-runs his game. Or, rather, he resembles a too-tender-nosed dog, that stops at a lark. Whipping has proved wholly unavailing; and, therefore, we must wholly disregard him. But, if we see the old lurching slouch of the COURIER, make but the slightest stop; if we see him only hang back a little upon his haunches, and begin to step cautiously, and slowly turn his head up towards the wind: then we must prepare; for, if a change of Ministry take place; if a splicing, or patching, or anything at all of the kind take place, it must be, and it can be, for no other purpose than that of repealing Peel's Bill, or of reducing the interest of the Debt. Therefore, watch the COURIER; and the moment this Scotchman, brother-in-law of Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH, begins to hang upon his haunches, put on your saddles and your boots; be upon duty day and night, for my summons will come upon you swift as the post can bring it.

53. The Worcestershire Yeomanry do not appear to have made up their minds which they ought to apply for; a reduction of the Debt or a repeal of Peel's Bill. The former, by all means, gentlemen, if you please. The latter would only put off the evil day; and that, perhaps, for a very short space of time. Until the interest of the Debt be reduced; and that *more than one-half*, too, this nation never can go to war; and the landlord will never have an acre that he can call his own. This has all been proved over and over again by me. The safety of the country and of the King's throne demanded such reduction twenty years ago. To be convinced of the *justice and necessity* of such a measure, no one has any-

thing to do but to read "Paper against Gold;" and especially the PRELIMINARY PART of that work. I wished the measure to be adopted nineteen years ago. In 1806 I communicated a distinct and detailed plan to the then Ministry; and if that plan had been adopted, the present difficulties would never have existed. In this PRELIMINARY PART, I have not supposed (for who *could* suppose) anything so monstrous as an attempt ever being made to compel the productive classes of society to pay the unproductive classes three times the amount of what had been borrowed. I have not, in that work, entertained the supposition that there ever would arise men to make the bees give the drones three times as much as they then gave them. I take the thing as it then stood; and, with a full knowledge of the then depreciated state of the paper-money, I prove, as clear as daylight, that justice and necessity demand a reduction of the interest of the Debt. In that work is contained the *whole argument*; an argument that has been a thousand times abused, but never has been once answered. I there stand upon the ground of the justice and necessity of the thing before so monstrous a thought was entertained by any human being as that of *trebling* the interest of the Debt by so augmenting the value of money as to reduce prices to a third. And, if my argument was good in *that case*, what must that argument be in this case!

54. In the course of these Letters to the Landlords, I shall unveil, lay bare, and scatter to the winds, all the miserable delusions contained in the Agricultural Report, relative to the *relief* which the landlord is to receive from a *rise in the price of the funds*. The rise in the price of the funds may tend to relieve some of those who have Israelitish annuities fastened upon their estates; but how is this to relieve the mortgager; the man bound by marriage settlement; the life-holder; and the various other descriptions of encumbered persons; and if all these could be relieved, or destroyed and got rid of wholly; what is to take from the land the all-pervading mortgage of *eight hundred millions*, which, though not recorded against the separate states upon parchment, bilks the landlord of his income; bilks the merchant, the tradesman, the farmer, of their fair profits; and, which in my eyes is a great deal worse than all the rest, bilks the labourer and the handicraftsman of a large portion of their earnings, strips them of their hustlement and their wearing apparel, makes their homes desolate, pinches them in their meals, deprives them of everything worthy of the name of pleasure, makes them discontented, and justly discontented, fills their minds with habitual anger against the whole state of things under which they live, makes them impatient under all subordination; in short, makes them impute to the very form and nature of the Government all those sufferings which the Debt alone inflicts upon them, and thus compels the Government, for the purpose of *enforcing* subordination, to resort to a monstrous standing army in time of profound peace, which, while it adds to the jealousy and irritation of the people, makes a large addition to the taxes, to the drain from the fruits of the labour of that very people, and, thereby, augments the danger against which it is intended to guard.

55. This is then, indeed, a monster of consumption. A monster, to furnish which with food other monsters are resorted to. It cannot be the wish of the Landlords of England that there should be a thundering standing army in time of peace. It can hardly be the wish of any set of Ministers; for, if it give them patronage, they must be compelled to give

it, out of their own hands, and leave it to the distribution of others. This enormous expense, therefore, of about *seven millions* a year, *over and above what it was before the French war*; this seven millions a year is a sort of retainer to the Debt. The necessity for this expenditure is created by the Debt, and the same may be said of the *police*, the secret-service money and various other articles of expense. Therefore, to get rid of this Debt; or, at the very least, to reduce it down to a mere trifle, is absolutely necessary *previous* to any considerable reduction of the army. The Debt is the nation's devil. It is the cause of all its calamities. And reduced it must be, by some means or other, or this nation will never again know the blessings of internal peace, any thing to the contrary in Mr. JUDGE BAYLEY'S financial creed, notwithstanding.

56. Yet, to accomplish this great purpose, the people must be on the side of the reducers; and to have the people on their side, the Landlords must act a part very different indeed from that which they have lately acted. It is very true, that I have no taste, and I know well that the people have no taste to live under the domination of the Israelites; but it is not easy to imagine, that the Israelites, even if left to themselves, would go much farther than Absolute Power-of-Imprisonment Bills, Sidmouth's Circular, Six Acts, Manchester affair, and Bill of Pains and Penalties. I have a great personal dislike to the Jews; but I am not aware of any very great additional inconvenience that would arise to the people from their possessing the soil. JOHN SWANN would find four years and a half of imprisonment full as pleasant under them as under those that sent him to that four years and a half imprisonment: in short, if it is to be merely a transfer of the lands from the present possessors to the mushrooms of the 'Change; if the people are to *gain nothing* by this being prevented; I can see no reason why they should endeavour to prevent it, while I can see many reasons why they should endeavour to let the law take its course.

57. It is impossible to believe that we shall suffer such an occasion to pass, without an effort to regain our lost rights; those rights for which we have so long been contending. In my *Leave-taking Address*, when I sailed for America, I said, that there would, at last, be an "*open struggle between the land and the funds*"; that, if, in that struggle we did "*not obtain a Reform we never should.*" That struggle is now come. The resolutions which I have above inserted form a sort of declaration of war. This declaration will be imitated, I am very certain; and if those who have the power to do it, give the people their rights, the nation is safe, the King's throne is safe, and we have before us, a long course of happy days. But unless we have those rights, unless we be suffered to raise our heads; if we are still to be marks of persecution and of obloquy, why should we give our consent to any measure that is to relieve the landlords and save their estates?

58. As to the *sort* of Reform. As to the more or the less; I am not for quarrelling with any body about a mere name. There are some that talk of a *moderate* Reform. It is nonsense; but even of this nonsense they only *talk*. They *do* nothing. They still heard us with their *parchments*, and tell us we are scum if we have none; though we contribute towards the maintenance of the Government, the army and the debt-people; and though our persons are liable to be forced out to be employed in defence of their lands. Why not give us their *moderate* Reform, and

take from us the possibility of *desiring to get at justice through the means of a convulsion?* Why not give us that same "*moderate Reform,*" and not entertain the wild and ridiculous hope of being able to keep us at bay while they disembarrass themselves of the Fundholder?

59. One thing I will never depart from, and that is this: that I will never cease to oppose, never cease to annoy, as far as I legally may, any man, or any body of men, who, having the power to do it, shall refuse or shall neglect to do justice to the *memory of the Queen*, and to the *persecuted Reformers of 1817, 1818, 1819, 1820, and 1821*. To this will I hold. From this I will never depart. If justice be not done to these men, I care not who suffer. Until that justice be done, the distress, the anguish, the ruin and racking torments of the persecutors give me pleasure. Divers other things I would yield. I lay wholly out of the question all redress *for myself personally*; for God has blessed me with health and spirits to weather the storm; but this is my solemn determination, that, under all circumstances, at all times, and in whatever situation I may be placed, I never will cease to endeavour to obtain justice for the basely persecuted Reformers of the five above-mentioned years. Upon this score I submit to no compromise; and, if I see no disposition in those who have the power to do justice, to do that justice, I hereby pledge myself, that those persons, be they who they may, shall experience at my hands all the thwarting, all the annoyance, all the injury that it shall be in my power lawfully to bring into play against them.

60. In the next letter I shall pursue my examination of the propositions contained in the Report of the Agricultural Committee. Before I have done with those propositions, the Landlords that read me will see their fate as clearly as they can see their faces in a glass; and, though that fate is by no means consolatory, I shall point out to them how they may rescue themselves and their country from the terrible curse that now hangs over them. I am aware, that I have said many provoking and irritating things. I am also aware that stubbornness and pride are as excusable in others as they are in myself. If I have been deeply injured, I have taken deep revenge. I by no means wish to live in strife to the end of my days. If I could see complete justice done; that is to say, full compensation made, to the persecuted Reformers of the above five years, I should be ready to declare, that I felt no enmity towards any human being, always save and except the hell-hound *private-letter party*. I am as desirous as any man to see peace restored to the nation. I can have no interest in convulsions of any kind. In short, no man is more anxious than I am to contribute towards the removal of the present difficulties; and yet, I am compelled to see them with pleasure, because, I, at present, see in them the only possible chance of the people obtaining fair play, and of the abused, insulted and persecuted Reformers obtaining redress.

61. Some gentleman has just sent me the *Edinburgh Review*, which I find *takes part with the Fundholders*, applauds *Peel's Bill*, says, with the ORACLE, that the *monish* has been raised only *four and a half per cent.*, and concludes, that, if, to keep "*good faith,*" a *quarter part of the lands be transferred to the Jews*, it will give us *national prosperity!* Ah! here these *feelosofers* are in their true character! They are the mouth-piece of the *Whigs*, mind; and, therefore, Messrs. Landlords, take care of *that faction*. These *Edinburgh fellows* take *Mr. Muesett* by the hand. They prate away about *retrenchment* and *economy* as the

effectual remedy, and say, that, if *four or five millions* are cut off from the annual expenditure, the nation will *bound forward!* Wretched drivellers! why, that amount has, in fact been *added* to the taxes, since May last, by the rise, since *that time*, in the value of money! These coxcombs call themselves "*statesmen!*" Miserable is the nation that is under the guidance and control of such "*collective wisdom*" as this! These *feelosofers* eulogize the Government on account of *Peel's Bill*, and well they may; for, it was, in fact, the work of the *Grenvilles and the Whigs* more than of the Ministers. However, I shall, in the course of these LETTERS, take in the doctrine of the *feelosofers* as well as the statements of Mr. MUSHETT; and I shall, I fancy, convince the Landlords, that *they* have no hope but, in the support of the *people*, who are, though not in the same degree, also interested in the *reduction of the Debt.*

WM. COBBETT.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS,
ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(*Political Register, September, 1821.*)

LETTER III.

LANDLORDS,

Kensington, September 26, 1821.

62. I now proceed to examine the third *Proposition* of the Report, as stated in Letter I, paragraph 15, thus:

III. *That consumption and REVENUE have not fallen off.* 3.

63. This is one of the grand fallacies of governments. *They prosper* when they collect great sums of money; and they have the folly, or the impudence, or both, to regard it as a thing taken for granted, that, so long as *they prosper*, all must be well; or, in other words, that a *nation* means only a parcel of people, made to work for the greatness and splendour of those who are, in any way, engaged in carrying on the Government.

64. The Committee, proceeding upon this notion of the *revenue* being the standard of *prosperity*, takes care not to advance into the main subject of the Report, before they state, as an *answer* to the complaints of the farmers and of the tradesmen connected with them, that, "it appears, by "*official returns*, that the total consumption of the different articles subject to *duties of excise and customs* have increased in the last year, "compared with the average of the three preceding years."

65. It is a strange thing, but not more strange than true, that, in this country, a minister of state, or a Committee of the "*Collective Wisdom*," seldom (I may say *never*) puts pen to paper without making some gross *grammatical error*; and, if the writing be of any considerable length,

several such errors. Accordingly they abound most luxuriantly in this Report; and, in the sentence before us, we are told, that the "total consumption *have* increased." If the writer of this Report, or, indeed, if any of the members of the Committee, had read my little Grammar, and had attended to what is said in paragraph 239, this error, so disreputable to the Committee and to the country, would not, could not, have been committed. But, alas! They will not read useful books. We shall find, by and by, that the Committee had read BURKE and ADAM SMITH, in order to discover in what degree the present agricultural distress may have been *produced by the stars*. They would have done much better to read my Grammar; and, indeed, there does seem to require some sort of national establishment for teaching their letters to persons, who, like a cub that I have in my eye, was, with great pains-taking, on the part of men who called themselves patriots, put into the representation of a county at the last election. This is really a serious evil. It reflects disgrace upon the whole of us; for if such be our *learning*; what must our ignorance be? However, I must not make this a critical essay; and, therefore, I proceed with my subject.

66. *Revenue* is no standard of *prosperity*; that is to say, except of the prosperity of those who live upon the taxes. The speeches of our Kings, ever since the Whigs first predominated in England, have always, when it was possible, boasted of an increase of the revenue; of the large produce of the revenue; of the flourishing state of the revenue; just as if a nation could be benefited by an increase of its burdens; just as if a farmer and his people can be better off, because a taxgatherer comes and takes away a part of their earnings! The thing is too monstrous, in this view of it, to be the subject of reasoning for a moment.

But, now let us consider this assertion of the Committee as it applies to the state of things at present. The process that is going on, is that of taking estates from one class and giving them to those of another class. Now this the Committee are very anxious to cause it to be believed, is not the case. They are anxious that the landlords should not look upon their estates as being in danger, and to assist them in this their endeavour, they bring forward the assertion that revenue and consumption have not fallen off. In a moment we shall see, that this is wholly fallacious; for there can be no reason why the "*total consumption*," should not continue as great as before, and, with respect to some articles still greater, though a transfer of all the estates in the country be going on at the same time. My Lord DE BOMBASTEVILLE (the Norman, who came in with the Conqueror), has, for instance, mortgaged his estate to MOSES ORACULO, the Jew, who came in with the Dutch and the devil. The estate, when mortgaged in 1812, was worth two hundred thousand pounds, and Moses lent a hundred thousand upon it. PERL's Bill passes in the memorable year 1819, and in 1821, the estate is the Jew's and the Norman has no estate at all.

68. Now, this is the process that is going on. But this produces *no diminution of consumption*. This produces no falling-off of revenue. What the Norman had before the Jew has now. The rents, which the Norman spent, are now spent by the Jew, who lives in the square of London where the Norman lived before, and whose hooked-nose wife and daughters have as low bows made to them as ever were made to the wife and daughters of the Norman. The land is just what it was before. It yields the same produce; it requires the same labour; and the labourers require the same quantity of victuals and drink.

69. Viewing the thing on a larger scale : that which the landlord consumed the fundholder now consumes ; and the change is much for the better ; because the labourer participates with the fundholder, and is getting back from the farmer a part, at least, of that which he was robbed of by the depreciated paper-money. So that by this transfer of property, consumption may, possibly, be increased, instead of diminished, seeing that the *millions* have an increase of means from the very operation of those causes which take the *great gains* from the farmer, and, which must, in the end, take the estate from the landlord of the present day. I should think it likely that more malt, beer, spirits, leather, candles, soap, sugar, tea and tobacco, would be consumed, in consequence of the fall of prices. The stamps, the post-horse tax, the assessed taxes, perhaps, will all decline ; but I do not see any reason why there should be a diminution upon the total of the Excise and the Customs ; I do not see why any such diminution should arise out of a fall of prices. It is true that the tax remains the same, per bushel and per pound ; but, the article is lower in price ; it costs less ; and it costs less, too, *in proportion to the amount of wages*. And, therefore, if the landlords will be content to deem an increase of the revenue a *proof of their own prosperity* ; I think it is likely that they may keep prospering more and more every year till they have not a hedge-stake left, or a bit of ground wherein to drive it.

70. Let us now proceed to the fourth proposition of the Committee, which, in Letter I., paragraph 15, is stated as follows :

iv. *That the distress is NOT SO GREAT as has been imagined.* 4, 5.

71. In the two paragraphs of the Report, here referred to, the Committee make a great effort to describe away that distress which, as stated in my first Letter, paragraphs 19 and onwards, they acknowledge to exist. They say here, under this fourth head, that they find that, generally speaking, the rents are well paid ; and that they trust they have a *ground of hope*, " that the great body of the occupiers of the soil, either from " *the savings of more prosperous times*, or from *that credit* which punctuality will generally command in this country, *possess resources* " which will enable them to surmount the difficulties under which they " now labour ! "

72. Well ! God bless us ! Here are crumbs of comfort for the chicken of agriculture ! But, how ; where ; what ; when : good God ! what does all this mean ! Let us steady our heads a little if we can, and ask the Committee how the difficulties are to be surmounted, if their first proposition be true ; namely, " that, at present prices, an arable farm can *yield no profit*, but must be productive of *loss*." If this be true, and if it be true that the Committee does and can hold out no prospect of a permanent rise of prices, how are the farmers to *surmount* their difficulties ? How are they to surmount difficulties under a continued loss ; and how, under that continued loss, and that being known to be their state, are they to obtain the *credit* on which the Committee depend as one of the means for helping them out of their difficulties ? As if this were not sufficiently preposterous ; as if this did not smell strongly enough of 'Change Alley, we are told that they have a resource, in the " *savings of more prosperous times*," which really is a thought which one could not have expected to come into the head of any one more elevated in point of station than the keeper of a chandler's shop.

73. Let us try it by common sense, and see how it will work. Here

is Old GRUB, the tenant of a large farm, taken five years ago, and the lease of which will expire in two years to come. GRUB has saved the worth of the farm; that is to say, the paper-money has enabled him to squeeze so much out of the bones of his labourers during the last twenty years. But he now pays a rent of a thousand a year, and he loses seven hundred a year. He has already lost in this way twelve or fifteen hundred pounds; and he has 1400*l.* more to lose. GRUB knows this very well. If the landlord will not reduce his rent, GRUB will quit the farm! That is the way that GRUB will *surmount his difficulty*. If his lease be out now, he quits at once, and then his difficulty is surmounted. If he be a very ignorant man; if he understand nothing but merely the getting of money together; if he be totally blind to the real cause of the fall of prices, he may hold over, and hang on for a year or so, under the notion that *things will come about again*: but he will take no new lease; he will enter into no new engagement for time; he will have the farm at last for 300*l.* a year; or he will leave it to another that will give but a very little more.

74. This is the way that difficulties will be surmounted by savings; and as to credit, what a pretty state must that man be in, who has to borrow the means of carrying-on that which is notoriously a losing concern, and which is declared to be such by the Committee itself! And, as to the assertion, that rents have been collected, "without more arrear than has occurred on several former occasions," I am quite at a loss to discover where the grounds of it have been found by the Committee. One of the witnesses declares his belief that the far greater part of the farmers within his knowledge are insolvent; other witnesses give numerous instances of sales for distress and total ruin; and the evidence of Mr. WAKEFIELD alone is quite sufficient to prove, that, if rents, at their present amount, have been collected, they can be collected no longer from persons who depend upon the produce of their farms. And this must be the sole dependence for rent; for, the idea of farmers with *spare money*, and of farmers, too, with a disposition to lay out spare money in the way of gift to the landlords under the name of rent; such an idea is worthy of no place but Bedlam.

75. As to the proposition, however, that the "distress is *not so great* as has been imagined;" this is true enough, if the word distress be applied to the situation of the *whole body* immediately connected with husbandry. It is by no means distress with the labouring millions. They are getting back to prosperity. With the renters there can be no *permanent* distress; for, first, they will be sold up, and then they cease to be renters; or second, their leases are about to expire, and with them ceases their distress; or third, they are in the situation of Farmer GRUB above-mentioned; and, therefore, though the landlord filch them a little, it cannot be for a very long time, and they are rich enough besides not to feel any thing worthy of the name of distress. With respect to the business of the farmer in future, it will be *less profitable*; the gains will be smaller; a larger share will go to the labourer, between whom and the farmer a greater degree of equality will prevail. There will still be farmers to make large fortunes; but the work will require two or three generations instead of one, and the cases of this kind will be fewer in number. The distress will belong solely to the landlord, in a very short time. His devil, the fundholder, never dies, never lets go his grasp; never ceases to torment him. Rides him incessantly with merciless

spurs; is continually driving him harder and harder; and will never quit him while he has a drop of blood in his body. The farmer creates something out of himself; he lives along with the rest of the community. But there stands the landlord, without any means for making up on the one hand for losses on the other, and he daily sinks lower and lower from the very weight that pushes the fundholder above him. They are like two well-buckets, and the landlord is at present going down.

76. Poor comfort, therefore, it is to him to be told, that the distress is not so great as has been imagined. The Committee seem not to be wholly insensible of the inadequacy of this comfort; for, they next endeavour to ascribe the distress, in part, at least, to superabundant crops, as you will find, my lords of the soil, by looking into the Report in the paragraphs pointed out by the figures here below.

V. *That ABUNDANT HARVESTS have contributed to the distress.*

12, 13, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 84.

77. To hear of *distress*, occasioned by *abundant harvests*, is something shocking to common sense. We have, in our common prayer-book, a prayer for fine weather, a prayer to be preserved from dearth and famine; a prayer for moderate and refreshing showers; a thanksgiving for joyful rain; a thanksgiving for fine weather; and a thanksgiving for plenty, which I shall here transcribe word for word, without, I hope, any danger of being accused on this account of sedition and blasphemy:

“ O Most merciful Father, who of thy gracious goodness hast heard the devout prayers of thy Church; and turned our dearth and scarcity into *cheapness* and *plenty*; we give thee humble thanks for this thy special *bounty*; beseeching thee to continue thy loving-kindness unto us, that our land may yield us her fruits of increase, to thy glory and our comfort; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

78. Amen! say I, and particularly as to the *cheapness*. Besides this settled thanksgiving of the Church, there was in 1810 a particular thanksgiving put up in all the churches by order of the King; in which, I remember, we offered our thanks to God, for that he had been graciously pleased to *fill our valleys with corn*. The bible, from one end of it to the other, describes plenty as a blessing, and scarcity as a curse, with which offending nations are frequently threatened. PHARAOH was punished with a famine; and amongst all the plagues with which he was tormented and distressed, “ *redundant production* ” never seems to have been thought of by Him who was inflicting vengeance on him. It remained for this bright age and nation to produce men capable of talking of a “ *remedy* ” for a *redundant crop*!

79. The Committee, in the paragraphs above-mentioned, ascribe a part of the distress to the general abundance and good quality of the last harvest; to the improvement in the extent and growth of wheat in this kingdom. They speak of “ *redundant production*,” and observe, that this admits of no “ *adequate remedy*,” except that of diminution of supply or increase of demand. They further observe that “ *no relief* ” from exportation can be expected, till there be a scarcity abroad, or a “ *failing crop here*, either of which will restore the markets to their natural level.” They speak of the “ *inconvenience* ” arising from “ *abundance*,” and observe, that this cannot be “ *alleviated* ” by any legislative provision. Now, was ever language like this made use of before, in any part of the world, since the world was a world? Did ever man before hear of *abundance* being an *inconvenience*? Did ever man before hear the word *re-*

dundant, applied to the products of the earth? Did ever man before hear of a *remedy* being wanted for an *abundant crop*? Did ever man hear, since the world began, of a wished-for *alleviation* of the effects of *abundance*? It required this state of things; it required the nation to be under the effect of the measures of PITT and his successors; it required the existence of a system of paper-money to put it into men's minds to venture upon paper such combinations of words. Instead of prayers for gentle showers; for plenty and for cheapness, we ought, according to these notions, to pray for floods, blights, parching drougths, blasting winds, the fly, caterpillars, grubs, wire-worm, lice and locusts. Sunshine in harvest ought to be hateful to our sight; and, oh! what pleasure to see the wheat growing in the ear, or coming home to the yard soaked and sopped in the wagon! *Redundant production!* No *remedy* for this! *Redundant* means *too much*. *Remedy* means the *getting rid of an evil*. And these words we have lived to see applied to the harvests of England! But, the system of paper-money is full of monstrousness. It destroys the very mind and thoughts. It makes good evil. Like Satan, it says, "Evil be thou my good." However, it is waste of words to talk thus. This question presses itself upon every mind: What! how wretched; how troubled; how unnatural; how everything abominable, must that state of things be, where abundant harvest can be called a *redundancy*, and where men can talk of a *remedy* for such *redundancy*!

80. Leaving the thing in the abstract with what has been here said of it, let us now inquire a little how the farmers can be *injured*, either temporarily or permanently by good harvests. In the first place, every one of the witnesses, without a single exception, to whom the question is put, says that a *large crop* and good harvests are best for the farmer. To be sure, they are; they are best for the whole country, and the farmer participates in the blessing with others. If he have ten bushels of wheat and sell them at five shillings a bushel, is it not the same to him in point of money as if he had five bushels of wheat and sold them at ten shillings a bushel? If his harvest be fair, it is, in all respects, better for him than if it be foul; for though his additional expenses be repaid him in great part in the end, he has first to encounter those additional expenses.

81. What, then, can the Committee mean by ascribing part of the *distress* of the farmers to abundant harvests? The low price, indeed; the depression of *price*, may partly arise from an extraordinarily abundant harvest, and such, indeed, *must* be the effect of *great abundance*; but it is impossible; I say completely impossible, that from a cause like this, the farmer should suffer injury even in the smallest degree; and, of course, it is impossible, that there should arise to him from this cause, the smallest degree of *incapacity to pay his rent*; and this, you will observe, is the point at which the Committee everlastingly labours; because the object is to assign reasons for the present difficulties of the farmers; their present embarrassments or distress; that is to say, their present incapacity to pay rents; if the Committee had gone upon the sensible, clear, state-of Mr. WAKEFIELD; upon his opinions, fortified at every step by undeniable facts, with names, dates, sums and every thing else necessary to constitute something worthy of the name of *evidence*; if the Committee had gone upon this evidence, they would not have wasted their time in talking about *remedies for redundant production*, nor amused themselves and the House and the public with the curious conundrums of Mr. TOOK and the astrology of BURKE and ADAM SMITH, which I shall notice only

because I would not have it be believed that such things can pass under my eyes without exciting my ridicule.

82. The ingenious Mr. TOOKER has discovered (and the Committee "entirely concur" with him); this ingenious person has discovered that the people do not eat more bread in times of abundance than they do in common times; and that the increased consumption in times of abundance, "can amount to little more than waste." Nothing so monstrous as this was, surely, ever put upon paper before; and yet the Committee say, that *experience* warrants them in concurring with Mr. TOOKER in opinion, that even *redundancy*; that is to say, too much produce, adds very little to the increase of consumption! O! monstrous, as every farmer can swear, and as all experience proves. In America, let the crop be what it may, the corn is always a fourth cheaper in October than it is in June. Nothing can more clearly prove, that the stock has been diminished by a greater consumption than ordinary taking place, while the barns and granaries are full. Indeed, what absurdity can possibly be greater than that of supposing that the mass of the people really do not leave off eating till their bellies are absolutely full. The question with them is, not how much they ought to eat, but how much they *can* eat. Or rather, how much they can get to eat. The mass of mankind; that is to say, the millions of the labouring classes, know nothing about dieting. They eat as much as they can get; and, if the kingdom were to produce twice as much next year as it ever has produced before, Mr. TOOKER and the Committee would find, that the stock in hand, at the end of the year, would be very little greater than it is at this moment. Reason says that it must be so, unless it can be made appear, that the people have, at present, as much as they can eat, and that the food is as fine as they wish it to be; a state of things that never yet existed and never can exist in any country in the world. Nevertheless, this pretty doctrine was necessary to account, or to help to account, for the *distress* of the farmer, without ascribing with Mr. WAKEFIELD, the whole of the distress to the paper-money. Yet, it was only absurdity upon absurdity; for, if this redundancy of corn was *not consumed*, it was *still in hand*. Consequently, the farmer had it to the good; consequently, he had not yet offered it for sale, and, consequently, it could not have tended to lower the price! So that, after all, Mr. TOOKER's conundrum makes against, rather than for, that "*ground of hope*," which the Committee say they have, that the great body of the occupiers of the soil will "*surmount their difficulties*;" that is to say, recover their capacity of making good with their landlords their present engagements.

83. We now come to the *astrologers*, BURKE and ADAM SMITH. The former of these discovered, from the aspect of the stars, I suppose, several years ago, that taxes were like *dews*, which, rising up and forming themselves into clouds, fall again over the country in refreshing showers. This was so delightful a discovery that this philosopher has, from that hour to this, been a great favourite with every set of Ministers, and with the whole of the "*collective wisdom*" in both branches, and whether in leaf, flower and fruit-bearing state, or in the winter of opposition. They all, from Mr. BENNETT to Lord CASTLEREAGH, call him that "*great man*;" CANNING calls him "*the departed sage*;" and you frequently hear them quoting his words with as much reverence and solemnity as a Methodist parson quotes the Bible. This "*great man*" made the discovery about the dews just after PITT had caused a most refreshing and fructifying shower to

fall upon this great Irish adventurer himself, who, for a pretty long life, had been opposed to, if not outrageously abusing, PITT and his predecessors; but who, having become the most fulsome eulogist of PITT, found fall upon him the contents of a cloud, sucked up from the dews of taxation, and consisting of three thousand pounds a year pension for himself, during life; twelve hundred pounds a year pension for his wife, during her life after him, and two thousand five hundred pounds a year to be paid to his *executors after his death*, one-half of it for three lives, and the other half of it for two lives, one of the lives on each half being still in existence; and, of course, the two thousand five hundred pounds being *still paid to those executors!*

84. About *seventy thousand pounds* of principal money have dropped out of this cloud, collected together from the dews of taxation! Well may the astrologer be called a "*great man!*" Well may his doctrine have such an abundance of disciples! Well may the Committee appeal to him with regard to another branch of astrology, connected with *Agricultural distress.*" This doctrine is "that years of scarcity or plenty do not come alternately, but in *pretty large cycles*, and *irregularly.*" Doctor Adam Smith (most interesting to know!) has made the same discovery. Only think of a "*pretty large cycle!*" Well; but that is not all. These "*cycles*" or rounds of years, do not come regularly, it seems; but irregularly. You will observe the word *pretty* before large. You will remember that a cycle means a periodical space of time; you will then observe that these periodical spaces of time come irregularly; that is to say, not periodically; and, then, you will, I think, my good lords of the soil, have a jumble in your heads, a confusion of ideas, a bewildering so complete, as to drive out, if any thing can, all thoughts of the fundholder. Good God! to talk about cycles of scarcity and of plenty; to talk about unperiodical periods; to send you to the stars under the guidance of great Irish and great Scotch philosophers; when you are wanting to know when and how, in God's name, you should get at your rents.

85. Let me hand you down from this dazzling height, and endeavour to direct your attention to something a little less at war with common sense. The Committee tell you that abundant harvests have had something to do in producing the distress. They say that the last was a harvest of general abundance and good quality. But, was there nothing of low price but *corn*? Was there nothing else of which the produce of the land consisted? They appear to have forgotten that farmers raise *sheep* as well as corn; or if they had recollected it they would here, perhaps, have discovered that there had been also a *redundant production* of sheep, and that a remedy could be found only in a hoped-for barrenness of the ewes. In this part of the business they had a conjuror to assist them, and a conjuror, too, with a broad brim to his hat. They had friend HODGSON, of the partnership of CROPPER, BENSON, and Co. at Liverpool; and friend HODGSON came, not only with an account of the corn crops for many years past in England, but with very elaborate accounts about flesh, hides, and skins, from Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield. These Quakers are far more searching than the Jews.

86. This conjuror appears to have been out, for once, in his calculation. Brother Nicodemus appears to have been a very favourite witness; and I shall advert to him more particularly another time, when I develop a little the nature of the pursuits of a fraternity who make shift to live upon the fattest of the land without ever doing any work. Brother

Nicodemus seems to have been a sort of *oracle*; I mean a second oracle. He had these positions to submit to the Committee; that there had been of late years a diminution of the consumption of butcher's meat in the kingdom; that there is a scarcity of cattle in the country; that the cultivation of land has been increased by this; or that, in other words, a considerable part of the land, formerly appropriated to pasture, had been brought into tillage.

87. Brother HODGSON was a capital witness, faith! What interesting facts; how authentic; how minute; how lucid and neat the statement; how logical and natural the conclusion! Unfortunately for brother HODGSON, this prig-like account was given on the *twelfth of April*; and it was hardly given before the butcher's meat begun to tumble down! And, now, at Norwich Fair, where about a hundred thousand lambs were sold about a month ago, the lambs of the Duke of Grafton sold at fourteen shillings in place of the twenty-six shillings that they sold at last year. The Register of the eighth of September contains a statement of the sales of all the principal flocks at the Fair, and the average but a very little exceeded *one-half of the price of last year*. At Wilton Fair, about ten days ago, the average price of South Down lambs did not exceed eleven shillings; and that of breeding ewes did not exceed fifteen shillings. These lambs sold last year, at WILTON Fair, for about twenty and the ewes for about twenty-eight. At LEWES Fair (in the very home of the South Downs) the lambs scarcely fetched fourteen shillings upon an average. They were last year twenty-two shillings; and the year before thirty shillings. The ewes at LEWES Fair, fetched from eighteen to twenty-one shillings, last year they fetched more than thirty and the year before they fetched nearer forty than thirty. Now, mind, all this is with such a crop of "*rowen*," and such a crop of turnips, as never before stood upon the earth within my memory. If the "*rowen*" and the turnips had been short, I have no question that the lambs at WILTON Fair would have sold for five shillings a-piece.

88. Now, then, what becomes of the deep research and profound remarks and logical conclusions of this prig of a Quaker? Are the cattle *scarce* now, Brother Hodgson? Happy, indeed, must be the nation, whose lawgivers receive lessons from lips like thine! Pasture land had been broke up for tillage; and this was *assumed* upon no other earthly ground than that this prig's observations and the miserable blocks of figures that he had put down upon paper, represented butcher's meat as low-priced, and cattle scarce!

89. The Committee will do well another time to make LUKE HANSARD despatch his printing more quickly; for, it has so happened this time, that NORWICH Fair had decided that cattle had fallen one-half in price, before LUKE could get Brother HODGSON's evidence from the press. BARNET Fair has seen beasts sold for eight pounds, which only last year fetched twelve; which is another excellent commentary on the prig's profound speculations. At LEWES Fair they penned about five-and-twenty thousand sheep. At WILTON Fair about eighty thousand. So that, from these two fairs the farmers took home about fifty thousand pounds less than they took home last year, and about a hundred thousand pounds less than they took home the year before. Mighty is this Bill, O! Mr. PEARL, and honoured and magnified be thy name throughout the dwellings of all the labourers in England! Let friend CROPPER bellow as long as he will, for everlasting paper, thou hast smitten the whole tribe in the

bowels, and we shall see them reduced to that state to which they had reduced millions.

90. But observe, how this sheep-story completely upsets all the doctrine of the Committee, and Mr. Tookz, and the sages of the "cycles!" Who, after this, can treat otherwise than with scorn any one who would affect to ascribe the ruin of the present race of farmers to any other cause than that of the rise in the value of money? Should any one be weak enough to subscribe to the doctrine of redundant harvests, is there an idiot, dry mouthed or slavering, without leader or with leader, who will suffer himself to be persuaded, that there has been a *redundancy* in the breeding of ewes and of cows.

91. Having done its best with redundant production, the Report next resorts to the transition from war to peace, as is briefly set forth, in the sixth proposition, in these words :

VI. *That sudden transition from war to peace is not yet over.* 20.

92. The words which the Committee make use of are these: "It would seem that the influence of that *general derangement* which the convulsions of the last thirty years have produced in all the relations of commerce, in the application of capital, and in the demand for labour, *is not yet spent* and exhausted, and that neither the habits and dealings of individuals, members of the same community, nor the transactions and intercourse of different communities with one another, have *hitherto altogether adjusted themselves* to that more natural state of things, which we may now hope is likely to become again the more habitual and *permanent condition of society.*"

93. No. They do not, I see, actually call it a *sudden* transition from war to peace. It would have been a little too much to call that a sudden thing, which has now been going on for *seven years and a half*. But, it is no other than a continuation of that pretty talk which the hole-digging philosopher began in 1816, and which was revived and brought out as fresh as if it had been only an hour old by Lawyer SCARLETT in his loud cries for justice on the poor silly Rump-ite *Evans*. Very sudden, indeed, the thing has not been; and if the "*derangement*," have not "*spent*" itself in seven years and a half, when are we to expect it to spend itself? Strange sort of "*derangement*," this must have been! What was it? It was war. It lasted just *twenty-one years*, and not *thirty* as it is here stated. But it was only war; and, bear in mind, my good lords of the soil; that it was gloriously triumphant war! Ending in a battle, which gave us the "*greatest Captain of the Age*;" which decorated so many thousands of heroes with medals; and in a peace, dictated to the French at Paris, and the negotiating of which peace caused *Castlereagh* to be received with clapping and shouting by the "*collective wisdom*" of the nation. Is it possible that a war like this can produce *derangement*? Amongst the defeated parties it may; but can it produce a *derangement* in the affairs of the victors, to last seven years and a half after the war is over, and even then, to be "not yet spent?" If this be the case, we should be better without glorious victories; better without having the "*greatest Captain of the Age*;" better without such a peace as covers the ambassador with cheering and caresses.

94. However, to speak in plain sense, what a hunting about is here

after causes, when the cause is as evident as the sun at noon-day. There was only a space of about nine years between the American rebel war, and the antijacobin war. During the first three of those nine years, the nation had completely recovered itself; and, before the end of seven years, its prosperity astonished the world! Ah! but that was a war of defeat and disgrace; that gained us no "*greatest Captain of the Age*." So that, it really would appear, that glorious wars and *great captains*, tend to produce *sudden transitions* and lasting *derangements*. However, this is all nonsense. When the American war ended, there was, as there always had been, settled gold and silver money. During the war, the nation had been heavily burdened; and, at the end of it, there was a sudden transition, indeed, but it was a transition from a *heavy* burden to a *light* one; whereas, at the Waterloo Peace; at the Great Captain Peace; at the glorious Peace, it was a sudden transition, from a *very heavy* burden to a *heavier* burden still. This constitutes the only difference of the two cases. This makes that transition an evil now, which, in 1784, was a good. The paper-money system, as I said before, says with Satan, "*Evil* be thou my *good*; and *good* be thou my *evil*!" During the American war, there was no depreciation of money, except in a very small degree; there was no Bank Restriction Act; no deduction from the wages of the labouring classes; no false prosperity; and, of course, at the conclusion of that war there was no preparation for return to cash payments; no drawing in of paper-money (of which there had been none under notes of *ten pounds*); there was no such thing as rag-bag country bankers in the kingdom! not a farmer in England at that time knew the meaning of the word *discount*, and very few had ever even spelled the word *accommodation*. There was no thrusting out and drawing in of the paper; no everlasting hangings for forgery. No *Peel's Bill* came then to double, if not treble, rents, taxes and the interest of the Debt. Therefore, the nation, relieved from the expenses of war, assumed at once its wonted march in prosperity and improvement.

95. The reverse of all this is now before us, and has been passing before us for the last seven years and a half. In each of the two cases, the effect has, naturally and directly proceeded from the cause. That cause is so plain that none but a hood-winked landlord can miss seeing it; and, if he suffer himself to be hood-winked any longer, we have the consolation of knowing, that, in the end, he will receive the merited reward of his willing blindness; and that no one will be punished but himself.

96. The Committee next proceed to teach the landlords to draw comfort from the miserable state, that is to say, a *derangement* like our own, in which other nations are placed. This is the seventh proposition or assertion.

VII. *That OTHER NATIONS suffer in the SAME WAY that we do.* 19, 20.

97. It is cold comfort, to be sure, to be told that others are as bad off as we; and the Committee (aware, perhaps, that the observation would be made) expressly disclaim all expectation of alleviating our sufferings by presenting to us the contemplation of a corresponding pressure, as they call it, and they go so far as to express their *regret* at the embarrassments existing in other countries; nay, they go farther, and say that this liberal feeling of theirs is confirmed in their minds, "by reflecting" upon the *intimate connexion* which must exist between the *advancement*

"of other nations towards wealth and improvement, and the growing prosperity of our own." This is very kind, but very foolish; for if all prosper, it is not prosperity to any one. If all have riches alike, there are no riches. So that this is merely a parcel of unmeaning words; which the Committee might have spared, for they may be very well assured, that their *motive*, in this case, "will not be misconceived," by any living creature, foreigner or native. Well, but how do they *make it out*? What do they make the thing amount to, here? They tell us that prices have fallen in the American States; that they have fallen in the West Indies, that they have fallen on the Continent of Europe; and then they come to what they deem the gist of the matter; namely, that *some of the causes* which have been operating here *cannot be considered as operating in those countries*.

98. Now I beseech you to mark this! Do, I pray you, forget your empty purses for one moment, and hear what I have to say about this. You see, that the object is to persuade you, that there is some general cause at work all the world over; and, therefore, that you are not to suppose that the *distress here arises from Peel's Bill*; for that is the short and long of the matter. They bid you look at America, at the West Indies, at the Continent of Europe; they bid you look at the low prices there; and as there is no Peel's Bill there, you are to look upon it that the mischief is produced here by something other than Peel's Bill, and that, therefore, you must be content till the *general derangement has spent itself*.

99. Now, one very short answer to all this pretty matter is that Peel's Bill, and the drawing-in measures previous to that Bill, have been just as much and as directly the cause of the reduction of prices in the West Indies as in England itself. To a considerable degree the same measures have produced the same effect in the American States, which are very nearly as much affected by English operations of this kind as the Banks in Liverpool are affected by the measures of the Bank in London. The money connexion, or, rather, the credit and paper connexion, between the two countries is little less close than that between consigner and consignee. In addition to this, the Americans had banks in greater numbers than we. The drawing-in of paper took place there in 1819, and, in the space of about twenty months, brought the bushel of Indian corn down from 125 to 25 cents! What could have produced this, but a change in the value of money? There had been no sudden transition from war to peace there, between the fall of 1817 and the spring of 1819. The fact is, that the moment the news arrived of the *discussion* of Peel's Bill, a shaking of the banks there began to take place; and before the Bill itself had been in the country a month, prices were reduced nearly one-half. How provoking then was it to hear, just after my return from America, the two great Ministers of our day, Lords LIVERPOOL and CASTLE-REAGH, speaking of what they called the *distresses* of America, wisely observing, that our distresses arose partly out of them, and expressing their hope that the American distresses would *soon cease*, for that *theirs*, ours would be removed! I have more patience than any other man that ever existed in this world, or, as I told these Lords at the time, this talk would have driven me out of my senses. What! Why it was their own measure that had caused this distress in America in great part; and yet, relief was to come to us *from America*; and that, too, while this very measure was going on full swing! Certainly there never was a nation in

the world committed to hands such as those to which this nation has been committed.

100. So much for the West Indies and the American States. Austria, Russia, and several other States on the Continent, have been drawing in paper and reducing interest since the close of the war; and, perhaps, to a very great extent; and besides, what rule can we have to judge by in the cases of such Governments as those, and where the press is under the immediate superintendence of the Government? And, do the Committee imagine; or, rather, can any man in his senses imagine, that the diminishing of the currency in England, and in the American States, has not produced a diminution of currency upon the Continent? It is manifest that it must have produced such diminution. Money all over the world has been recovering its value, and prices, of course, have been falling. This, of course, must have everywhere produced great injury to borrowers, private as well as public; great benefit to tax-eaters of all descriptions; but it is in this country alone where the debt is so great as to make this cause be continually in operation till it swallow up the estates of the present generation of landlords, unless in those particular cases where fundholding and landholding, or landholding and tax-eating go hand in hand.

101. Thus you have no comfort, then, to draw from the alleged distresses of other countries. The same cause that is at work here has been at work there: the differences are these: there they have been temporary (except as far as relates to the American public debt), here it will be permanent: there it has swallowed up here and there a borrower; here it will finally devour the great mass of the owners of the land.

102. The next topic of comfort with the Committee is, that this sort of distress is *nothing new in our history*; but here I must break off for the present, being quite satisfied that I have thus far dissipated the mist, and that before I have done I shall leave you a clear view of the desperation of that situation from which you will endeavour in vain to extricate yourselves, unless you have the people at your back.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS,

ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(Political Register, October, 1821.)

LETTER IV.

LANDLORDS,

Kennington, October 1, 1821.

103. In my last letter I concluded my remarks on the *seventh* proposition, or assertion, of the Committee. I now proceed to the *eighth*, as stated in my first Letter, paragraph 15, namely:

VIII. *That distress OF THIS SORT IS NOTHING NEW in our history.*
14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

104. Wonderful are the resources of the mind of man in the discovering of comfort ; in the finding out of circumstances to cheer his spirits, and to allay his fears. The old proverb, that "drowning men catch at straws," was, perhaps, never more aptly illustrated than in the proposition now before us. When a friend is afflicted with any malady, we seldom fail to find comfort for him in assuring him that his case is *nothing new* ; that others have been afflicted with the same malady ; that they have *got the better of it*, and have lived for many years afterwards in health and happiness !

105. Precisely such is the conduct of the Committee with regard to the proposition immediately under our view. Indeed, as I have frequently had to observe, the main drift of the whole of the Report is to comfort the landlords ; to persuade them that the malady is temporary. First, consumption and revenue had not fallen off ; then, the distress was not so great as had been imagined ; then abundant harvests had contributed to the distress ; then, the sudden transition from war to peace had not yet wholly spent itself ; then, other nations suffered in the same way that we did ; and thus, while the paper-money and Peel's Bill were kept wholly out of sight, and while the distress was pushed far away from all causes under the control of the Government, there was to remain, in the minds of the landlords, a *hope that things would come about*. At last, after all these endeavours to afford comfort, comes the assertion, that distress of *this sort is nothing new* in our history. The landlords were, upon this assertion, to reason thus : O ! it is nothing new ; the country has been in the same state before ; and, as we have seen great prosperity of late, so we may again ; and, as the Funds remained untouched upon former occasions of distress, we may now recover our prosperity without the Funds being touched.

106. Such was intended to be the reasoning of the landlords, and such their conclusion. Let us see, then, how the matter stands with regard to the basis of all this fine reasoning. Let us see, whether the Committee be correct in the *fact* ; that is to say, let us see whether distress of this sort be *nothing new* in our history.

107. We must here quote the words of the Committee a little more closely than we have sometimes done. They make this branch of comfort a principal head in their Report, and they open it with these words : "Your Committee feel it an *important part of their duty* to recal to the recollection of the House and the country, that, in the *years 1804 and 1814*, " a depression of prices, principally caused by abundant harvests, and a " great extension of tillage, excited by the extraordinary high prices of antecedent years, appears to have produced a *TEMPORARY pressure* and " uneasiness among the owners and occupiers of land, and a corresponding difficulty in the payment of rents and the letting of farms, in *SOME DEGREE similar to apprehensions and embarrassments* which now " prevail ; and, also, that in many earlier periods, similar complaints may " be traced in the history of our agriculture." After this the Committee allude to two complaints of this nature made between the middle of the seventeenth and the middle of the eighteenth century, and say that arguments and alarms were then current, *similar* with those which prevail in many quarters at this period. "Yet," the Committee adds, "those

“alarms were only temporary, and the fears of those who reasoned upon their continuance and increase were soon dissipated by the natural course of seasons and events.” But they say it is “impossible to look back to the years 1804 and 1814, and more especially to the evidence taken before the Committee appointed by the House on the latter occasion, *without being forcibly struck with the conformity of the statements and opinions* then produced, respecting the ruinous operation and expected continuance of low prices, with those which will be found in the evidence now collected. Indeed these statements, in some instances, *come from the mouths of the same witnesses.*” The Committee hang on, tooth and nail, to this *straw*: for, not content with the above, they add, that they “trust that this reference to *past experience* will not be altogether useless and unavailing to *allay the alarm*, and to dispel some of the *desponding predictions*, which, by a necessarily increasing anxiety for the future, tend to aggravate the severe pressure of our present difficulties.”

108. Here, then, we have the *motive* for this hunting back into history. It was to *allay alarm*, and to dispel desponding predictions. This may be, in some cases, a very sensible motive; but the present, I take it, is by no means a case of this kind. The demands of the fundholder are eating away the estate of the landlord; and, therefore, the argument of experience is wholly worthless, unless you can show, that this cause was at work in those *ancient times*, to which you refer; and that you cannot show, unless you go back to the paper-money of New England, which was called *old wack*.

109. We have nothing within our reach here but the complaints of 1804 and 1814; and what are we to gather from them? In those two years the same cause was at work, only in a less powerful degree, that is at work now! Mark *that*, I pray you! gentlemen of the collective wisdom. And, as I shall presently show, the *distress*, as it is called, was, in those two cases, removed; that is to say, *high prices were brought back again*, by a pouring forth of the paper-money! These two periods were, in fact, two periods *when the paper-money had been drawn in*. Thus we shall soon “*dispel*,” not the “*desponding predictions*,” but the efforts made by the Committee, to allay the alarm.

110. We will begin with the year 1804. The years 1800, 1801 and part of 1799, a small part of 1802 was a time of great dearth, owing to a bad crop in 1799 and to the wettest harvest ever known in 1800, when it rained every day, in almost every part of England, from the fourteenth of July to nearly about the first of September. The harvest was, too, very forward; so that the crop was not, in point of eatable matter, the half of an average crop. At one time, that is to say, in the year 1801 from January to September, the quarter loaf in London was eighteen-pence-halfpenny. During the whole of the year 1800 it was seventeen-pence. In the last three months of 1801 it came down to eleven-pence-halfpenny. In 1802 it came down to ten-pence-halfpenny. The crops of 1802 and 1803 were most abundant, and the harvests singularly fair. These delightful circumstances were the subject of a little poem by Mr. CANNING, wherein he endeavoured to immortalize the fame of the “*Great Doctor*,” to whom he ascribed the sunshine, the showers, and the happy harvest-home. These crops brought down the loaf to ninepence-halfpenny in 1803; and in the early part of 1804 they brought it down to eight-pence-halfpenny.

111. I beg you to keep these dates and prices in mind. No doubt so very great a disparity in the harvests was one of the causes, and, in this case, a principal cause of the disparity in prices; but the Old Lady in Threadneedle-street was also at work. She had been issuing her paper up to the end of the year 1801, and until the month of March, 1802, under the Act which protected her against the demands of her creditors. But, that Act was to cease in one month *after the conclusion of peace with France*. And this peace was concluded on the 25th of March, 1802. There was, *at that time*, some little remnant of shame existing. The *Bank-protecting Bill* had existed only six years; and, therefore, as peace had been talked of from the foregoing month of October, the Bank naturally looked forward for a resumption of payments in cash, agreeably to the Act of Parliament. The Protecting Act, however, was not repealed; or, rather, it did not go out of effect; but another Act was passed to continue it in force for a year longer; that is to say, until March 1803. Before that time came, another Act was passed to continue it in force till six weeks after the commencement of the then next Session of Parliament. All the pretty workings upon these occasions; all the pretty reasons given for these Acts, will be seen by a reference to PAPER AGAINST GOLD, Letter xix., which work, it is now more than ever necessary for the politician to have constantly in his hand.

112. In the early part of 1804, these combined causes of good crops, fine harvests, and the *drawing-in of paper-money preparatory to cash payments*, had brought down the quartern loaf to eightpence-three-farthings, as we have seen before. The landlords, who, in consequence of the high prices, had, where they could, raised their rents enormously, began to cry out for a *Corn Bill*, which is their old-established trick. The vapouring empty-skulled Minister, PITT, who had turned out ADDINGTON and shoved himself into his place, said that corn was now *too low*. A Bill was brought into the House of Commons, and passed that House in the early part of 1805; but the war had now begun again; a Bill had been passed to *put off cash payments till six months after the end of that war*; the paper had come tumbling out again; and, before the beginning of the harvest of that year the quartern loaf had risen to a shilling, and before the month of December it had risen to sixteen-pence, up to which mark it kept upon an average until the passing of Peel's Bill.

113. Now, here was sudden relief, indeed! The "alarm" was "alayed" here presently. The "desponding predictions" were soon "dispelled;" but how were they "dispelled?" By the tumbling out of the paper-money; by a new series of rise in prices, and by a new train of robberies committed upon the labouring classes. This was the way in which the "desponding predictions" were "dispelled;" and, if the Committee had recommended a *repeal of Peel's Bill*, and a consequent pushing out of the paper-money again, then, indeed, the case of 1804 would have been a case in point, and the landlords might have derived something like comfort from the experience of that period. But, to refer us to the experience of 1804, and, at the same time, to tell us that the means then made use of to remove the distress are never to be made use of again; to tell the landlords that they made similar complaints in 1804; to tell them that the subject of those complaints was of short duration; to leave them to recollect that the distress was then removed by an Act which put cash payments off to a long and indefinite period;

and to tell them (as the Committee do in another part of their Report) that *cash payments shall now take place*; this is, surely, a most singular way of going to work, to "allay" the "alarm" and "dispel the desponding predictions!"

114. As to the other period, the experience relative to which, is to cheer the hearts of the landlords, I mean the period of 1814; how, in all the world, could the Committee take it into their heads, that the *distress* of that period was either more or less than a *beginning of the present distress*? And how could they imagine that there was any other cause at work, than that very cause, which, though in a different degree, is at work at this hour?

115. Is it not notorious, that it was, not the *peace*, as fools imagined it to be, that made what was called the plenty of 1814; but, that preparation for cash payments which was the consequence of peace? As the law stood, previous to the peace, the Bank was to pay in cash, at *six months after the definitive treaty*. Before the hour came, a Bill was passed that put off the cash payments for another year. Before that year expired, another Bill was passed to put off the cash payments for two years longer; and thus the thing went on; but, at every renewal there were *solemn protestations*; and, the Bank was always compelled to be cautious in issuing the paper.

116. In 1814 the pinch *began*; and it only began. The landlords, as usual, began to cry out for a *Corn Bill*, the moment that prices began to fall. They would not look at the Bank. They would not look at the real cause. They did not want prices to be low. They had felt the sweets of high prices. They saw the labourers perishing. They knew well enough the cause. But then they, as now, sought for no remedy, other than that of some law that would compel the people to purchase food at high price. Not a word did they say about National Debt; about taxes; about depreciation of money; about the robbery of the labourer. They had found their rents rise three, four, five and six fold; and, therefore, all they wanted was high price; they, though in opposition to the Ministry, as to other matters, cordially supported them here, and even pushed them on to action; and Sir FRANCIS BURDETT, "Westminster's pride," himself, in the teeth of the petition of his own constituents, setting both their instructions and their prayers at nought, *declined to oppose this Bill*, and has since made a merit of his conduct in this respect, in pleading for an acquital on a charge of libel, to a jury of landlords and farmers at Leicester; nay, he, on that occasion insinuated a charge of deluding the people, against those who had laboured in opposition to that Bill.

117. The landlords had tasted the sweets of high prices; and they wanted something to keep those prices high. The Corn Bill, however, had no such effect. The prices declined; for the Bank, always in a state of uncertainty, was compelled to draw in her paper. In 1817 the landlords got a short relief; and *how*? Why, by the Government borrowing many millions from the Bank, and thus increasing the circulation. What was the consequence of this? Why, the few millions of gold that the Bank had put out, *instantly took their departure from the country!**

* See Debates in Parliament, 5. April, 1819, when a short Act was passed through all its stages in one night, for the purpose of restricting payment of certain notes in gold.—ED.

Are not these facts notorious? Is it not notorious, that, the moment the gold began to disappear, that moment the farmers and landlords began to flourish? And is it not also notorious, that this flourishing continued until the Government began to entertain the design of passing Peel's Bill?

118. As soon as that design was formed, the Bank began to contract its issues at a great rate, of which the landlords very soon tasted the sorrowful effects. Those effects increased upon them continually; and, therefore, they have now again applied for their old remedy, a *Corn Bill*, not having, in any one of the petitions, I believe, said a word about either the taxes or the Debt. But, if the petitions were silent upon this subject, their tongues have not been silent; and, therefore, it is, that the Committee have taken such infinite pains to quiet their alarms: "to allay the alarm and to dispel some of the desponding predictions."

119. What, then, has the Committee done? It has referred to two specific instances of "*past experience*:" it has shown that complaints like those of the present day were made in 1804 and in 1814. It has shown, that the low prices of those days were followed soon after by high prices; but it has omitted to state that, in neither of those cases was a return to cash payments *certain*; and it has also omitted to state, that, in both those cases, the return to high prices was accompanied with a great increase of the circulating medium.

120. With this before our eyes; with this clear view of the matter; these evident causes, and these necessary effects, staring us in the face, what ineffable nonsense do not the following observations of the Committee appear! "The reflections which such a retrospect is calculated to excite may lead the occupiers of the soil, as it has led your Committee, to infer, that in agriculture, as in all other pursuits in which capital and industry can be embarked, there have been, and will be, *periods of reaction*; that such reaction is the more to be expected, in proportion to the long-continued prosperity of the pursuit and to the degree of *previous excitement and exertion which that prosperity had called forth*. They must add, as a further inference from the experience of former periods, to which the present crisis bears no distant resemblance, that there is a *natural tendency* in the distribution of capital and labour to remedy the disorders which may casually arise in society from such *temporary* derangements, and (without at all meaning to deny that it is the duty of the Legislature to do every thing in its power to shorten the duration, and to palliate the evils of the crisis), that it often happens that these disorders are *prolonged*, if not aggravated, by too much *interference and regulation*."

121. We have just seen what the "*retrospect*" is. These gentlemen talk about "*periods of reaction*." What do they mean by this new-fangled word, as applied to political matters? A curious thing, indeed, that *reaction*, that is to say, distress, is naturally to be expected to follow prosperity; and that it is "*the more to be expected in proportion to the long-continued prosperity of the pursuit*;" which is, bad grammar in the first place, and in the next, most ridiculous philosophy. A pretty thing, indeed, to tell us that a man cannot be prosperous in any pursuit, without being exposed to subsequent distress! If this were true, prosperity would require a *remedy* in like manner as the Committee say, a *redundant harvest* does. This is, however, nonsense too gross to pass even with landlords, to whom, besides, it is but cold comfort to know that their present distress is the cause of foregone enjoyment.

122. As to the latter part of the observations in this paragraph, namely; that the *disorders* of this sort tend to *remedy themselves*: and are often prolonged by *too much interference and regulation*: If the Committee mean, that prices, whether very high or very low, arising from *natural causes*, tend to remedy the little disorders that may arise out of them, I perfectly agree with the Committee. I perfectly agree that disorders of this sort are often prolonged, if not aggravated, by too much interference and regulation. And well I may agree with the Committee in this; for, at all the Bills passed by the collective wisdom, for the last twenty years; corn bills, import bills, export bills, bounty bills, brown-bread bills, bolting-cloth bills, potatoe bills, herring-soup bills, and pilchard-stew bills, I have uniformly laughed. But with the leave of their worships, the present case, is not a case of *natural causes*. It is a case where the cause is that of interference itself; for, if Peel's Bill had been in these words: Whereas, it is expedient that Farmer GRUB, who rents a farm of Lord DE DUNCEVILLE should pay a thousand bushels of wheat annually, instead of the five hundred bushels that he contracted for, may it please your Majesty that it be enacted, that the said GRUB pay to the said DE DUNCEVILLE, for this year, and for every year henceforward unto the end of his lease, the price of a thousand bushels of wheat: if the Bill had been in these very words, it could not have been a more direct act of interference between GRUB and his landlord.

123 The Bill ruins GRUB; and nothing can save him but a Bill, which shall, under one form or another, repeal this Bill. The Government has begun with its *interference*. There has been direct interference all through, from the date of the Bank Stoppage Act to the date of Peel's Bill; and, therefore, for the Government to deprecate interference now, is being delicate and squeamish just at the wrong time. It should not have interfered at all. It should not have interfered in the first place between the Bank and its creditors, which was, perhaps, an instance of the most sturdy interference that ever was heard of in the world. It interfered with the property of the whole country. It disturbed all contracts. It caused the meaning of every contract, every settlement, every bargain, every will, to be perverted. It said to the dead father, you left your son a thousand pounds, and he shall have only seven hundred; and now it says to the dead father, you left your son an estate, subject to legacies of half the amount of it, your son shall pay the legacies and he shall have no estate. This is what the laws that you have passed say in effect; and yet when something is called for to counteract this effect, you muster-up a doctrine applicable only to a case of natural causes, and deprecate all interference and regulation!

124. So much for the assertion, that distress of this sort is *nothing new in our history*, and now let us proceed to the ninth proposition; namely,

ix. *That taxation DOES SOMETHING, but NOT MUCH, in creating this distress.* 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66.

125. The Committee acknowledge, what no part of the collective wisdom has ever before acknowledged; namely, that taxes *tend to diminish the enjoyments of the people*. But here is a curious observation brought in; namely, that, during the *American war*, prices were lower than during peace; and that at the same time taxation was very heavy, and was accompanied with an annual *diminution of revenue*. The Com-

mittee further observe, that during the last war, the *national capital must have been greatly increased.*

126. One can hardly make out the real purpose for which these observations are introduced, unless it be that of communicating comfort to the landlords, from the reflection that they survived the effects of the American war; and that of the assumed fact, that, if we have a great deal more to pay now, than we had after the American war, we have a monstrous deal *more to pay with*; so that, after all, our taxes are not heavier now than they were after the American War; and that, therefore, the landlords ought not to be so much alarmed.

127. The Committee confound things in a very strange manner; or, they would perceive, even from their own showing, the wide difference in the two cases. They would perceive, that during the American war, farm produce was lower priced than it was after the war; whereas, in the present case, it is upon an average, taking cattle, corn, timber, underwood and all together, at a price *far below one-half* the average price of the war. The Committee would perceive, if they were but to open their eyes, that the *stagnation of improvements*, as they call it, which took place during the American war, was the natural effect of withdrawing, by the means of taxes, the profits from agriculture and trade; and they would further perceive, that, in proportion as such withdrawing was diminished, improvements would recommence; as they notoriously did.

128. If the Committee's eyes had once been open, for only a few minutes, they never would have talked of the *increase of capital*, during the last war; if by capital they mean *things of value*. If, indeed, they mean an increase of bank-notes, they are as right as Monsieur DE SNIR was, the other day, who said that we had added, during the war, *six hundred millions to our capital*; thereby meaning our debt. In any other way than this, an addition during the war was impossible. Granted that fine houses, fine bridges, fine streets, fine rows of houses have been raised; but have these been created by bank-notes? O! no! they have been created by those unjust deductions from labour, of which deductions the bank-notes have been the cause. This infernal system of paper-money has demolished two or three hundred thousand farm-houses, and annihilated their furniture and the wearing apparel of their inhabitants. It has made so many holes and dens of misery of four millions of labourers' dwellings. Regent-street, though a tenth part finished, and though manifestly destined to be, like Waterloo-bridge, a monument of the fooleries of this at once wicked and despicable system; this street alone has pillaged many a hamlet and village. Call you this making an addition to our capital? Capital means money. It means *gold*, or things that can be exchanged for gold, and readily exchanged for gold, too; and, how then, can there, taking the nation as a whole, have been an increase of these proceeding from bank-notes?

129. This word capital is made use of, it appears to me, when men *do not know what they mean*. In the foregoing observations relative to the American war, the Committee say that a part of the taxes of those times "must have been paid out of the *capital* and not out of the *income* of the nation." Now what in God's name does this mean? Let us try it by the test of plain words. Taxes are the things to be paid. Very well. These must be paid in *money*. Very well so far. This money then, the Committee say, did not come out of the *income of the people*. Watch me here, reader—did not come out of the people's income; that is to say,

out of their rents; out of the profits of their trade and business; out of the produce of their trade and business; out of their wages, daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly; out of any earnings whatsoever; out of the fruit of any sort of labour or skill; out of none of these did the money come to pay the taxes with! O! Good, good. But what did it come out of, then? It was *money*, mind you; and the money must have come from *somewhere*. "Why," say the Committee, "have we not told you that it came out of the capital of the people?" And what is the capital, then; why, it must be *hoards* that the people had! Nothing short of this: nothing else will answer your purpose; for, if you mean that the people *had to sell part of their property*, let me ask you where they were to find a customer? Let me ask you where a *whole people* were to find a customer. Some might sell their property to pay their taxes; but then there must be others to buy it with their *incomes*; so that, at last, the taxes came as all taxes must, out of rents and out of labour; unless we go upon the monstrous supposition that every man according to his means has a hoard; and, that, at the mere invitation of the Government, without any possible compulsion, he will liberally put his hands into that hoard.

130. If, then, this notion of the Committee be nothing short of most astounding nonsense; if it be utterly impossible that taxes can be paid out of anything but the rents and the labour of a country; how false is the notion, that, by the terrible humbug of paper-money, the people's means of paying taxes have been increased? There has, in fact, been no such increase of means. There has been an increase of splendour and an increase of luxury on the one hand, and an increase of beggary and misery on the other. The thousands have been glittering in gold; and the millions have been shivering in rags.

131. So much for this word *capital*, which, as I said before, is a word made use of by those that have no definite idea of their own meaning. The operation of the paper system was to draw away the wages of the labouring classes, and to place them in great masses in the hands of bankers, attorneys, Jews, jobbers, contractors, commissaries, nabobs, pensioners, commissioners, and all that host of creatures which was created by paper-money, war and corruption. The landlord profited, the parson profited, the big farmer profited; for they also kept drawing from the wages of labour a sufficiency to compensate them for the depreciation in the value of money, and they continually drew something more than what was sufficient for this purpose. Struck with horror at the idea of never seeing specie again; petrified with affright at the vision of everlasting compulsory peace; their hair standing on end, their mouths gaping open, and their eyes ready to start out of their head upon being awakened from their dream of security, and told that they might at any moment be deprived of the means of keeping a bayonet in pay: thus scared out of their wits, the Bouroughmen cried, Give us gold!

132. It was decreed that they should have gold; but they did not ask for low prices; they did not ask for a cessation of the profits which they derived from a deduction from labour; they did not ask to have a million of money less brought them home from the sheep-fairs, alone, than they were accustomed to have brought them home. They were amused with those "*oracular belchings*" which told them they would lose only four and a half per cent. This they could endure: this, liberal and public-spirited souls, they would gladly sacrifice for the honour of Old England,

little dreaming, that half rents and double mortgages would be the inevitable effects of the measure. And now, for their consolation upon this hideous discovery, the Committee reminds them that they survived the American war, and that, the "*capital*" of the nation is now prodigiously increased. They do not positively say with Monsieur DE SNIP, that it is increased in the amount of six hundred millions of pounds sterling; but that it is increased in an extraordinary degree.

133. Having mentioned Monsieur DE SNIP, it occurs to me to mention, that I hear, that he has prepared his *pedigree* against the time that he is to become a *lord*. I hear, that he means to say, that his family "*came in with the Conqueror*;" and that his ancestors cut a grand figure "*at the battle of Hastings*." He means, I understand, to hoist the *escalop*, the *griffin*, and the *bare and bloody arm*, and to sink for ever the *needle*, the *cabbage*, the *goose* and the *louse*; and, as to *contract*, he intends to have the word expunged from the dictionary, and to have "*capital*" inserted in its stead, with a quoted illustration after the manner of old Dame-Devil, thus: "*CAPITAL*.—Money taken away from the labouring classes, and, being given to army tailors, and such like, enables them to keep fox-hounds, and to trace their descent from the Normans."

Leaving Monsieur DE SNIP to go on with his pedigree, let me for a moment, before I conclude this Letter, return to the Committee, for the purpose of again making them my sincere and humble acknowledgments for having confessed that *taxes* are an *evil*; that they do deduct from the *comforts of a people*; that they do retard *improvement*; that they are *burdensome*; and that their *weight* is a thing to be *lamented*. I am sincerely grateful to them for confessing that this is the nature of taxes; because it contradicts the assertion of the *hole-digger*, made in 1819, that, if *all the taxes were taken off*, the *labouring classes would not be in the smallest degree the better for it*; and that I was a *deluding and seditious rascal* for telling them what they suffered from the taxes. This confession of the Committee, must, however, give pain to that famous political economist, Mr. JUDGE BAYLEY, who, in his "*charge*" to the Grand Jury of York, in 1819, assured them that national debts and taxes were a *blessing*; and no one thought to ask him, whether it was a *blessing* to take from a labouring man twenty shillings a year in tax on his salt, when, without this, he would have twenty shillings more to lay out in bread. Taxes are, indeed, a blessing to the *Judges*, as things now stand; for, since 1797, *their salaries have been doubled*, and wages and provisions, are as *low-priced* as they were in 1797; aye, and as to provisions, clothing, and materials for building, *lower priced*. Taxes, to persons thus situated, are great blessings; but, far otherwise with those who have to *pay them*.

135. In concluding the present Letter, leaving the aforementioned comfortings of the Committee, together with my commentary, to produce their natural effect on all but addled brains, let me just observe, that, if the landlords be not really born-idiots, they will prate no more about *Corn Bills*, but will set on upon the *taxes*, and take them away. The *mall*, *salt*, and *leather taxes*, ought to be taken off directly. This would produce *retrenchment* in a twinkling, without any addresses to the King, which is a poor way of going to work. However, I beg leave to be understood as *expecting* no such thing as this. My opinion is that we shall have a good deal of *talk*, and some *stir*; but, that, the landlords and

parsons are so much afraid of the *Radicals*, that, rather than make an opening for them, they will go on paying double and treble interest for the Debt. Let them : they will only secure their own ruin ; and will not keep off the Radicals after all, who will have a great deal less trouble in grappling with the *Jews*.

136. In my next Letter I come to the assertion, that the *interest of the Debt ought not to be reduced*. This is a *grand point*. It is, indeed, the question ; and I shall endeavour to settle it in the minds of my readers.

WM. COBBETT.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS, ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(*Political Register, October, 1821.*)

LETTER V.

LANDLORDS,

Kensington, October 16, 1821.

137. We now come to a great point in our subject ; namely, the opinion, stated by the Committee, as to the interest of the *Government's debt*. But, before I proceed on this point, I beg leave to look back for a moment, to Letter III., paragraphs 63 to 69. I there noticed the statement of the Committee, that the *revenue and consumption had increased*. I, for argument's sake, admitted the fact, and I clearly showed that it was a fact to afford no sort of comfort to the landlords. Now ; that is to say, within this week, an account of the *Quarter's Revenue* has been published in the newspapers, trumpeted forth by the *COURIER* and *criticised* in the *Morning Chronicle* by (as it is said) the profound and vigilant JOHN DE SNIP, of Cabbage-Hall, in the county of Surrey, *Esquire*, who (without meaning to pun) I may say watches Mr. VANSITTART with the sharpness of a needle.

138. According to this account, the revenue has increased, during the quarter of a year which ended on the 5th of October ; and it is stated that the increase is principally in the produce of the *Malt-tax*. Now, in the first place, I *never believe any of these statements*. They come forth under no responsible authority. If false (as I believe they always are) there is no *detection possible*. In short they are statements such as the parties putting them forth *choose to put forth* ; and who is to believe, that they will not put forth that, be it what it may, that is best calculated to answer their own purpose, be that purpose what it may. How false these statements are, upon an average, must be evident to every person of the smallest reflection. For more than thirty years past, there has, according to these accounts, been a *constant increase going on*. "The last was good, but this is better." And thus has this nation been cajoled along from year to year, by the instrumentality of the newspapers, who choose to regard these statements as *true*, and to dispute about them

accordingly. At the end of every quarter of a year, they amuse their dupes, *for a week*, with this kind of sham disputation; and thus, for these seven days, keep their minds at the distance of leagues from every thing like fact and common-sense.

139. However, upon the supposition, that there really is an *increase* in the amount of the *Malt-taxes* received during the last quarter of a year, the fact only confirms my doctrine, laid down in Letter III., paragraphs from 63 to 69. And, indeed, nothing can well be more plain, than that *low prices* of food and raiment tend to increase the amount of consumption. For, though the tax on the bushel, the gallon, the yard and pound remain the same, the *article still costs less*, and costs less, too, in proportion to the amount of wages.

140. I must here take another *look back*. In Letter III., paragraph 71 and onwards, I discussed that proposition of the Committee, which attempted to *lessen* the amount of the *distress*. I have all along contended, that the word *distress* does not apply to the state of the far greater part of the persons employed in agriculture. How can it? In the Western counties people buy mutton at 3½d. a pound. I hear from Hampshire, that *bacon* is bought for 4d. a pound, where I never knew it bought for less than 10d. or 1s. of the same quality. Wages *never can* come down in this proportion; and the fact is, they do not. Therefore, it is not *distress* with this class, but an approach towards the absence of distress. But, it is far otherwise with farmers bound by lease and with landlords. From every part of the country I hear that the main part of the farmers *are ruined*. I know they are a race that cry out *soon enough*; but, when, from the Norwich papers and Bury papers which my correspondents have been so kind as to send me, I see, that the *farming stock and household goods* are actually *now for sale by auction* (or have been within this week), upon more than FOUR HUNDRED FARMS in the counties of *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*; when I see this with my own eyes, and when I see from a catalogue of a sale that has taken place on a farm where the stock was of a description rather superior to the ordinary run even in Norfolk; when I see from this catalogue, that the *milch cows* sold for *seven pounds* on an average, and that other things sold at a proportionable price; when I see these things, I must be convinced, that a farmer, bound by a lease, must, *as farmer*, be ruined; and, that, whatever may be the immediate effect, the ultimate effect must be the loss of a large part of his estate, and that right speedily, to the landlord.

141. The foregoing observations form no unsuitable preface to what is to follow here, the next proposition of the Committee being in the following words:

x. *That the interest of the Debt OUGHT NOT TO BE REDUCED, and that the fundholders have a RIGHT to what they get.* 85, 86, 87.

142. It does not appear very evident, that the Committee had much business with this matter. The Committee was appointed *to inquire into the allegations of certain petitions, and to report their observations thereon*. Now (and I beg the fact to be borne in mind) *in no one of these petitions was there a word said about the interest of the Debt!* The Committee, therefore, would, if I had been a Member of the House, have received a rap that would have made their fingers tingle, for having thus gone out of their way to obtrude upon me their opinions relative to a matter not at all referred to their examination. They might, with full

as much propriety, have reported upon the colour of my hair or that of my eyes ; and, indeed, with less impropriety ; because, in touching upon the question of the *interest of the Debt*, they were calling upon the House to sanction, by a side-wind, doctrines, which, before they were adopted, required to be *discussed* ; and doctrines, too, of the most fearful moment.

143. However, report upon this they did ; and, in the 85th, 86th and 87th paragraphs of their Report, they say what amounts to a declaration, *that the interest of the Debt ought not to be reduced*. SO SAY I ; but, only **CONDITIONALLY** : that is to say, *right*, between the parties ; *right* between the *landlords* and the *fundlords* demands a reduction of the interest of the Debt *to a very great amount*. But, then, there is the rest of the nation ; there is the *mass of the people*, who have a demand upon the *landlords* ; namely, to be restored to their right of *choosing their representatives in Parliament*, which those landlords now withhold from them. The good of the *whole nation* is, therefore to be taken into view. And, as I am convinced, that the people will never be permitted to have their just share of weight, in choosing Members of Parliament, if the interest of the Debt be reduced *before* that share be given to the people, I shall do my best to oppose such reduction, *until the landlords consent to the people's possessing that share*.

144. It is not to be supposed, that I am here to enter into an *argument* to show, that, under a Constitution which says, that *no man* shall be taxed without *his own consent*, the people who pay a third of their earnings in taxes have a *right* to have a voice in choosing the men who impose the taxes and expend the amount. Nor is it to be supposed, that I am, at this time of day, and with all the present scenes before us, to set about to show by argument, that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, is not calculated for the purpose of putting an end to those difficulties and that distress, the existence of which it so loudly proclaims and the cause of which is notoriously to be found in its own acts. It is not to be expected of me, that I here enter into *discussion* on these points, which have been long settled in the minds of the nation at large. I assume the positions, as I have a clear right to do ; on them I ground my opinion, *that the interest of the Debt ought not to be reduced*, until the people obtain their undoubted right of choosing those who are to lay taxes on them ; and on that opinion I shall act.

145. "What," some landlord will say, "because *you* are deprived of a right, would you support others in taking *my* estate away ?" Stop ! You have not *fully* stated the case. Your question should be this : "Will you, because *I withhold your right from you*, support others in *reducing me to a state of impotence* ?" My answer is that of common sense : "To be sure *I will*." If the landlord rejoins, and say : "What, then, though you allow the claim on me to be *unjust*, you will give your assent and support to that injustice, out of *revenge* against me ?" No ; but for my own *preservation*. My object is the recovery of my rights from you ; if you suffer from my assent in favour of a third party who presses on you unjustly, the fault is *yours*, not *mine*. If I am wronged by a powerful neighbour, if he use his power to oppress and insult me incessantly without cause and with perfect impunity, if he make me pay to support him and to supply him with the means of keeping me in a state of degradation and of suffering ; and, if, in this state of things, I see others urging on him an unjust claim that tends to enfeeble him first, and finally to remove him wholly from out of my way, is there, in morals or

religion, any law that forbids me to wish success, and even to lend my aid, to those others? It is for *myself*, and not for *them*, that I act: it is *justice*, and not *injustice*, that is the object and end of my wishes and my efforts. If a robber have taken my purse; if I see him fallen upon by other robbers; shall I endeavour to rescue him that he may quietly keep my purse; or, shall I assist them in rifling him with a *chance*, at any rate, of obtaining my own again?

146. The case is as clear as daylight. The path for the *Reformers* is, therefore, plain as the King's highway. It has in it nothing dark, devious or dirty. They *must* see their interest clearly; and their conduct ought to be, and I trust it will be, as fair and as open as their view. They know, that to reduce the interest of the Debt is *just*; and, if it be accompanied with a restoration of the people to their rights, it will be their duty to join the landlords in calling for such reduction; but, if it be not thus accompanied, it will be their duty to *oppose it with all their might*, and to disregard the circumstance, that, in this opposition, they may happen to give support to the Ministers; yea, even to *Castlereagh and Sidmouth!*

147. Now, then with this *condition* constantly in our minds, let us turn to the Report of the Committee, and examine a little the *grounds* of this opinion of theirs, *that the interest of the Debt ought not to be reduced*. I shall suppose, that the landlords, bled and sweated as they will have been by their old friends, the fundlords, will have come a little to their senses at last, and will have ceased to accuse of "*sedition and blasphemy*" every one who disapproves of the selling of seats. I shall suppose them ready to put a stop to Burke's posthumous pensions, and that they have resolved to abolish all sinecures, all unmerited pensions and grants; that they will have no scruple to *resume grants* of property in numerous cases that I have in my eye; and that the church will have *refunded* what it has been, for a long while, annually receiving *out of the loans*. I shall suppose all this and a great deal more; and upon this supposition I proceed to show, that the uncalled-for opinion of the Committee, upon this subject, is erroneous.

148. The Committee say, that the departure from the ancient standard was *injurious to the fundholders*, and that the restoration of that standard has, *in its turn*, been *proportionably* disadvantageous to the landholders. If this were *all true*; and if this were *all*, it may well be asked *what sort of government* that is, which has *sported* thus with people's property? It may well excite surprise, that such effects should be produced *by the Acts*; by the deliberate Acts, in black and white, of a Parliament that needs *no reform*, and that acts under a Constitution that is "*the envy of surrounding nations and the admiration of the world.*"

149. But, this doctrine of the Committee is all a fallacy from first to last. There were some few fundholders, who were, in 1797, *compelled* to keep their money in the funds. All the rest *could sell out at any moment that they chose*. No matter, therefore, what was the state of the currency. The funds were still the *best security* and gave the *best interest*; or the holders would have removed their stock. They, in fact, *gained*, and did not lose, only they gained much less than they gain now.

150. It has frequently been said, and truly said, that the far greater part of the money that was borrowed was *depreciated money*. In answer to this, out comes Mr. MURPHY with a book from the Mint, to show, that

the money was *not depreciated* when the far greater part of the loans were made. This book is the war-horse of the fundlords. Every body of *lords* ought to have a body of *esquires*; our landlords have theirs, and, God knows, we frequently see them on benches and in jury-boxes! Accordingly the fundlords have theirs too, and the author of this book, who is a *clerk* in the Mint, *calls himself* ROBERT MUSHET, ESQUIRE. This 'Squire's book consists almost wholly of *columns of figures*, marshalled in very regular order, supported with head and tail lines, and with the words "*national faith*," inscribed on their banner, enough to frighten a poor rentless landlord out of his wits.

151. Nothing is so *true*, or so *false*, as figures. If true, nothing can be so perfect; if false, the falsehood is monstrous. The 'Squire's book, though, I dare say, nice to a hair in all its hideous calculations, leads to a conclusion too monstrously false to admit of an adequate description. Yet, this being the grand battery of the Lords of 'Change Alley; yea, their very citadel; it being so well calculated to impose upon the much-talking and little-thinking multitude, such as those who rely for knowledge on the *paradise of fools*; this being the case, I must not let it pass from under my hand without clearly developing its utter destitution of truth.

152. The 'Squire sets out with a declaration, that his object is to show, that the fundlords have not been *gainers* by the changes in the value of money; and to produce in the country one heart and one mind to come to the support of the Government, who have, so honourably to themselves and so consistently with the national dignity and integrity, rejected every attempt to *break faith with the national creditor*! This, too, is the language of our Agricultural Committee, whose business it was to inquire into the alleged distress of agriculture, and who conclude their Report with advising the Parliament to "*manifest to the world*"..... What, think you?.....Why, "the *inflexible* determination of this country"....to do what?.....Why, "rigidly to adhere to that good *faith* of which the *moral* character of the people is the sure guardian, "and which, with that character, has placed our greatness *and* our power "upon the foundation, hitherto unshaken amidst all our vicissitudes, of "*public credit and national honour*."

153. Was there ever such shocking bombast! And, not a word about *agricultural distress*! The Report seems to have wholly forgotten its own subject, as I shall the 'Squire's book, if I do not make haste back to it. The 'Squire, by his tables of figures, makes it out, that, upon the whole, for the last twenty years, the fundlords have *not gained* by the changes in the value of the currency; and he asserts, indeed, that they have *lost*, rather than gained. Some general questions will occur to every one to put to the 'Squire upon this point; but, let us first hear his preliminary observations. He says,—

"The object of the following tables, is, to place before the reader the advantages and disadvantages which have arisen to the fundholder, from the state of the currency, since the year 1800. The utility of this inquiry, I think, cannot be questioned, from the constant attempts now made to represent the situation of the fundholder as highly advantageous, arising from the circumstance of his now receiving in a currency of standard value, the interest of the capital which he lent to Government in a currency considerably depreciated. Besides the utility of this investigation, as a matter of curiosity, it is impossible not to attach considerable importance to it, from the wish, not secret, but expressed, of a considerable party in the country, to break faith with the fundholder, and to compromise their

own and their country's honour; and, that, too, in the absence of any proof, that the fundholders, as a body, *have derived any gain whatever in consequence of the depreciation which has existed upon the currency since 1800.* The Government, *highly to their honour*, have discouraged every attempt that has been made; and I feel persuaded, that those who wish to interfere with the *property* of the fundholder, do so from a belief, that he is actually deriving great advantages from the increased value of our currency; though even upon this ground, I should differ in opinion from the party in question; for the fundholder certainly lent his capital to Government in periods of great exigency, and upon an express understanding that, at six months after a definitive treaty of peace, the currency was to be placed upon its ancient footing as to value. As no respectable party, however, in the State, can wish for the destruction of their country's faith and honour, let us hope that the attempts that have been made to affect the property of the fundholder, have taken place in the absence of facts; and when his case is more fully and perfectly understood, there will then be but one mind and one spirit in the country, as to the obligation to maintain sacred those engagements, to which the Government and the country at large are parties."

154. Were we to stop here, we might certainly be permitted to ask the *Squire* how it has happened, if the fundlords, as a *body*, have gained nothing; how it has *happened*, that they have been able to *lend a sum very nearly twice as great in amount as the worth of the fee-simple of all the lands, houses, woods, and waters in the kingdom?* One of my boys, about two years and a half old, when the nurse introduced him to a new-born sister, asked the old granny: "Where did un *tum fom*?" The nurse said, of course, "O! out of the *parsley-bed*." "Aye," said he, "but were did un *tum fom*?" laying a strong emphasis, and stronger and stronger every time, upon his word *fom*, till the granny was compelled to get out of the inquiry as well as she could. He knew well enough that the baby *came out* of the *parsley-bed*; for the nurse had told him so; but he wanted to know how the little girl *got into* the *parsley-bed*: that is to say, where she *came from* first of all. I am, at this moment, very much in the situation of this philosopher in petticoats, whose vehement interrogation has so often been a subject of mirth with us; and I now, with all possible earnestness, put it to granny MUSHET: where did these thousand or eight hundred millions of pounds sterling *COME FROM*? I know very well that they are written down in the *great book*, that *parsley-bed* of our nurse of a Government; I know, too, *how they came there*; I know all about loan-acts and Exchequer-bills: all about *scrip* and *omnium*, and the devil knows what besides: but, what I want to know from granny MUSHET is, where the eight hundred millions of pounds sterling were *first got* to be *lent* to this unhappy nation, while, at the same time, it was paying from 60 to 80 millions of pounds in taxes annually?

155. I may ask in vain. The Botley-granny could have answered more easily than granny MUSHET can. What then, should we want more than this to induce us to treat as a *farce* the calling of such a thing "*property*?" And to treat those as impudent knaves who would persuade us, that it stands upon a level with property in house and land? What was a *loan*? Was it the bringing of so much *real money*, or so much of *valuable things*, and delivering the same to the Government? It was no such thing. It is notorious, that the *writing of a name* constituted the loan, in the first instance; that, afterwards, a shuffling of paper-money took place; and, that after the *bonuses* and *discounts* and allowances of one kind and another, the thing amounted to little more than the *lending* of the gains arising from the various workings of the

thing. What was more common than to give newspaper editors and clerks in the offices what was called a *slice of a loan*? And is it not on the records of Parliament, that Pitt, out of his own head, without authority of Parliament and without the assent or knowledge of his colleagues, DUNDAS only excepted, lent Boyd and Benfield a sum of the public money to enable them to make good an instalment upon a loan made by them to that very public! Is not this notorious; and is it not notorious, that the *statute-book* contains an Act to indemnify him; that is to say, to screen him from punishment for having committed this unlawful deed!

156. To treat such a thing, therefore, as something sacred; to talk of the national faith and honour holding the owners of the soil to such a thing is impudence unparalleled. Is it not notorious, that hundreds of beggars have swelled up, during the last thirty years into millions? We used to read of the running and squeezing and suffocating and tearing of clothes off people's backs to get a chance of lending the Government money on Exchequer-bills. Did men ever do this, or such things as this, for the purpose of really lending money? Did orange-boy ever in this world get half a million of money by any thing that was fair and honest? Can four or five thousand fellows all be getting money and living like lords by merely jobbing about upon the thing called the funds, and can this be a fair and good thing for the nation; and, can the national faith and national honour be bound to uphold such a thing?

157. It is impossible, physically impossible, that any people in this or any country, can have had eight hundred millions of their own money to lend to the nation. It has been the nation's own money, raised in taxes and lent to itself. Give a gamester five guineas to begin with, game with him, and he will win your whole estate, then lend you money to play on, and finally get your promissory note and put you in jail for debt. This is, in substance, the sort of thing that has been going on. There are unquestionably great numbers of individuals who have actually lodged real money, or things of real value, with those that have given them, in return, some sort of document, authorizing them to receive interest of what is called the National Debt. But, however the thing may have changed hands; however the participators in it may have been multiplied; the thing itself has always remained, and always must remain, essentially the same. How often have we seen, that the scrip, as it is called, and, sometimes, the omnium, has sold for 10 or 20 in the hundred more than the loan-maker had contracted to give for it? How often have we seen the whole of it disposed of in this way before the loan-makers had paid a farthing? And whence did this arise? Why, from the mass of paper created, and the great consequent depreciation of the currency, of which for the time, at least, the scrip formed a part. Thus the Government got something, but not what it agreed to have; and, it is evident, that, in the course of four or five loans, the loan-makers, as a body, had gained enough to lend, in future, the nation its own money.

158. Besides this, how do we know how many transactions like that between Pitt and Boyd and Benfield may have taken place? Pitt lent these people 40,000*l.* out of the public money to enable them, as he alleged, to make good an instalment upon a loan which they had made to that public. The money was got from the elder Dundas, who was then Treasurer of the Navy, who afterwards took the name of Melville. But mind, this matter lay as snug as murder from 1756 (mark the time!) to 1805, when Lord Saint Vincent (first Lord of the Admiralty in Adding-

ton's ministry) had been furiously attacked by PITT and his crew, and had, with Addington and his set, been *turned out of office*. Addington, the *gentle Sidmouth*, would have put up with a good deal; but the old sailor, never forgiving a fault, pounced upon Melville (who by the bye, became his successor at the Admiralty), which he was enabled to do with great effect, the books of Dundas, as *Treasurer of the Navy*, having, of course, fallen within his reach. Dundas finally escaped all punishment, except that of being put out of the Privy Council for awhile; but, the inquiry did a prodigious quantity of good. Amongst other things it brought out the loan to Boyd and Benfield; and, which was not less curious, it brought out the fact, that, when the "*loyalty loan*" was raised, that "*glorious proof of public spirit*," as PITT called it, DUNDAS lent 10,000*l.* of it, and that he lent it, too, kindly and generously assisted the nation with these 10,000*l.* *out of its own money*, deposited in his hands as *Treasurer of the Navy*!

159. Come, come, granny MUSHET, we begin to get a glimpse at the probable *whereabout* that the *eight hundred millions* CAME FROM. We are here got much further back than the *parsley-bed*. Let it be observed, too, that PITT was a "*heaven-born*" being! That he was brought up in a sort of celestial way; that a man who is now a bishop, had, as it were, the *cure of his soul*! If, then, a heavenly creature like this stands recorded in Act 78 of the 45th year of the reign of the late king of most virtuous memory; if he there stands recorded as indemnified; that is to say, as *screened* and *protected*, for having unlawfully lent the public money to loan-makers, *without interest*, while the *nation was charged with interest upon this very sum*, what are we to suppose has been the case with *others*, mere mortals, with no pretensions to heavenly origin? If Dundas could *lend* the nation *ten thousand pounds of its own money*, shall we suppose, that others, who had *constantly* immense sums in their hands, in the way of arrears, were not *equally generous*? Was this species of generosity, think you, confined to the breasts of these two individuals? O, no! granny MUSHET, this excessive generosity was a general foible, be you assured; and this, and this alone, together with the bonuses, discounts, premiums, allowances, charges of management, and the rollings over of interest, account (for nothing else can account) for the nation having had *lent* to it a *thousand millions of money*, while the fee-simple of its soil is not worth half the sum.

160. Upon the face of the thing, therefore, and without any investigation of the matter, we might decide against any claim whatever of the fundlords on the landlords. If a mere common shopkeeper were to go into a court and swear, that he had lent his rich neighbour half a million of money, would not a jury decide, at once, that the demand was unjust, and ascribe it to madness? And is the demand of 800 millions of money on the part of *any* body, no matter who it is, to be seriously listened to and reasoned about? However, bearing in mind this real *character* of the thing, let us, for *argument's sake*, and in order to show the shallowness and silliness of granny MUSHET, suppose (and, mind, it is a mere supposition for the sake of exposure) that the thing called the national debt is a *real thing*, and that it arose out of *money really lent to the Government*. This is what no man in his senses *can* believe, and it is what none but a knave will *pretend* to believe: but, merely for the sake of argument, let us suppose it to be so.

160. Proceeding upon this supposition, there are two questions that

present themselves: *First*, Is it, if the good of the nation require it, *right to sweep away the Debt altogether*; that is to say, to pay no more interest at all? *Second*, Is it right, under the present circumstances, to *reduce the interest of the Debt*?

162. As to the first of these, I have, long ago, *proved the affirmative of the question*. *The preliminary part of Paper against Gold*, which I have lately republished, contains the *whole of the argument*. I there *prove*, that it is the bounden duty of the Government to sweep the whole of the Debt away, at once, if the good of the nation require it. I prove that it is a mere matter of *expediency*, as much as the making of war or of peace, or as any possible condition or stipulation in a treaty with a foreign power; that there is no obligation to hold the nation to Loan-acts, any more than to Acts for the raising of taxes or for the building of barracks; and not quite so much obligation as there was to hold it to the *Act of Settlement* and the *Act regulating the residence of the clergy*.

163. If it would be right to take away the *whole*, it cannot be wrong to take away a *part*. But, now, in coming to the *second question*, namely, "Whether it be right, under the present circumstances, to *take off part of the interest*," we agree, though in the teeth of reason and common sense, to regard the Debt as a *real debt*, arising from money *really lent* to the nation and *coming out of the pockets of the fundlords*.

164. The object of inquiry, in this narrowed view of the matter, is, whether the fundlords are, or are not, *now receiving a larger interest than they ought to receive*. GRANNY MUSHET says they are *not*: I say, that, admitting them, for argument's sake, to be *real creditors*, they are receiving *more than three times as much as they ought to receive*. I say, that the money they lent was not worth a *third part as much as the money they now receive*. I say, besides, that they did *not lend as much* even in nominal amount as they claim interest for. I say, moreover, that they have been already *paid back the principal of a full third of what they regard as a debt due from the nation*. And, now, we will proceed to inquire, how GRANNY MUSHET *makes out his position*.

165. GRANNY MUSHET sets out thus:—"I shall now proceed to state the *principle* upon which the following tables are constructed." Now mark! "To ascertain the *value of the interest of funded property from 1800 to 1821, we must take it in relation to the market-price of gold*; because, when the interest was paid in paper, under a price of gold, higher than the Mint-price of 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.*, the fundholder, though nominally receiving the same number of pounds, was, in fact, receiving a less value. So that, to ascertain the actual value of the interest paid to the fundholder from 1800 to 1821, we must value it in the market-price of gold during those years, by reducing the nominal value of the 100*l.* to its value in bullion."

166. Now this is the very "*principle*" upon which the Parliament proceeded in the passing of *Peel's Bill*, which, to cite the expression of the most accomplished rogue I ever heard or read of, when detected in fabricating false accounts, said it was the *principle of mistake*! As GRANNY MUSHET takes the thing on *both sides*, the *market-price of gold*, during the age of depreciation, is fair enough; for, though it is no criterion at all as applied to the present state of things, and though the only true criterion is, the price of the *necessaries of life*, it is as broad as long as far as GRANNY MUSHET goes. The fact is, that the fundlords could not, for a long while, buy with a *pound* more than they can now buy for

about *seven or eight shillings*; but, then, the pound that they *lent* was worth only about seven or eight shillings of the present money. While the paper was *depreciated* and the *prices high*, one was a balance against the other. And, if the account had been *closed* when Peel's Bill was passed; if a *new valuation* of the Debt had taken place, all would have been right enough; but, then, that valuation must have been made, not on granny MUSHET's principle, but upon this principle; that the fundlord should receive, for every pound lent, a *sum sufficient to purchase as much of the necessaries of life as that pound would have purchased at the time that it was lent*. This was the principle that should have been adopted; and that man must be besotted or perverse indeed who can contend for any other principle.

167. To refer to the *market-price of gold as a standard*, is exactly what the Oracle did; the oracle of the "*collective wisdom*." Gold, says he, being the *standard of all things in the world*; every price depending on that of gold; and gold now being within *four and a half per cent.* of its lowest possible price, the prices of *other things* cannot, by this measure, be brought down more than four and a half per cent.; and, of course, a Southdown lamb, at Norwich Fair, which now sells for about 30s., will lose in price only 1s. 5½d. and a fraction; and will, *of course*, sell, in future, for 28s. 6½d. This was a mere trifle. The farmers could stand this; and the landlords, always as wise as their tenants, chuckled and hiccupped with delight at seeing gold about to return, the *puff-out* rendered impossible, and the Radicals put down for ever. Nought but glee filled their "*manly*" hearts. They embraced the Oracle with the fervency of pardoned penitents, and bedewed his beard with the overflowings of their gratitude. O! how they licked him and slobbered him over, and how my Lord FOLKESTONE called him his *honourable friend*!

168. This was the ground upon which *Peel's Bill was passed*! This queer, this 'Change-alley, this jew-like notion of the price of gold being the *standard*. However, this was no *new* notion: it had been harped on by Oracle Horner and his Bullion Committee; by *Lord King*; and by a great many others, long before *the Oracle by excellence* spouted it forth. When I read this, in Long Island, how delighted I was! I not only saw that the Borough lads were caught; but I saw *how* they had been caught: and, we always lose half the pleasure belonging to such a thing, unless we know how it has taken place. When the farmer's men bring him home a fox that has long escaped his toils, he cannot stir from them till he has learnt from their lips, while they drink his ale, where they found him, how they outwitted him, and where and how they got the old rascal at last; who shot him, what dog first laid hold of him, how he fought, and how he died. Thus it was with me, when I got the *Morning Chronicle* containing the "*debates*," as they are drolly enough called, on Peel's Bill. And, when I saw how the Power-of-Imprisonment Bill gentlemen had been noodled along so neatly by such a man as *the Oracle*, I was ready to go crazy with joy. Some friends have told me, that they thought me in jest, when I said, that I sent for my son to New York to come up twenty miles *to help me laugh*; but, I do assure them, it is perfectly true. He had a *right* to his share of the sport. I skimmed the papers over; and the moment I saw the grave assertion, that the fall in prices and rents would be only *in proportion to the fall in the price of gold*, I bursted out a laughing, threw down the paper, packed off my man and horses for my son, before I set to for a regular reading and laughing.

169. That I did not laugh without reason the event has fully proved. I might have doubted as to the ultimate views of the "collective wisdom;" I might have supposed, that they intended to reduce the interest of the Debt; but, when I saw that they relied upon prices and rents falling *only in proportion to the fall in the price of gold*, I was sure that their difficulties would be as great even as they have proved to be. If there be any persons to blame me for my joy and my laughter, let them tell me their names, and I will laugh at them.

170. To suppose, that the *market-price of gold* is, or can be, any standard at all, in a case like this, is monstrous. For, if such were the case, prices would be always the same in times of a settled currency. Gold is an article bought and sold like other things; and, of course, must, in many cases, be affected by causes which have no influence at all as to *rents and prices of things in general*. Besides, the notorious fact; the fact known to every man above the mere labourer; that the actual price of gold for any series of years, shows this in figures. The "collective wisdom" had before it at least a score of official documents to show, that gold had been cheapest when corn and meat were dearest; and that gold had been dearest, when corn and meat were cheapest. It had documents to show, that in the terribly dear year of 1800, the price of gold was at 77s. 10½d. the ounce; and that, in the cheap years of 1802, 1803 and 1804, gold was at 82s. the ounce. It had documents to show, that, in the dear year, 1812; gold was at 95s. 6d. an ounce; and that, in the cheap year of 1814, it was at 104s. the ounce. How, then, could the "collective wisdom" imagine, how could it dream, that the price of gold was the standard of rents and prices generally; and how could it hail as an oracle the man that called upon it to pass, upon such a notion, an Act affecting all the contracts and all the property in the kingdom? But, when I reflect, why should I ask such a question!

171. Granny MUSHET'S principle is wholly erroneous, all his reasoning is erroneous, and his columns of figures not worth a straw. Besides, he brings the amount down only to the end of 1820. Up to that time, he says, the fundlords have lost as much by high prices as they have gained by low prices; or, in other words, they have only recovered by the rise in the value of money that which they had lost by the fall in the value of money. Thus, then, according to his calculations, the landlords and the fundlords were even at the end of last year. Well, now, suppose this to be the case, are the fundlords now to go on for ever receiving two or three for one? And, is it a breach of faith to reduce their interest so as to give them no more than their due? Is it a breach of faith to repeal a bill, which has, in fact, broken all contracts and all faith, or, to reduce the interest in such a way as now to put a stop to this course of injustice? Granny MUSHET seems to have overlooked the circumstance, so awful to landlords, that these were going on losing, and must, unless the interest of the Debt were reduced, lose their all in the end. The granny looks only at the past; he is blind to the future; though it is in the future that the whole of the injustice to the landlord lies. This is like the "collective wisdom," who thought, and who said, that the distress would be over when cash-payments came; not considering, that the distress would only then come to the point at which it was to remain! This was a grand mistake of the "collective," and into a similar mistake granny MUSHET has fallen.

172. The fundlords are now receiving more than three for one. Take

the average of prices, during the time that the money was lent, and you will find, that, taking *all* the articles of farm-produce, in all parts of the country, that *one* pound will buy as much as three pounds bought, during the time that what is called *the lending* was going on. You are not to take corn and meat only, but *timber, underwood*, and all the numerous *little things*, which now fetch *next to nothing*: *Hops* do not form a very extensive article to be sure; but, a *crop* is absolutely an *evil*. It is not worth the direct tax imposed upon it; and possibly, it never may be again, until a part, at least of the tax, be taken off. And yet, while the grower actually pays to the fundlords a tax equal to the amount of his crop, the Committee encourage him to hope, that *things will regulate themselves*; and granny MUSHET says it will be a breach of national honour to give the fundlord *less* than he now receives!

173. But, granny MUSHET omits one very material *item*; no less in amount than about *three hundred millions* that the fundlords have already received *over and above their interest*! He talks about *redeemed debt*; but, he makes no allowance to the nation for the 300,000,000*l.* raised on the nation in taxes, and given to the fundlords under the pretence of "*redeeming the Debt*," which pretence is, even in the "*collective*" itself now called a "*humbug*," though it was the joint child of PITT and FOX! This mass of taxes has been ludicrously called the *sinking fund*. But, in plain truth, what has it been? An enormous sum of money, raised yearly in taxes, to be carried to 'Change-alley, and there laid out in *weekly* sums in order to make the stock of the fundlords constantly saleable at a good price! Was ever such a thing as this heard of before in the world? So here was this silly nation borrowing with one hand, and, with the other, buying up, *at the same time, its own debts*! This was a humbug, indeed, if ever humbug there were; that is to say, with regard to the nation, for, with regard to the fundlords, it was a most solid advantage. It was, in fact, so much money paid to them every year *over and above their interest*.

174. If you have a house to sell, and I expend money to *make it sell*, have I not paid so much money *to you*, and am I not to be repaid out of the price of the house? The fundlords may say, that they *did not agree* to make any deductions *on* this account. But, far be it from me to propose to *go to law* with them. Law is out of the question. We know very well what the loan-bills say; but we are here talking of the *equity* of the thing; because we know very well that the matter is to be settled by an *Act of Parliament*; and surely those who could pass Acts to screen the Bank from paying its creditors on demand; those who could pass an Act to set aside the most important part of the Bank Charter, that part which gave protection to its creditors; surely those who passed an Act to suspend actions commenced in the courts against the clergy, which actions were founded on the clear law of the land; surely those who could finally pass an Act to *quash* those actions and to take from the informer the benefit of his suit; surely, those who could pass Acts giving immense sums out of the taxes to the clergy of the church and foreign emigrant princes and clergy; surely that same body can pass an Act to deduct from the fundlords the three hundred millions that have already been paid to them under the colour of sinking fund, which is now acknowledged to have been a humbug. It would be a pretty collective wisdom, indeed, to be able to pass all the Acts that we have seen passed, and yet to be unable to pass this one Act. To say, therefore, that the fund-

holders have the *law* for them, is saying no more than that an Act has not *yet* been passed to reduce their interest; and that is saying but very little, indeed, when we know very well that such an Act *may* be passed long before next April.

175. I trust it is necessary to say no more on the equity of reducing the interest of the Debt. It is against the principles of natural justice that the labour of the child unborn shall be taxed to pay the debts of the father, or, as the thing now stands, of the great great grandfather. The scripture expressly forbids compelling the child to pay the debts of the father, and especially to make the child a bondman for those debts; and what is he but a bondman, who is compelled, for life, to labour for the creditor of his father? Talk of civil society, indeed! It would be pretty civil society that would allow of one generation making bondmen of another generation; and that, too, by the means of a claim the origin of which is as dark as any of the dealings of wizards.

176. The equity of reducing the interest of the Debt is clear; and, as to the *expediency* of it, who can doubt of that, that considers for a moment the unavoidable consequences of rejecting such reduction. It is manifest that a revolution is now silently going on; that the far greater part of the real property must change hands; that a new set of proprietors will arise; and that, in the meantime, innumerable families will be reduced to ruin and misery. Then, with regard to foreign nations, is it not manifest, that to talk of *war*; to talk of national power, while this millstone hangs about the neck of the nation, would be to give sure and certain signs of incurable insanity. The Debt says to the King of England, "*Thou shalt never go to war again, as long as I am in existence!*"

177. Yet, I wish to hold out no expectation that the interest *will be reduced*, at least during the next session of Parliament. It may, and it will, be *talked of*; but, there will be too many to hang on to the thing in the hope of "*better times.*" It is an *evil day* to be put off. It is an *operation to be performed*; and we know how fertile we are, in such cases, in excuses for postponement! I had been, for *seven years*, perfectly convinced that the tumour on my head must *finally be cut off*; but, I had put it off from year to year, from month to month, from day to day; and, at last, when the operators came, happening to say something about *seeing the garden*, and asking whether they should go and see it *before or after* the operation, I said, "*before, by all means!*" This is just the case with the landlords. But, undergo the operation the nation must, or, like a tumour, the thing will *burst*, and then the cure, if accomplished at all, will be accomplished with infinite difficulty.

WM. COBBETT.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS,

ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(Political Register, October, 1821.)

LETTER VI.

LANDLORDS,

Kensington, 23rd October, 1821.

178. We are drawing towards the close of our examination. The *eleventh* proposition of the Committee is, as stated in Letter I., paragraph 15, in the following words :

xi. *That Peel's Bill ought not to be repealed.* 87.

179. Before I proceed with this proposition, I should state, that, since I wrote Letter V., I have, by the favour of a gentleman who has lent me the book, seen the Edinburgh Review of June last, in which Mr. MUSHET'S Tables are noticed with *great approbation*. I observed, in my last, in paragraph 171, that Mr. MUSHET has brought the account to a *balance*; that is to say, that he had made it out by his calculations, that, *up to the end of 1820*, the fundholders had *neither gained nor lost* by the changes in the value of money. But, I learn from this Edinburgh Review (odd as it is that one can *learn* anything from it) that Mr. MUSHET, upon *second thoughts*, found he had made a mistake; and so he published a *new edition*, giving *compound interest* to the fundlords; and, by this means, made it out, that they had *lost a large sum* by this miserable debtor nation! But, the good of the thing is, to hear the grave remark of the *feelosofers* upon this point. "*Thus* (say they) there is a *permanent annual loss* to the fundholder of 72,704l." *Permanent* mind! He *has lost* the principal; and, of course, will *continue* to lose the interest; and, accordingly they then *set down* the value of 72,704l. at *twenty years' purchase*, just as they would the *rent of an estate*! Now, if, notwithstanding all that has been said in LETTER V. about the *manner* in which the Debt was contracted; about its very suspicious origin; about the *impossibility* of so much money having been *really lent* to the nation; about all the pretty works of Pitt and Dundas: if notwithstanding all these, we regard the Debt as a *real thing*; and if we believe, that, from the alteration in the value of money, the fundlords did, up to the end of 1820, *lose* a sum that was worth to them 72,704l. a year; if we suppose this, is that any reason for their now *gaining* 20,000,000l. a year? Is that any reason, I say, for their *now gaining twenty millions a year*, and for their *continuing to gain it for ever*? These twenty millions a year they now receive unjustly; for it is notorious, that they now receive, taking all commodities together, three for one. And yet the *feelosofers* say, that Mr. MUSHET has *settled the question for ever*! If he have, he has settled you, my lords of the soil; for, it will require but a very few

years for me to see the far greater part of you as poor as those "*Radicals*" whom you have hunted like wild beasts. You will find something else for your sapient heads to think about than inventing crimes like that of "*radicalism*." Forty millions a year; for, mind, the *sinking fund*, as the humbug is called, is only so much *given* to the fundlords; forty millions a year, ten or fifteen of which come out of your estates, directly or indirectly, will soon eat you out; and, in the meanwhile, we shall have you gentle as doves! Not but you will spit your spite out upon *us* as much as you can, as an ill-tempered coward kicks a dog, when he would wish to kick his servants; but, you will not have the *power*; you will grow poorer and poorer every day; and, as you grow poor, you will grow feeble: and as impotence, as all philosophers agree, is the very best possible security for continence, so poverty is the best possible security for your good behaviour.

180. Leaving the *Edinburgh Reviewers* for the present, in order to return to them hereafter, let us now come to the Report of the Committee as to *Peel's Bill*. The Committee do not name this precious monument of "*wisdom collective*." They allude to it in the 87th paragraph, thus: "They" (the Committee) "look forward to *this mode* of easing the incumbrances of the landlord" (we shall see *this mode* hereafter) "with the more anxiety, as, amidst all the injury and injustice, "which an unsettled currency,—an evil, they trust, never again to be incurred,—has, in succession, cast upon the different ranks of society, "the share of that which has now fallen upon the landed interest, is *the only one* which, without inflicting greater injury and greater injustice, "admits (*now that we are so far advanced in the system of a restored currency*) of no other relief."

181. To understand the meaning of this sentence, even at a third reading, demands a *steadyish head*. But, we do learn from it that "*injury*" and "*injustice*" have been cast upon the *different ranks of society* by an "*unsettled currency*." Now, this is *something*, at any rate, in the way of acknowledgment. *Who* is this unsettled currency? *What* is he? Is he a *Radical*! Is he one of those *sedition and blasphemy* fellows whose crimes called so loudly for Six-Acts? Is he a two-penny-trash man, who, as the Doctor lamented, had not written anything that could be prosecuted with a chance of success? "Why, you fule!" I hear the *Edinburgh Reviewers* exclaim, "It is *nae mon*: it is a *theng*!" O! thank you, feelosofers: it means the *raising and lowering of the value of money*! I thought it was licentiousness-of-the-press man, at the least, if not Bonaparte, or some great four-legged monster capable of eating up half a nation at a meal! Now, I understand the thing clearly enough. It is an "*evil*," it has "*inflicted injury and injustice on the different ranks of society*," and the Committee trust they shall *never see this evil again*!

182. Well, then, how did the "*evil*" come? Who created the "*evil*?" Who did the *injury* and the *injustice* to the different ranks of society? Why those who made the unsettled currency. And who made that? Why, the *Parliament*; that very Parliament that stands in need of *no reform*, and that is the envy of surrounding nations and the admiration of the world! Now, either the Parliament did this injury and injustice to the different ranks of society *intentionally*, or it *did not*: if the former, I must, with Six-Acts in my eye, leave the reader to characterize the Parliament: if the latter, every one to his taste, but, for my part, I can have no expectation that that same body who *created an evil* of such magni-

tude, who cast injury and injustice upon the different ranks of society without intending it; I have no expectation, that that same body will ever intend to do that which is calculated to get the nation out of its difficulties. They may intend to do that which they think will have this effect; but, with their present acknowledgment before me, what reason have I to suppose, that those will think correctly now, who thought so erroneously before?

183. Nay, they seem to doubt and to be half afraid of what they have already done; for, observe the words: "now that we are so far advanced in the system of a restored currency." As much as to say, that they cannot now retract. That they cannot repeal *Peel's Bill*. They are in the mess, and they must go through it! Yet, there is a misgiving here; and, when we take this in conjunction with what the "prime" minister (and a prime cock he is!) said, towards the close of the last session; namely, that the question of a paper-currency or a metallic currency was still open to Parliament; when we look at these together, we ought not to be too sure, that when Mr. Perry's "collective wisdom" shall be again collected, there will not be some little talk about a measure, that would cause the feast of the gridiron. Indeed, I am perfectly satisfied, and so are thousands and thousands besides, that if it had not been for the picture of the gridiron at the head of my Register, last winter, the Bill would have been repealed before the month of May. But, that picture! The horrid disgrace; the triumph on the side of "sedition and blasphemy;" the never-ending jests on the "collective;" the noise all over the world, these, seen in prospective, made the "stern-path" men brace up their nerves; and they seem, though their lips quivered and their teeth chattered all the while, to have resolved to go on, neck or nothing.

184. I say too, "that Peel's Bill ought not to be repealed." I was half dead with fear, when it was a matter of doubt. It would have covered the whole thing with disgrace and infamy, to be sure; but, it would, perhaps, have put off the day that I wish to see come. It would have lightened up the jolterheads, and have made them prance and gallop and cut and slash more than ever. It would have given them a new lease of the privilege of being oppressive and insolent. Thank God and the King, they are now coming down to their proper place. They are growing mild and civil. One can be within a yard of them without having one's eyes put out with the haze proceeding from their puffing insolence. I thank the King for choosing the stern-path men to push the Bill on, and I thank God for disposing the heart of the King to make such a choice. This Bill will do every thing for us in time; but, above all things, it will lay sprawling upon the earth thousands upon thousands of the most unjust, oppressive, cruel and cowardly vagabonds that ever strutted about upon the face of that earth.

185. If this Bill were to be repealed, we should soon feel the savage effects of it. The power of robbing the labouring classes would then be looked upon as made perpetual; and there would be nothing left for them but real, personal slavery, or open resistance. Fraud, now so completely held in check, would again start forth, and with more vigour and confidence than ever. As to the violation of all contracts for time, that would be nothing new. But, there would, out of the repeal of the Bill, arise so many advantages to the paper-fraud, that the country would become a scene of general gambling and swindling, a perfect "Pall-Mall Hell" of fraud and villany. The Bill has already given us gold; it has

banished the *one-pounders*, and is banishing the *five-pounders*. And thus we are come to the *ten-pounders*. They will, I trust, disappear too; and I do not care one single straw from *what cause*. The rag-men in the *country* must follow the main spring of paper; for the Debt will continue to *draw away even their paper*, which they must *diminish*, mind, in proportion to the diminution in London paper. Gold will go creeping over the country. If the forgers cannot work upon the Mother Bank, they will fall upon her country litter; and, in this way it will be, that we shall need no corn-bills; for the corn will be as cheap in England as in any other part of the world.

186. This Bill, this blessed Bill, which was passed when the "collective" was in one of its happiest moods, will, in the end, be the salvation of England. It will "put down the mighty from their seats;" and, therefore, with the Committee, I say, that "Peel's Bill ought not to be repealed." In this one point, too, I have the happiness to agree with the Edinburgh Reviewers, who are stout advocates for this Bill; and well they may, for it originated with their faction! It was the relics of the Bullion-Committee. But, no matter for its origin: it will set all to rights!

187. The Edinburgh Reviewers do, indeed, seem to have some *qualms*; for, they do not positively say, that the Bill can be adhered to without a *reduction of the interest of the Debt*. They lay about them on all those who contend for the reduction; but, still, they do not *assert*, that it may not be found *unavoidable*, at last. They call those "*open and bare-faced robbers*" who propose to do the thing; but, still they talk, as if they thought the thing *must be done in the end*. They come in with a "*but*" after their imprecations; and with a "*though we were wrong*." And, then they say, that; *if* the thing be done, they prefer the doing of it openly to a *debasing of the coin*, on the plan of the *Attwoods*, which is a real *Birmingham* plan, a *clipping and sweating* plan; yet this was, too, the plan of the "*Liverpool merchants*," who petitioned last winter. Yes, I do not like the clipping plan; for that would *repeal Peel's Bill*, which I regard as the sure means of our regeneration.

188. These Reviewers say, that they would prefer Mr. RICARDO'S plan of *dividing the lands*, to a reduction of the interest of the Debt. Why, so should I; for, this would be a proper punishment of the landlords for their hypocritical outcry against the poor *Spenceans*. What the *feelosofers* say upon this subject is really curious; and, as a fine specimen of grave nonsense, I will insert it: "A measure of this *bold and decided* character ought not to be adopted, except as a *dernier resort*, and after "all other less hazardous and more practicable means of relieving the "national embarrassments have been tried. But, if our choice lay only "between public bankruptcy and *the transfer of 20 or 25 per cent.* of the "capital of the country to the *fundholders*, we could not, unless we "had determined to trample on public faith, and to commit an act of "gross and shameful injustice in the face of the world, *hesitate about* "making such a transfer. That it would be attended with *considerable* "temporary hardship and inconvenience, cannot be denied; but, at the "same time, it would preserve the national honour and character unimpaired, while, by relieving the country from *above thirty millions a* "year of taxes, it would go far to render us *the most flourishing and* "happy people in the world."

189. Well! Thank God there are not many such fools as these! What will a *fifth* or a *fourth* part of less than thirty millions a year, *pay off* a

debt, the interest of which is *more than thirty millions*? Do these men not know, that the rental of the kingdom is not thirty millions a year? And do they not know, that, if a measure like that of Ricardo were attempted to be put in execution, the whole lands would not fetch a quarter part of the principal of the Debt? Or do they mean *all capital*; that is to say *all property*? They must: and then, what a muster of chairs and tables and frying-pans and porridge-pots and old shoes, to be exchanged for stock! It is a real madness. Let them attempt *this*, and I am *satisfied*.

190. These reviewers again resort to "*retrenchment*." Very good; but will they agree to the lopping-off of Burke's posthumous pensions of 2500*l.* a year? Will they agree to lop off the pensions and sinecures granted by the Whigs? Will they agree to the taking off of the pensions which the Whigs granted to *foreigners* in direct violation of the Act of Settlement? O, no! come to the pinch, and they will agree to none of these; nor to the rescinding of any of the *grants*, which they, in the language of Fox, call "*freeholds*," &c.! Foh! for such Whigs! They mean by "*retrenchment*," the taking of money from others to give to themselves. And, when these Edinburgh reviewers met to petition the King to turn out his Ministers, they, with the most bewitching simplicity and modesty declared, that they would never take any office that they were *unqualified to fill*; and, I'll engage that the King has no office in his gift, no, not even *his own*, that they do not think themselves better qualified to fill than any other persons in the world.

191. But, why this *vague* talk about "*retrenchment*?" Why do they not tell us *in what*? There are the *salaries of the judges*. These have been *doubled* since 1799. The last addition was, too, made upon the motion of SAINT HORNER, one of these very reviewers. Do they propose to reduce *these salaries*? Ah! they know better! They are a group of *lawyers*; and, it was so decent, so independent, so impartial in Lawyer HORNER, though in "*opposition*," to propose an addition to the salaries of the "*venerable persons*," before whom he had to plead and to obtain decisions for his clients as often as he could! Foh! for such "*opposition*." No wonder the Whigs regard HORNER as a *Saint*. No wonder that both sides of the "*collective*" chant his praises à *pleine tête*, or, as we of the vulgar call it, *open-mouthed*! These are the things that have disgusted the people, and made them sick of *parties*.

192. What is the "*retrenchment*," then, that these men are everlastingly harping about? Do they not know, that *patronage* is the oil of the wheels of the system? Do they not know, that, if it were not for *that*, there would be no obstacle to *reform*? Do they not know, that the system could not stand a day, or, rather, could not move another inch, without this *oil*? Where is their sincerity, then, in calling for "*retrenchment*," when they know that *real* retrenchment, that the putting of an end to *unnecessary expenses* must put an end to the system, which they labour with all their might to uphold?

193. I shall conclude this letter with an extract from the *Norfolk Chronicle and Norwich Gazette*, not, indeed, immediately relating to *Peel's Bill*, but not foreign to the matters of the Report, it being one of those humbugs by a succession of which, regularly served out at stated periods, this nation has been deluded and noodled along for the last thirty years; till, in the end, we find a Committee of the "*Collective*" itself proclaiming, that it is in a state of *embarrassment* and *distress*.

The following is the article I allude to ; and, if anything more gross was ever attempted to be palmed upon the Peruvians by the Padres whose object was to filch their gold and debauch their wives and daughters, the Padres must have been still greater impostors than they have been represented :—

“ British Empire.—The population of Great Britain at the census in 1811, was 11,800,000, exclusive of the army and navy, then about 50,000. From the returns, so far as published under the present census, it appears the increase is about 15 per cent. This will make the population of Great Britain at present to be 14,000,000 of souls. Ireland contains about 6,500,000 people, making the population of the British dominions in Europe 20,500,000. The population of our North American Possessions cannot be less than 1,500,000; the population of the West India Colonies, 800,000; Africa, about 130,000; in the Mediterranean, 150,000; colonies and dependencies in Asia, 2,040,000; and our other extensive territories in the East Indies, perhaps 70,000,000 of souls. The whole population of the British Empire, will, at that rate, contain 95,220,000 of souls. The Russian, the next highest in the scale of civilized nations, contains 50,000,000; France, 30,000,000; and Austria an equal number. *The Roman Empire*, in all its glory, contained 120,000,000, one-half of whom were slaves. When we compare its situation with that of the British Empire, in power, wealth, resources, and industry, in the arts, sciences, commerce, and agriculture, the preponderance of the latter in the scale of nations and empires is *great and most remarkable*. The tonnage employed in the merchant service is about 2,640,000 tons, for Great Britain: the exports 51,000,000 (including 11,000,000 foreign and colonial); the imports 36,000,000. The navy, during the last war, consisted of 1000 ships of war; and the seamen at present in the merchant service are about 174,000; the net revenue of the state 57,000,000*l.* *The capital of the empire contains 1,200,000 persons, the same number which Rome contained in the days of her greatest strength.* The value of fixed or landed property in Great Britain, as calculated by Mr. Pitt, in 1797, was 1,600,000,000*l.*, and it may now be fairly taken at 2,000,000,000*l.* The cotton manufactures of the country are immense, and reach in the exports to 20,000,000*l.* or one-half of the whole. In short, taking everything into consideration, the British empire, in power and strength, may be stated as the *greatest that ever existed on earth, as it far surpasses them in knowledge, moral character, and worth.* On her dominions the sun never sets; before his evening rays leave the spires of Quebec, his morning beams have shone three hours in Port Jackson, and while sinking from the waters of Lake Superior, his eye opens upon the mouth of the Ganges.”

194. Well, then, how came two of this mighty empire's fleets to be beaten and captured by two Yankee fleets of inferior force? How came her fleets and armies to be driven from America in *utter disgrace*? But, if such be her resources, why talk of the paltry expense of her *Sovereign's Coronation*? Why talk of “*retrenchment*?” And, above all things, why talk of her *difficulties* and *distress*?

195. The hired fellows who write these things are no fools. They know how to turn the vanity of the stupid to account. They know, that the most sordid of wretches, who have no feeling for their poorer neighbours, and who never even thought of a public-spirited act, are still to be tickled by statements like this; and that the conclusion they will draw, is, “*What a wise and good government we must have to have gained us all this power and all these riches!*” Even the half-broken farmer or tradesman conceits, for a moment, that *he* has a *part* in these immense riches; and is, perhaps, to be awakened from his dream only by a tap on the shoulder by the hand of the bailiff.

196. Only think of reckoning the land at a *fourth more than the worth* of 1797, when it is notoriously not worth in nominal amount so much as it was then! And only think of omitting to state, that there is a *mortgage on this for more than it is worth* according to the present rental!

Only think of saying that the land alone is now worth *twenty hundred millions*, when, according to the Property-tax returns, it never, at the highest times and in the most base paper, was worth more than about *twelve hundred millions*, and cannot now be worth more than *six or seven hundred millions*, though charged with a mortgage of nearer *ten hundred than eight hundred millions*! Only think of reckoning 70 millions of people in India as forming part of *our strength*, when we are drained of the fruit of our labour to carry on wars to enable a company of merchants and their underlings to make a part of these people work to get them money!

197. But, if we be this *mighty empire*, how came we to be so cursedly afraid of the French as to stop cash payments at the Bank upon the alarm excited by a few old women, in Wales, having their cloaks mistaken for French soldiers' dresses? Look at "Paper against Gold" and see the *fright* the "mighty empire" was in at that time! If we be this "mighty," this Mammoth of an "Empire," how came we to be so shamefully in fright as to send for a parcel of *German soldiers to defend us against the French*, and to give the German officers the *command* of whole districts in England! Poh! ye impostors! None of your *drams* to drown our senses and our sorrows!

198. However, my lords of the soil, be you assured, that this is amongst the devices to gild the pill that you have to swallow. It is to dazzle your poor brains, and to make you believe, that it is *impossible* that you should be *ruined*, belonging, as you have the honour to belong, "to the greatest empire on the earth." Nevertheless, suck down the *dram*; gulp it all to the very dregs: swallow "*Lake Superior and the Ganges*:" and then awake, and find the Jews in possession of your estates: just as the cully who has fallen asleep in the elysium of a brothel, awakes stripped to the skin and bitten with fleas. I am, my lords of the soil, with the most profound respect,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS, ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(*Political Register, November, 1821.*)

LETTER VII.

LANDLORDS,

Newbury, Berks, October 31, 1821.

199. We now come to the main thing, the 12th proposition, or, rather, *string* of propositions, of the Committee; namely,

- XII. *That rents will not fall so low as some expect; that prices will not fall so low as some predict; that agriculture will NOT DECLINE; that our PROSPERITY IN WAR has added to the CAPITAL TO FEED AGRICULTURE WITH; that things will RIGHT THEMSELVES; and that the landlords will be AS PROSPEROUS AS BEFORE THE LATE WARS.* G, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 54, 58, 87.

200. If you look at the several paragraphs of the Report pointed out by the above figures, you will find, that they contain all these assertions. The thing aimed at here, as in every other part of the Report, is, to *cheer you up*; to make you believe, that you will be as well off as you, or your fathers, were *thirty years ago*. Upon the very face of the thing this cannot be, seeing that the Debt is now four times as great as it was then, and seeing that the interest of this Debt has, in part at least, to come out of the land. It, therefore, becomes us to endeavour to discover *how it is that the Committee have deceived themselves*.

201. The Committee, in paragraph 11 of the Report, say: "Under circumstances favourable to the *prosperity* of the country, which they trust may fairly be *anticipated from the continuance of peace*, they are disposed to HOPE, that this diminution (of *rent*) may not be carried even to *that extent*;" that is to say, to make rents as low as they were in 1793.

202. Now, in the first place, why do the Committee associate with *peace* that which they call *prosperity*? It is *peace* that has put an end to what is called prosperity! When the Committee, in other parts of their Report, talk of "*prosperous times*," they always allude to *war-times*. But, here, they choose to think peace favourable to *prosperity*; a word, by-the-by, to which, before I go any further, I must endeavour to affix something like a meaning. When the crops of a country fail, the hoarders of corn call it *prosperity*; when the drought stunts the cabbages and turnips, the black grub is in a state of *prosperity*; when the yellow fever, or the plague, visits a city, it is a season of great *prosperity* with the physicians and undertakers; the rot which strews the fields, lanes, and hedge-rows with dead sheep, brings uncommon *prosperity* to the birds of prey; and, the paper-money, which deducts from the wages of labour, which degrades the labourer, which strips his cottage of its goods piece-meal, which makes him look like a moving bundle of rags, which reduces his carcass to a skeleton; this accursed thing, together with long war and heavy taxation, bring *great prosperity* to big farmers, landlords, parsons, bankers, attorneys, lawyers, placemen, pensioners, grantees, sinecure people, and to tax-eaters of all descriptions. But, by *prosperity*, as applied to the *state of a nation*, we mean the *happiness of the whole*, or of the *great mass*; and, when we are talking of happiness in a case like this, we allude, as a matter of course, to the well-being of the *bodies* of the people, to their having *plenty to eat, drink and wear*. This is *national prosperity*; this comes very naturally by *peace*; but, it does not come along with *high prices and high rents*. So that, as appears to me, the Committee has in view, when it talks of *prosperity*, prosperity like that which, as before-mentioned, occasionally attends the corn-hoarder, the undertaker, and the birds of prey. The gay looks and lively movements, glib tongues of the bankers and tax-eaters, always put me in mind of the fluttering and skimming and skipping and strutting about of the magpies round the carcass of a rotten sheep. "*Mack, mak, mak! chac, chac, chac!*" And then up they flutter, and down they drop again; and look as merry and as saucy as any flock of Whitehall, feeding upon "*cheese-parings and candle-ends*."

203. Now, in the first place, might one, with *Six-Acts* in one's affrighted eye, be so bold as to ask this Committee of the "*collective wisdom*," whether even a hole-digging philosopher would be able to give any *good reason* for "*hoping*" that rents will not fall to their old mark?

I can discover none. I can remember when *very good arable land*, very capital farms, let for 10s. *an acre*; and I began myself moving my feet about upon land that let, and that was well let, for *half-a-crown an acre*. But, come: let us look at the *Evidence* here. "John Elman, *Esquire*," and who has become an *esquire* since he took his farm in 1790, then gave for 440 acres of arable, 484 of meadow and pasture, and 350 of Downs (*South Downs*, mind), 680 pounds a-year; that is to say, 13s. 9d. an acre; and, mind, here are 484 *acres of meadows and pasture!* I have been, lately, expressly to see this farm; and, God bless me, what a fine farm it is! I do not grudge Mr. Elman his prosperity by any means. It gave me great pleasure to see his beautiful fields and prodigious crops of all sorts; and his beautiful cattle in the meadows. But, am I not warranted in saying, that the average price of *good arable land* did not, before the war, exceed 10s. *an acre*?

204. Now, in 1790, the nation was in a state of great *real prosperity*. We heard *then* of none of these *distresses* and these *Corn-bills* and this *hole-digging work*. We heard *then* of no *emigrations*; no overstock of people and overstock of food at the same time; of no persons *petitioning to be transported!* Of no new jails and "*improved prison discipline*;" of no county-hospitals for the *insane*. All these signs of "*prosperity*" have made their appearance while rents were *trebling*. I, therefore, can see no *good* reason for the Committee *hoping so anxiously*, that rents will *not come back* to the old standard.

205. Their reason, however, is this: that, if the rents do come back, it is clear as day-light, that the present landlords, if *encumbered*, must lose their estates right speedily; and, if not encumbered, the landlords must be *brought down*, and will soon be insignificant creatures compared to the fundlords, who are daily rising over them: and who, in a short time, will, and must, have a complete ascendancy.

206. So much, for the *hopes* of the Committee. Now for the *grounds* of those hopes. They say, that the rise in rent was partly owing to *improvements* and partly to the *depreciation of money*. But, this is so vital a part of our affair, that we must here take their own words from paragraphs 6 and 7 of their Report.—"Your Committee cannot allude to the state of rents in this country, without observing, that a *large proportion of the increase of the rent* which has taken place within the last twenty years, is *owing to the capitals which have been permanently vested in improvements*, partly by the owners and in part by the tenants of the soil; by the judicious application of which capitals, in many instances, great tracts of land, theretofore *waste*, or comparatively of little value, have been brought into productive cultivation. A *further proportion of the increase of rent* is, unquestionably, to be ascribed to the *diminished value of our currency*, during a great part of the period when this rise took place. It may be difficult, upon an average of the whole kingdom, and still more difficult in specific cases, to determine what part of the increase of rents may have arisen from this cause; but it is certainly not inconsiderable, and was, during the war, sufficient probably to *compensate to the landlord the effects of the derangement of the currency*. The restoration of that currency will necessarily lead, as existing engagements lapse, to new arrangements between landlord and tenant; in the adjustment of which the permanent effect of *that restoration*, however difficult exactly to ascertain, will have its *practical effect*."

207. Now, though a plainer manner of writing would have been a great deal better, even hers; yet, we may make this out. In the first place, a large part of the increase in the rent is ascribed to *capitals permanently vested in improvements*, and especially in *new enclosures*. Which means, if it mean anything, that, in consequence of the more than usual quantity of money laid out upon them during the war, the lands became *more valuable* than they were before the war, and especially the *new enclosures*. And, that, having become more valuable than before the war, they will *continue* (as the Committee afterwards say) to let for more, in *proportion to this increased value*.

208. This we can understand; but, we may ask the Committee (or, we would, if it were not for *Sir-Acts*), some questions here that might excite a good deal of laughter. However, with the sword suspended over our heads, it becomes us to behave in a respectful manner. "*Capitals permanently vested in improvements.*" What a phrase to describe money laid out upon chalk and lime and marl and hedges and ditches. But, this money was laid out. Its effect, in many cases, must have been anything but *permanent*; for, even as to enclosures, a great part have been *thrown up again*. But the money *was laid out in this way*; but, *whence came this money*, and have not the lands contracted a debt to the poor equal in amount to this *increased value*, whatever it may continue to be?

209. In Letter IV. paragraphs 128 and 129, this silly word *capital* (used in this way) was fully explained. It is money; and, now, *whence did this money come?* To go about proving here what I have so often proved, would be irksome to myself and wearisome to my readers. I appeal to the Letter to Mr. ATTWOOD [see page 66 of this vol.]; to my Letter to Mr. HAYES [see page 87 of this vol.]; to my Letter to Mr. COKE, [see p. 115 of this vol.]; and, upon the *proof*, the unquestionable proof, contained in those three Essays, I here state, as a thing taken for granted, that, whatever addition was made to the *value of the land*, during high prices and depreciated paper, was *so much deducted from the wages of the labouring classes*, in the manner that I have a hundred times shown. And, therefore, whatever portion of this increased value shall remain in the land, will and must leave a proportionate charge on the land in the shape of *augmented poor-rates*, compared with the poor-rates previous to the high prices and the robbing of the labourers.

210. It is not all *gold that glistens*. The gay farm-houses with pianos within were not *improvements*. The pulling down of 200,000 small farm-houses and making the inhabitants paupers was not an *improvement*. The gutting of the cottages of their clocks and brass-kettles and brewing-tackle was no *improvement*. And, I ask, where is, or where will soon be found, the landlord, not to wish that his *estate* and the *poor-rates*, independent of all other taxes, were what they were in 1790?

211. Thus, then, the land has made no *permanent gain* here. If prices do not come back to the standard of 1790, poor-rates will not; and, indeed, they cannot. So that rents (if gold continue to be issued) must come back to the old standard; or, at least, there is no reason that they should not, to be found in this observation of the Committee.

212. We now come to the other cause of the increase in rents; namely, the *paper-money sales*. And this was the cause and the *only cause*. And, observe, that, in speaking of the "*diminished value of the currency*," the Committee seem to go by the *Jew-standard*; that is to say, to suppose that the value of the currency was diminished only in proportion to

the difference between the *price of gold and that of paper* in the *metal-market*! It is notorious that rents were augmented *threefold upon an average*. But, was gold ever up to 233s. 7½d. an ounce? Yes, the landlord, and so with the parson, found, in *high prices* a compensation for the "*derangement*," because both of them shared in the *deductions from the wages of labour*, which sharing (and *this* is the real pinch to them) both of them have now lost.

213. With this view of the matter before us, how good it is to hear the Committee gravely observe, that "the *restoration* of the currency will lead to *new arrangements between landlord and tenant*;" and that here the restoration (that is Peel's Bill) will have "its *practical effect*." To be sure it will! The thing will "*adjust*" itself with all imaginable truth. No *joint* of a spinning-jenny ever fitted better. One farmer goes from 300*l.* a-year rent, and another comes at 100*l.* a-year. One landlord loses his estate, and another takes it. Or, the landlord sinks down into comparative insignificance, while the fundlord becomes a great and important personage. The far greater part of the lands will actually change hands and owners. But, if the *lands* could all remain, those valuable, those precious *chattels*, the SEATS, would soon change masters; and they are by far the best part of the inheritance.

214. The Committee having given us their brilliant ideas as to the causes of the *rise of rents*, they next proceed to treat us to those which they entertain as to the causes of the *fall of rents*; and to explain *why* it is, that they "*hope*" that rents will not fall *so low* as the standard of 1790. *Why* they "*hope*" that the "*practical effect*" of the new arrangements between landlord and tenant will not be so unpleasant as *some* anticipate. I have said, that I *understand* the Committee in the foregoing quotation; but, I cannot omit to notice here what I hope will be a *warning* to all future Report-makers. They say: "in the adjustment of which "*the permanent effect* of that restoration, however difficult exactly to "*ascertain*, will have its *practical effect*." Here is an *effect* having an *effect*. And, then, *what is it* that it is difficult to *ascertain*? Is it the *permanent effect*? If it be, what is meant by *ascertaining it*? The Committee meant this: "In the adjustment of which that restoration "*will have its practical and permanent effect*, however difficult it may be "*to ascertain the degree of that effect*." But, the Report was to be *fine*; and to be *fine*, it must be *obscure*.

215. Proceeding, now, to inquire into the *grounds* of the Committee's lively "*hope*," that rents will not fall *so low* as they were in 1790, we must again quote their own words. These grounds are unsolid, indeed, as we shall see in a moment, seeing that the chief of them, is an *opinion*, a mere opinion, that we had, when the Report was made, *too little currency afloat*. The reader will do well to be cool and provide himself with great *steadiness of head*, before he enters upon the passage that I am about to quote.

"But, your Committee cannot omit to state their opinion, that any attempt to determine that effect at this moment, would give an erroneous, and possibly an exaggerated measure of its prospective influence. Having been long below, the currency appears now to be forced above, its standard. In making this remark, it is by no means designed to offer an opinion upon the precautions which have been taken, and the preparations which have been made by the Bank, for the resumption of cash payments. But it must be obvious, that if the effect of those preparations has been to contract, in any considerable degree, the amount of coin previously circulating in Europe, by withdrawing it from that circulation

into the coffers of the Bank, the value of money must have been raised generally on the Continent; and if, coincident with that operation, the separate currency of this country has also been contracted, not only in the degree necessary,—first, to restore it to its relative par value with the metallic currency of other countries, but further, to place it at a permanent premium above that metallic currency; (itself enhanced in value in proportion to the amount withdrawn by the purchases of the Bank,) it would *seem to follow*, that the proportion of our circulation is now somewhat below, and the value of the currency somewhat above, what would be requisite to maintain that currency upon a level with the diminished circulation, and consequently, with the increased value of money in the other countries of the world. The present price of standard silver in bank-paper, the very high course of the foreign exchanges, and the immense influx of bullion for the last nine months, without any decline in those exchanges, now higher with all countries than at any former period, all concur strongly to warrant this conclusion."

216. This is a *puzzler*, faith! This is really *bad writing*; and, I do hope, that MR. HUSKISSON did not write this part of the Report at any rate; for I have always entertained a high opinion of his *clearness of head*, and these sentences do not justify that opinion; for, nothing can be more true, than that he who thinks clearly will write so as to be clearly understood. There is in all the *official writings* of the present day, an affectation of *singularity*; a sort of aristocratical *reserve*; an apparently constantly-prevailing fear of being too *familiar*. And yet, when on subjects of this sort, they condescend to borrow pretty freely from the slang of 'Change Alley. This passage, however, is a perfect "nest of pill-boxes," as SWIFT would call it. The third period (beginning too with the words, "*it must be obvious*") is, as far as I recollect, the *most obscure* that I ever read; and I appeal to the reader, whether, even after a *third reading*, he have not found this sentence *difficult to understand*. When there is so much matter to lie in so small a compass, *distinct propositions*, though plain and homely, are always best; and to them I must resort, even now, in order to state what *I look upon* to be the meaning of this sentence, which is a very important one.

217. The meaning, then, I take to be this: "That, if the preparations for cash-payments at the Bank have drawn to the Bank a considerable part of the coin, before circulating on the Continent of Europe, the value of money generally must have been there raised by such withdrawing; that, if, at the same time, the paper-money of this country have also been diminished in quantity in a degree necessary to bring it up to the value of the coin of other countries, and, further, to make it *higher* in value than that coin, which coin had already been raised in value by the withdrawals from it by our Bank; *if these premises be admitted*, it follows, that the quantity of our present circulating medium *is smaller*, and the value of it *greater*, than would be requisite to keep it of equal value with the money of other countries."

218. Such is the meaning of this famous sentence: and, now, for the *opinion* which it expresses. The *object* is, you see, to inculcate a belief, that the quantity of our circulating medium *will not further diminish*; and, of course, that PRICES and RENTS, *will not fall lower than they are at present*. Nay, that, as our money is *less* in quantity and *greater* in value than it need to be, there is reason to expect, that it will become *greater in quantity* and *less in value* than it now is; and that, therefore, prices and rents may be expected to rise something, rather than to fall lower than they now are.

219. Such is the object of the passage above quoted. But, before we agree in *opinion* with the Committee, and, of course, before we take their

"hope" into our bosoms, we must look a little at the *grounds* of that opinion.

220. Nothing can be more true, than that cash-payments *here* must raise the value of real money in every other country, and even of paper-money convertible at pleasure into real money; for it takes away a part of the money of every other country. But, I should be glad to ask Mr. HUSKISSON (and to get an *answer*) on what it is that he founds the supposition, that *our paper-money* is now *higher* in value *than the coin of other countries*. This strange supposition appears, from the concluding sentence of the above-quoted passage, to be founded on the *market-price of silver* and on the *state of the exchanges*. But, these depend upon circumstances not at all connected with this matter; and, it remains for the writer of the Report to show, if he can, how the market-price of silver can possibly warrant his conclusion. It was upon just such ground as this, that the House of Commons *resolved*, in 1811, that the paper-money had *not depreciated*; for, though even Rose and Vanittart allowed that the market-price of silver was *then* above the paper, they contended, and they *proved*, that, when the quantity of the paper-money had been *greater*, the market-price of silver had been *less*; and, that in some cases, the silver had fallen and the exchanges had risen with the increase in the quantity of the paper-money.

221. So that, I think, that there is nothing here to found a "*hope*" on. And, indeed, all is deception when you make the price of the metals a standard to judge by in a case like the present. It is a notorious fact, that almost the whole of the circulating medium of this kingdom is paper-money yet. If the Bank have issued *five millions* it is as much as it has. The gold is slowly creeping about the country, and, if it go a distance from London, it goes, in most cases, into hoards. It bears a *premium* in many places; and, in the degree that it creeps along, the country bank-paper will make way for it. This country paper; these despicable rags, which frequently rest upon no security at all, and which are beset by forgers on every side, do, however, for the present, *shut out coin*; make it stay in other countries; and keep up prices there, though not so high as our own. *This is the thing for a statesman to look at*. No matter what the market-price of silver and what the exchanges say: so long as *wheat* is, upon an average of years, much dearer in England than it is in France; *so long are our prices and our rents above the mark to which they must finally come*.

222. I wish these gentlemen would talk less about *silver* and more about *wheat*! I wish, with all my heart they would; for, their Jew-like standards puzzle me. I am told here, that our money is of a *higher* value than the money in France; and yet I know, that *prices are much lower in France than they are here*! Money is nothing but a thing to *measure* by; and, surely, that is the *greatest* measure that will hold the most wheat. If a sovereign will buy more food and raiment and lodging (of the same quality) in France, than it will buy here, is it not of *higher* value there than it is here? Jews may gabble, *Oracles* may speak, and Committees may send forth nests of pill-boxes to all eternity, about prices of silver and about exchanges; but this everlasting truth nothing can shake; namely, that in that country, where, upon an average of years, food is *highest in price*, in that country is money the *lowest in value*.

223. Let him deny this who can find assurance to do it. And yet, if

this cannot be denied, what becomes of the opinion of the Committee? View the matter in this light: take *produce* as the standard, and you see, at once, what is wanted, and *all* that is wanted: you want to make produce *as low in price* (measured by gold) *in England as it is on the Continent*; and, then you want no *Corn-bills* nor anything of the kind. And, until you do this, you will never have one moment's peace at home, and never can again show your nose in war.

224. The Committee seem to think that a *Corn-bill* of some sort is necessary to "*protect*" the English farmer. Strange thought! When they think at the same time, that English money is *higher in value* than the money on the Continent! For, if this latter were the case, it is as clear as daylight, that corn would be, on an average, *higher-priced* on the Continent than in England! However, it is useless to dispute with 'Change-alley. It has in it all things monstrous; all things roguish, and all things foolish.

225. I think we have now torn up this ground of "*hope*." We have seen, that it is a sad delusion to suppose, that money is higher in value here than it is on the Continent, and that an augmentation may be made to our paper while we are issuing gold. But besides this, the real *time of trial* is not yet come; though we are now, thank God, within *fourteen months of it*. It is when the Bank shall be *compelled* to pay in gold: it is when the thing shall be *done* that preparations are making for; it is then that the ragmen in the country will be put to their trumps! But, in short, a diminution of the circulating medium *must go on*, until prices of produce in England come down to the average mark of prices on the Continent; and, if I am asked how the *present taxes* are, in such case, to be paid, my answer is that I leave that to the "*collective wisdom*" who contracted the Debt, and who best know how to settle the matter of payment.

226. Here lies all the mischief! What is more unnatural than to "*hope*" for high *rents*, and consequently *high-priced* food? Do we not well know that these high prices drive thousands upon thousands of people out of the country to spend their incomes with our rivals and perhaps secretly plotting enemies? The Committee, in another part of their Report, see, and notice this evil; and their words are remarkable. They speak of "*the necessity of guarding, as much as possible, against creating, by artificial means, too great a difference between the cost of that subsistence here and in other countries*;"—not only in regard to the people themselves, but "*also from the risk which must be in proportion to that difference, of driving much of the capital, by which their industry and labour are supported, to seek employment in other countries*." For there cannot be a doubt that this difference operates, in the same manner as taxation, "*to diminish the profits of capital in this country, and there can be as little doubt, that though capital may migrate, the unoccupied population will remain*;"—and remain to be maintained by the *landed interest*, "*upon whose resources, diminished in proportion to diminished demand, this additional burden would principally fall*."

227. Very well, then; what better reason can be given for *wishing* our produce to come down *lower than it is*; and, of course, *wishing rents to be lower*? And yet, as we have seen, in paragraph 201, they "*hope*," that the rents will *not come down*! But, what do the Committee mean by "*too great a difference*?" Any difference is "*too great*" that can drive people to go and live and spend their money in

France; where there are, at this time they say, more than a *hundred thousand* English living on incomes derived from English labour; and yet the Committee tell us, O, good God! that money is *higher in value* here than it is there! And they "*hope*" that it will be of *lower value* here; that rents will keep up here; that prices will get up too; and, at the same time, O, heavens! they talk of the care that ought to be taken to prevent people from being driven abroad to spend their money!

228. Well! talk of *inconsistency*, indeed! Here is blowing hot and cold with the same mouth over the same mess. Here is all that is inconsistent, self-contradictory, wild and childish: here is all manner of emptiness of mind conveyed in the most ridiculous pomposity of language. Such a Committee was, surely, never before heard of in this world; and, as Six-Acts do not, I believe, reach to our thoughts, I will leave the reader to form his own opinion of this select and celebrated body, not liking to put into words my thoughts upon so ticklish a subject.

229. In my next, which will be the last but one (for I must notice *Mr. Webb Hall's* remarks on the Report), I shall have to explain the nature of the *grand remedy*, which the Committee have in store for the landlords' distress.

WM. COBBETT.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS,

ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(*Political Register*, November, 1821.)

LETTER VIII.

LANDLORDS;

Uphursborne, Hants, Nov. 5, 1821.

230. You will please to bear in mind, that, in the last Letter, we had the 12th set of propositions before us, and that we showed very clearly, *how* the Committee had *deceived themselves* into an opinion, that rents and prices would not come down to, and remain at, the standard of 1790. But, we did not, in that Letter (for fear of tiring ourselves) come to the passage in which the Committee conclude their statement upon the subject. They do this in the following words: "Whatever may be the ultimate operation of the restoration of the currency upon the nominal rental of the kingdom, your Committee *incline to believe*; that it will fall far short of *some of the exaggerated predictions* to which the present alarms have given rise; and they *see no reason to apprehend* that the diminution can ultimately exceed *that proportion of the increase* which, during the war, grew out of the depreciated value of the currency."

231. Now, what does this mean? Why, that the Committee do *not know* how low Peel's Bill will bring prices and rents; but that they *incline to believe*, that it will not bring them *so low* as *some persons* (that is William Cobbett) have predicted; and that they see no reason to *fear* that the fall of prices and rents can ever *exceed that portion of the increase* of prices and rents, which, during the war, grew out of the fall in the value of money.

232. Well! and what then? We have seen before that the increase of prices and of rents arose *wholly* out of the fall in the value of money; and, what have I predicted *more*, than that the fall will be equal to the increase, and that things will, of course, come to the mark of 1790? The Committee speak, however, in very faltering accents here. They only "*incline to believe*;" which is not very much unlike a Yankee's saying, "that he *expects* he shall *guess*." What would a Methodist parson, or indeed, any parson, or any priest, say to his flock, who should be only "*inclined to believe*" in the truth of the Gospel, and who could only "*see no reason to fear*" damnation? This is, in fact, very feebly expressing an opinion; but, it is as strongly to do it as the nature of the case warranted.

233. However, if, for argument's sake, we were to allow, that prices and rents will not come down *quite* to the mark of 1790, what *comfort* is there here for the landlords? They have now to face a Debt that requires *forty millions* a year instead of the *nine millions* of 1790, when, too, observe, there was a real diminution of the Debt going on. This is the grand delusion; namely, that things will come to *about the same state altogether, that they were in before the late wars against freedom and for the Bourbons and the priests, were begun by Pitt and his associates*. Now, if this were to be, all would still be well with the landlords. But, this cannot be; for, before the wars, the whole amount of the year's taxes was only *sixteen millions*; whereas there is now required annually much more than *fifty millions*; and, when money come (for it is *not yet come*) to the value of the money of 1790, is it not evident that the landlords must suffer by this state of things? The additional *thirty-four millions* must come, in great part, out of the pockets of the landlords. The wages of labour cannot come down to the standard of 1790, because these wages have to bear their proportion of the taxes laid on since 1790; and, if wages do come nominally down to the standard of 1790, pray mark, that they cannot *really* come down to that point; for, a part of the wages must come out of the *poor-rates*! And, a large part of the poor-rates must, in fact, be paid by the landlord, seeing that, in the first instance, they are invariably just so much *deducted from rent*. Suppose land *tithe free*: is it not *higher in rent*? And, suppose a farm *poor-rate free*, is not the rent higher in proportion? It is true, that, in the *end*, rates and tithes fall upon the *consumer*; but farmers and landlords are consumers as well as others; and, at any rate, the *rent* is lowered in proportion to the amount of the poor-rates.

234. There is, as to the injury now to be sustained, a great deal of difference between *landlord* and *tenant*. The tenant gets rid of his lease *in time*; but, the landlord cannot get rid of that which binds him. If a tenant be *in debt*, or if he be *level with the world*, and have a lease three or four years old, and that lease have some years to run and he be held to it, he must be totally ruined. If a landlord have his estate encumbered by mortgage, rent-charge, annuity, bond, or otherwise, and to any considerable extent, he must be ruined; that is to say, if he looks upon *loss* of estate as *constituting ruin*. If his estate be wholly unencumbered by private engagements, still he must lose it in time, or, he must live in a way so low and degraded as to make it a question with all around him, whether he be, or be not, a gentleman; for, observe, he cannot get rid of the *public encumbrance*; that is to say, the *interest of the Debt*. He cannot, like the farmer, *take a new lease*! He cannot now *come in afresh* with the fundlord!

235. I beg you, my dear lords of the soil, to *keep this in your eye!* In the eye of those enlightened minds, that have approved of Power-of-Imprisonment Bills and of Six-Acts! And here let me caution you against an error, that the general stupidity of the farmers is well calculated to lead you into. They *hang on*. They do give rents, and pretty high rents, in many cases, even yet. They are *reluctant to quit*; and they are men who know their interest well, in most cases, and, as Mr. PAINE truly said of the Quakers, "pursue it with the steadiness of time and the certainty of death." But remember *what it is to quit a farm*; remember what it is to *sell off stock*; remember what it is for a farmer and his family to be *without occupation*. And, above all things, remember, that the main body of farmers, though so keen as to their own particular interests, know really nothing of *the causes* that are at work to ruin them. How should they? The far greater part of them have been bred up amidst paper-money and high prices. Scarcely a man of them knows, that gold coin was once the money of England. They have no knowledge of the effect of Peel's Bill. They think that *war* gave high prices and *prosperity*; and, if they were to read the Report, they would not discover their error, though the Committee tell us, that the *American war* did *not produce high prices*, and produced the *opposite of prosperity*. They do not, in short, *know anything at all of the causes* of the present low prices. And, is it; then, any wonder, that they should hope, that the present prices will not be stationary; and that they should take, or keep, farms upon a quite inadequate reduction of rent? They have nothing to assist their judgment. They, in general, *read nothing but newspapers*, and all these, instead of enlightening them as to these causes, serve only to keep them in the dark.

236. When, therefore, we consider these circumstances, is it any wonder, that the farmers *hang on*; that they take or keep farms in the hope that *things will come about*? Peel's Bill says, that "*things shall not come about*;" but the main body of the farmers do not understand the language of this Bill, any more, nor half as much, as they understand the language of rooks and magpies. In short, this is their state; those who are renters and are poor will be speedily reduced to common labourers; those who have anything beforehand will *lose it*; and this loss going into the landlord's pocket, he will not feel his *real pinch*, till the main body of the farmers be reduced to something very little short of what is properly called *poverty*.

237. But, this pinch *will come*, mind, and then the landlord *sinks too*, or loses his estate. It is not to be supposed, that the fundlords will come "with force and arms," as the law calls it, and put men out of their estates. If the estate be heavily *encumbered*, it goes at once, or very shortly. If not, the thing will work in this way. Here is Sir BOOBY DE NINCOMPOOF with a clear estate of 3000*l.* a year, and with a couple of sons and a couple of daughters. His three thousand falls to two, and, by-and-by, to one. He will have his *bread* and *meat* at prices of three for one. But, Sir Booby and "my Lady" want something besides bread and meat. They want *servants* (a great article!) and their wages will not come down with bread and meat. They want "*wines*;" and they want numerous things, *more than one-half* of the cost of which is *tax*; and taxes do not fall with rents. They want *horses* and *coaches* and *dogs* and *windows* and a *house*. Here the tax remains the *same*, though the rent is come down one-third. Sir Booby must come down

very low indeed, in his way of living, or he must *mortgage*. But, suppose him to come down so low as to live *within the thousand!* That is bad enough. But, what is he to do when his daughters are *marriageable*? Will young fundlords take them off his hands without a penny? Fundlords are not very apt to fall in love with *faces*. And, the *sons*, too! No *places*, mind, in times of "*retrenchment!*" No war; no posts; no commissaryships even to satisfy the borough-voters! Well, there the family *lives along*, till the sons are old bachelors and the daughters old maids. Sir Booby dies! The estate is divided; that is to say, *sold* to some fundlord; and, away goes the family of the DE NINCOMPOOP, who "came in with the Conqueror," and whose *arms and crests* stare you in the face outside and inside of the church, on the portal of the almshouse and on the sign of the neighbouring inn!

238. This is the march of things. This is that profound statesman, Castlereagh's "*general working of events.*" And, thus, quietly and silently, will a *revolution* be accomplished, as complete, as *radical*, as ever revolution was in this world. Nothing can prevent this but the *speedily taking off of about thirty millions of taxes*; and that cannot be accomplished without a *reduction of the interest of the Debt*; and that cannot be accomplished *without a reform of the Parliament!*

239. Now, *what do I wish for?* The latter: and then the family of DE NINCOMPOOP may remain, and will be harmless. But, if we have not Reform *first*, let us have *no reduction of interest*. Let the *revolution come*, say I; for it will be, not only a thing just in itself; but a great blessing to the people. These silly, haughty, insolent "*comers-in with the Conqueror*" will be pulled down. We shall see them, first in a state of *degradation*, and then we shall see them dispersed, scattered, annihilated as persons of authority. The new *proprietors* cannot arrive at their pitch of insolence and cruelty for ages; and Englishmen will, for a century, perhaps, once more know what it is to exist without Power-of-Imprisonment Bills, Six-Acts, and Sidmouth's Circulars.

240. If, indeed, SIR BOOBY has any share in a *borough*, that may save his family. The *sons* may, in that case, come in for some of the "*cheese-parings and candle-ends,*" that "*retrenchment and economy will leave.*" As the feeders on cheese-parings diminish in number, they will become select as to quality; and, we shall soon find, that whatever there is left of "*good things*" will be bestowed on those only who have a something or other to do with that famous affair which the grannies call "*the envy of surrounding nations;*" that is to say, they will be bestowed on those who have something to *give in return*. The tutors of the Normans, the offspring of happy ladies' maids, and those of nurses, confidential footmen, or of butlers who are the creditors of their masters, must take their chance in the world; and the good things must be kept for those who have something to give in return for them. Those of the Normans who have these good things to give in return may hold their ground; for they will have what "*retrenchment*" shall leave. But, if, by any chance, they *let go* these things. If they give up, for value received, these precious things to the fundlords (as *some of them have*), away they go for ever. Taking a *trip to the Continent* will not save them long; and, besides, *who knows them there?* Who will crawl before them there? While the grass is growing up between the steps of the door-way of Nincompoop Hall; while the jackdaws are breeding in the roof thereof; while the De Nincompoops are living "*for their*"

health" in some stinkhole of France, it is clear enough, that the *hares* and other wild animals, and a great many other good things, will fall to the share of the people in the neighbourhood of Nincompoop Hall. They are, in fact, for the time, as effectually delivered from their petty tyrant, as if he were *transported* by due course of law. His going away throws *additional burden upon those landlords that remain*, and this helps to bring them down, and to make them "*travel*" too; so that the thing, "*the general working of events,*" will, even in this way, produce great relief, ease, comfort and quiet, to the main body of the people.

241. So much, then, for the assertion of the Committee, that prices will not fall *so low*, and that rents will not come down *so much* as some people predict. Then, as to the assertion, that "*agriculture will not decline,*" who denies it? But, what is meant by *agriculture declining*? Agriculture does not *decline* when it gives a good living with moderate labour to *all* that are engaged in it. The English fields and meadows are gardens compared with those of America; but, where the English labourer gets an ounce of meat, the American labourer gets half a pound. And, in any rational view of things, agriculture flourishes more there than here.

242. But, I imagine, that our Committee have in view nothing but the gain of the landlord and that of the Government. And, as to this, agriculture has declined, does decline, and will decline. The Government, indeed, receives more than it did, in *reality*, for the taxes have *more than doubled* by the rise in the value of money; but then, the *gain* of this goes to the fundlord, the soldier, the sailor, the judge, the placeman, the pensioner, the grantee, and to all who receive money out of the taxes. What has been called the *flourishing* of agriculture has arisen, as I have over and over again proved, from the robbery committed on the labourer by the means of paper-money. That *flourishing* has, in great part, ceased; and, if Peel's Bill go on, it must wholly cease; and the prices must, as was shown in Letter VII., come down lower and lower, till they be on a level, upon an average of years, with those of France. So that, thank God, we shall see no more "*flourishing*;" and, if we do not, we shall see no more Six-Acts, which, together with all the other terrible measures of the last thirty years, are no more than the natural effects or concomitants of "*flourishing.*"

243. It is truly curious to observe the "*working of events,*" and I am here enticed a little out of my way to observe on it. How did Pitt and his understrappers exult, from 1790 to 1800, at the pillaging of France by the seigneurs and priests! How did they brag of the barrels of gold and silver which were shipped from that country to England! How *rich* did we become at the expense of France! What malignant, what base, what cowardly joy was expressed upon this subject! Very well, then, that which we then gained, the half-broken-up landlords and the half-pay people created by the war against France, are now *carrying back* to that same France, to avoid the high prices and taxes growing out of that war! Nay, the placemen and pensioners and grantees, also created by the war, are *carrying back* too, and repaying France with double interest! So that, every day of our lives, we are enfeebling ourselves and strengthening our rival, who, unless human nature is a liar, can never forgive us for the injuries and insults of 1814 and 1815. And, I beg the reader to bear in mind, that *America* has a *fleet*, which she had not in 1800! She has now 74-gun ships. As a maritime state

she must desire to put us down a step or two. France grows in strength hourly. The longer the peace, the more are we unfit for war. Nothing, in short, can prevent the humiliation and utter degradation of England, but her *riding herself of her debt*. This it is that does *all* the mischief. This sends forth the bands of taxgatherers; this creates the necessity of a standing army in time of peace; this drives the De Nincompoops and whole swarms of officers and placemen and pensioners to carry the fruit of English labour to France; this drives another and better class of persons to carry the fruit of that labour to America; this makes a discontented and miserable people; and, it does all those things, which every good man and sensible man must lament to behold.

244. The Committee tell us, that our *prosperity in war* has added to the *capital to feed our agriculture with!* Alas! for the heads in which such an idea could have been conceived! But, let us quote the Committee once more. "Under such a system there can be no apprehension that either will permanently retrograde (*except in so far as rents may be nominally affected by the resumption of cash payments*) or even be for any time stationary,—so long as our institutions continue to afford, to capital and industry, that superior degree of security and protection which they have hitherto found in this country,—so long as *public credit and good faith* keep pace with that security and protection, and as we avoid any course which, in a time of peace, and possibly of improving confidence in the stability of the institutions of other countries, might *drive capital to seek a more profitable employment in foreign states.*"

245. Now, in the first place, the words within the parenthesis give the lords of the soil but poor comfort. But, the main thing to look at here, is, the notion of the Committee, that our not keeping *good faith*; that is to say, the landlords and others *not* paying the fundlords *three for one*, will "drive capital [read *money*, read *fruit of labour*] out of the country to seek a *more profitable employment in foreign states.*" Why, pretty, pretty gentlemen, this is just what the Debt does! This is just what your "*public credit and good faith*" are doing! What drives Sir Booby and "my lady;" what drives Parson Pinchum and his whole tribe; what drives these to France with their "*capital*;" that is to say, with the fruit of the labour of the parish; what drives them to carry this to France! Why, they find a "*more profitable employment*" of it there than in England. It hides them from richer rivals; and it gives them more food, more clothing and more waiting upon for their money. And why does it give them more? Because *prices are lower* in France than in England. And why are they lower in France than in England? Because money is *higher in value* in France. And why is money higher in value in France? Because there are no ragmen there, and no paper-money. And, why do we not, then, get rid of the paper, and make our money as valuable and our prices as low as the money and prices in France? Because, if we do, the whole of the rental of the kingdom will fall down to less than twenty millions, and to collect enough to pay the bare interest of the Debt will be impossible, while not a penny will be left to pay soldier, judge, or police-officer! So that it is *the Debt*, and the army which the Debt has engendered, and which it now requires to cause it to be paid; it is the Debt; it is "*public credit and good faith*" that drive away the fruit of the labour of the people; and, what absurd-

dity, then, to suppose, that they are to be the only means of keeping that fruit to emigrate ourselves !

246. The concluding part of the string of propositions, stated under No. XII., and at the beginning of Letter VII., and in Letter I., paragraph 15, is, *that the landlords will be as well off as before the late wars* against the people of France and those of America. I have before touched upon this, but, let me again here remind the landlords, that they have now a large share of thirty-four millions a year to pay *on account of debt and army*, which they had *not to pay before the late wars*; and that, as I have clearly shown, whatever permanent nominal value the lands may have acquired during the war, they must now lose; because the *poor-rates must remain permanently augmented*, unless wages keep much *above the mark of 1790*.

247. How, then, is the landlord to be placed in the situation in which he was in 1790? If prices come down and rents come down to the standard of 1790, the landlord, like Sir Booby Nincompoop, must dwindle, even if his estate be wholly clear, and for the reasons before clearly stated. If prices do not come down quite so low; nay, if they stand where they *are now*, wheat *on an average*, at about 5s. a bushel (for a great deal of it is wholly unfit to make flour), and wether sheep at about 2s. 8d. a stone of eight pounds, and fat hogs at about 7s. 6d. a score; if the prices were to continue *even thus*, the rents must fall down to the standard of 1790. *Not just immediately*, for the reasons that I have before given in this letter; but, for those same reasons, down the rents must come in a year or two or three; for, the farmers' heads will grow clear in just the degree that their purses grow empty. So that there is no hope for *the landlord*, except in the taking off, *somehow or other*, of about thirty millions of the taxes; and, as this cannot be done without a "*breach of public faith*;" and, as he is *so honest* and "*honourable*" a gentleman, he will, of course, yield, after the manner of SIR BOOBY, his estate, his armorial bearings, his manor and his hounds to the Jews and the De Snips.

248. The next letter will close the series, and will be a commentary on the REMEDY which the Committee hold out to the landlord for his DISTRESS, which I shall show to be no remedy at all, but the grossest delusion that ever weak mind practised upon itself first, and then upon other weak minds.

WM. COBBETT.

P.S. There is, I see, a Mr. THOMAS ATTWOOD, a "*Brummagem*" banker, figuring away in the "*Brummagem*" newspapers, about the *effects of Peel's Bill*. This is a brother of the ATTWOOD, on whose *single speech*, in the "*collective wisdom*," I commented in May last. These gentlemen are sporting upon my manor, which I hereby desire them not to do any more without leave; and, I beg them to take this as a regular and legal notice, which, if they disregard, I shall, agreeably to the statute, proceed against them as "*malicious trespassers*." When did they, I pray, obtain a right to inveigh against *the paper system*? I have had the exclusive enjoyment of this right for now nearly twenty years, during a great part of which time they have been *paper-money makers*. What right have they to pretend, that they have *discovered* the effects of Peel's Bill, when it is notorious that I pointed out the effects of the Bill, a year before the dear good little Bill was born. They, indeed, wish to

stop the Bill, and to get the paper-mill to work again ; but, these "loyal" Brummagemites shall not carry this point ; if they do they shall be dragged to the feast of the gridiron ! Another Brummagem gentleman wants *little shillings* ; but, he shall not have them. No : we will have none of your "Brums," as the bad half-pence used to be called when I was a boy. None of your "Brums," gentlemen : let us have the Bill, the immortal Bill ; let us see it go into *full effect*, without a *reduction of the interest of the Debt* (for that is the condition, mind !) and then I will surrender myself to be broiled alive. We have but a little better than a *year and a half to wait* ; nay, only eighteen months from the 1st of November, which is now past. I once more beg, civilly desire, these Messieurs **ATTWOODS** to desist ; to cease their unneighbourly, and, I might call them, *pouching* practices. If they ask leave, they shall have it ; but, if they persist in their present course, I will visit them with that species of punishment which the laws of literature award to *impudent carcombal plagiarists*.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS,

ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(Political Register, November, 1821.)

LETTER IX.

Gloucester, November 8, 1821.

LANDLORDS,

249. We now come to the Committee's *grand remedy* for your distress. We now come to the "*landlords' last hope* ;" and, therefore, let us deal fairly by it. Let us give it our best attention ; let us endeavour to understand it in the first place ; and let us endeavour to ascertain whether there be here any possible remedy or not.

250. Let us take the whole passage from the Report, paragraph 86 and 87.

"That restoration must also be accompanied with embarrassment to the landowner, in proportion as his estate is encumbered with mortgages or other fixed payments, assigned upon it during the period when land and rents were raised to an artificial value, in reference to the impaired value of the money in which those encumbrances were contracted.—From the cessation of public loans, the probability of large accumulations of capital, and the constant operation of such a sinking fund, as in the present state of our finances, may, henceforward during the continuance of peace, be regularly appropriated to the reduction of the public debt, your Committee trust that the rate of interest of money, may, in a short time, be so far reduced below the legal *maximum*, as to make those encumbrances a lighter burden upon the landed interests of the kingdom. It is an alleviation which former intervals of peace have produced, at periods in many respects less favourable to its attainment ; and if, in the present instance, the want of that alleviation is become more urgent, your Committee venture to hope, that from the greater accumulation of capital in the country, co-operating with the effects of

a positive and steady reduction of the public debt, this salutary result will also be more speedily brought about. They look forward to this mode of easing the encumbrances of the landlord with the more anxiety, as, amidst all the injury and injustice which an unsettled currency,—an evil they trust never again to be incurred,—has in succession cast upon the different ranks of society, the share of that evil which has now fallen upon the landed interest, is the *only one* which, without inflicting greater injury and greater injustice, admits (now that we are so far advanced in the system of a restored currency) of *no other relief*. The difficulties, great as they unfortunately are, in which it has involved the farming, the manufacturing and trading interests of the country, must diminish in proportion as contracts, prices, and labour, adjust themselves to the present value of money. That this change is now in progress, and has already taken place to a considerable degree, is in evidence before your Committee. They are satisfied that it will continue until that balance is restored, which will afford to labour its due remuneration, and to capital its fair return."

251. Here is another of those blocks of words (resembling a "nest of pill-boxes") of which I gave a specimen in Letter VII. Now, I ask the reader, be he who or what he may, whether, even after a third reading, and that, too, before breakfast, he really does comprehend the *meaning* of all this? The *use* of words, is, to communicate our thoughts to others; but, if they be employed in a manner not to effect that purpose, we may as well refrain from speaking and writing. To *twist together* great parcels of words in this manner is no mark of *talent*, but the contrary. And, really, when we look well at this Report, and consider it, as we must, as a specimen of the *greatest ability* of the Government, are we to wonder that a nation, which has so long been under the management of that Government, should be entangled in a combination of conflicting difficulties from which even the clearest head can discover no possible means of escape?

252. There are no less than *three* grammatical errors in this passage of the Report, rather than have suffered any one of which to go from under my hand, in a writing like this Report, I would have hanged myself. What confusion is here with "*progress*" and "*change*," and "*a change continuing!*" However, not to waste time upon the manner, let us come to the matter: let us, for the present, at any rate, leave the *words*, and come to the *thoughts*.

253. And here I must, to do justice by my readers, and to show my own superiority, as I have a *right to do*, over the writer of this Report, proceed as I did in Letter VII.; that is to say, to reduce this passage to *distinct propositions*; to open the nest of pill-boxes; to place the boxes before the reader one by one; then inquire into the nature and worth of each; and, lastly, to see what the whole amount to.

254. The passage that I have quoted means as follows: 1. That Peel's Bill (by raising the value of money) must pinch the landlord whose estate is *mortgaged* (or otherwise encumbered): 2. That the masses of money, now gained by the fundlords, will (the Committee *trust*) be lent to landlords at a *reduced interest*, so that the mortgager may get rid of the *five* per cent. interest, and have a lower interest to pay: 3. That the Committee venture to *hope*, that the *accumulation of capital in the country*, co-operating with the reduction of the Debt by the sinking fund, will bring about this lowering of the interest of money more speedily than at former periods: 4. That the Committee look forward with the *more anxiety* to this lowering of the interest of money generally, as it is the *only means* which they can discover, without lowering the interest of the Debt, of *giving relief to the landlord*.

255. There are two propositions remaining ; but those will find a fitter place by-and-by. We will first take these *four*, and try to ascertain what they are worth.

256. *First*, that Peël's Bill must pinch the landlord whose estate is *mortgaged* is clear enough ; and, if mortgaged to any thing approaching *half* its value of 1813, must *take it wholly away*, as the proceedings in the Court of Chancery now must prove to every person of common sense. The mortgagees are at work, taking away the estates as fast as the forms of the law will allow them ; and nobody can blame them for so doing. This is the way in which the insolent Normans are to be brought down and made to *feel*, in their turn, the evils of a system, which has hitherto oppressed only the labouring classes. And, pray, "*Mounseers*," when the stock-jobber comes and bids you *walk out*, and, as you cast "one longing, lingering look behind," do recollect, that this Debt was a debt of *your own contracting* ; that the Radicals wanted you *not to contract it* ; that they warned you of the consequences ; that I, a Radical to the back-bone, have been *twenty years*, come January, warning you of these consequences ; and, that you contracted the Debt for the *sole purpose* of preventing a Reform in the *People's House of Parliament* : pray remember all this, "*Mounseers*," when the Jews come to oust you from your mansions, and to pull down and laugh at those *arms* through which you trace yourselves back to "*the Conquest*."

257. *Second*. But, you are, the Committee say they "*trust*," not to be ousted ! Come, then, cheer up, "*Mounseers* !" Your estates are, though actually *mortgaged*, to be saved by a fall in the *interest of money*. That is to say, the *accumulation of gains* in the hands of the fundlords, will induce them to lend you money at a lower interest than five per cent. ; so that, if for instance, you have a thousand pound interest to pay annually now, you will if money come down to four per cent., have only eight hundred pounds to pay ; and if money fall to three per cent., you will have only six hundred pounds to pay. Now, this is the most curious way of getting *relief* that ever was heard of. In the first place, it is remarkable enough, that the Committee should *wish* for a lowering of the interest of money, seeing that, whenever and wherever it take place, it is a sure and certain sign that all persons engaged in *productive labour*, and all persons *owning the materials* (of which land is one) of that productive labour, are in a state of *depression* and *decline*. Suppose I am a tradesman and am *gaining greatly* by my trade. I wish to extend it. I borrow, and can afford to give a *high interest* ; but, if my trade be not profitable, I do not wish to extend it. I do not borrow. Less money is wanted on loan ; and the money that is lent must bring a *lower interest*. It is, therefore, queer enough, that a Committee of a "*collective wisdom*" should *wish* for a lowering of the interest of money. But, the Government is *sick* ; it is in *ill health* ; odd as it may seem, the "*restoring of our currency to a healthy state*," as the slang was in 1819, has made the Government *unhealthy* ; and we all know how capricious the appetite is when the party is out of health, a remarkable instance of which is daily witnessed in South Carolina, where consumptive young women *chew* by stealth a sort of *clay* or *marl*, and, indeed, actually eat it !

258. But, it is the *masses of money collected by the fundlords* that is to *produce* this lowering of interest. Now, *whence* are these masses to come ? Why, out of the *taxes* to be sure. And, if they come out of the taxes, must not you *lose* in exactly the same proportion that the fundlords *gain*

and amass? Must not your loss *precede* the lowering of the interest o money? And must not your estates *sink in value* in proportion to the lowering of interest from this cause? Must you not *lose* in your *principal* in proportion to your gain by the lowering of the interest of the money which is first *to go from you to the man who lends it*? Good God! is it, can it be, necessary to say any more upon such a subject to men whose ancestors came from *Normandy*, proverbial for the keenness of its inhabitants! The plain state of the case is this: you owe the fundiord a thousand pounds of money of 1810. You are *now* to pay him, in his capacity of fundlord, one hundred and fifty pounds a year instead of fifty, as you actually now pay him *three for one*. Of the money thus gained from you and accumulated by him he will lend you, in his capacity of mortgagee, some money on your estate, and will take from you only four or three per cent.; and then, when he has got *some more from you* in his capacity of fundlord he will lend you some more in his capacity of mortgagee. He grows richer and richer, and you poorer and poorer; and yet, O Lord! this is the *only means* that the Committee has to relieve you! Come, come, "*Mounseers*," you will act wisely to let us have our rights; for nothing but a *Reformed House of Commons can save you!*

259. *Third*. But the Committee say, "That they venture to hope," (how *modest!* how *bashful!*) "that the *accumulation of capital in the country*, co-operating with the reduction of the Debt by the *sinking fund*," will accelerate this happy reduction of the interest of money to be lent on mortgage, and thus gratify more speedily this Carolina girl-like appetite. How the capital will accumulate we have just seen; that is to say, that it will be great parcels of money carried up and given to the fundlords in taxes *raised in part upon you*. But the sinking fund is to *lessen these taxes*. It is to *reduce the Debt*, and, of course, *the interest of the Debt*; and thus, it is to cause you to *pay less taxes!* Now, pray, if you have brains in skull; if your heads be anything better than pumpkins and calabashes: if you be not the most perverse as well as the most stupid brutes that ever dishonoured the human form, listen to me, and I will make the foolishness of this as plain to your understandings as the daylight is to your eyes.

260. What is the sinking fund? What is it? In *Paper against Gold*, I, twelve years ago, traced it from its seed-root up along its trunk, then along its limbs, its branches and into its very leaves. I *proved* the utter impossibility, not only of its *reducing* the Debt, but of its having any other tendency than that of *augmenting the Debt*. I proved it to be a flagrant *humbug*, the child of the most profound knavery or the most degrading imbecility. Since that time, this favourite child of the joint efforts of Pitt and Fox, has, in both Houses of Parliament, been called "*a humbug*" a hundred times over. And, yet, we now hear this Committee putting it forward as a thing to *assist in affording the landlords relief!* This I think really does surpass anything we have hitherto heard of, even of this Committee. To tell us anything that could be taken in by *any* body; that *any* creature could swallow; to do this might be excused: but to trump up this *sinking fund*, which has almost become the subject of ballads and epigrams, is going farther than ever I could have expected.

261. But, despised, laughed at, flouted as this thing is, as a thing to *reduce the Debt*, it is, as a thing to help to empty the landlords' pockets and rid them of their estates, by no means a thing to be *laughed at*. *What*, then (coming back to my question); what is this sinking fund?

Why, my lords of the soil, it is composed of *taxes*. Aye, of *taxes*. It is not made up of money which the *Bourbons* or the *Holy Alliance* send here. It is not found on the King's highway. It does not drop down from the clouds. It is a parcel of money, raised annually to the amount, *they say*, of *five millions a year*. Now, mind, I do not say, that it is *five millions*; for, trust in *no account*, no *paper*, no *statement* made by any one belonging to that body of men, who, in 1797, *managed the affair of the Bank Stoppage*. I never give credit to anything that any of them say: others may, for aught I care: I do not.

262. However, on the *supposition*, that what they say is *true*; on the supposition that they do collect five millions a year for a *sinking fund*, then five millions is so much money *raised from the nation in taxes*. And, does it not appear very odd, that any body, and especially a *select Committee*, and, a *Committee too*, of a "collective wisdom," should think that the landlords could get *relief* by means of their *paying taxes*! Did ever even tax-gatherer tell poor plucked pigeon of tax-payer, that the payment was for his *relief*! That it was to tend to *make his fortune*! No; he used to tell him, that it was to preserve him from the *French*, and, at one time, that it was to preserve him from the *devil*, seeing that the devil was coming on with the French to *take away his religion*: and it is well known, that nothing was more common, than to hear the people called upon to *fight* for their King and their *God*! George Rose, who had been a *ship-purser*, called taxes a *salvage*, which the people paid; that is to say, a portion of the cargo given up in order to preserve the remainder, amongst which remainder George reckoned "*the blessed comforts of religion*." This was all well enough; but, never until now were *taxes* held out as the means of RELIEF to the party paying those taxes! If this language be proper, we have, all these ages past, been in great error as to poor-rates. We ought to call them a *sinking fund*; but, at any rate, we ought to look upon them as giving relief to those who *pay them*, and not to those who receive them.

263. These five millions of taxes are just so many pounds paid annually, or, rather, *given* annually to the *fundlords*, for *no value*, and even no *pretended value, received*. The thing is this: the fundlords have *stock*, as it is called. They receive, out of the taxes, interest on this stock; and, in order that they may at all times be *able to sell the principal*, five millions a year are raised in taxes to be laid out (a part of it weekly) in stock! Now, is not this sum of five millions just so much *added* annually to the amount of the interest paid to the fundlords? And do not these five millions come out of the *taxes*? And does not the *landlord* help to pay the five millions? And, O monstrous! these five millions are to help to *relieve* the *distressed* landlord!

264. The five millions are divided into 52 parts, and are laid out in the purchase of stock in weekly parcels. This gives a *higher value to the stock than it would otherwise have*. This *keeps the Funds up*; but in whatever degree it do that, is it not clear that it must pull land and labour down? Suppose I were to lend you a hundred pounds, on your farm, and you were to pay me an interest of five per cent.; but, *besides this*, suppose you were to be compelled to give *one pound every year* to some third party to be laid out in *buying up my mortgage*; would not my mortgage become thereby *more valuable*; would not you be *losing* the pound a year, and should not I be *gaining* it; and must I not go on very fast to *swallow up your estate*? Is not this as clear as day-light? Can you

be *relieved* by my taking the additional pound a year from you? And, yet, this is the very way that, as the Committee tell the landlords, these latter are to be *relieved* by the sinking fund!

265. Let us put the thing in another shape. Suppose these five millions of taxes were laid out every year upon *land*! Ah! you start back, do you, my lords of the funds! And you my, lords of the soil, lick your lips! Suppose these five millions of taxes were laid out yearly *upon land*? Would not land *rise in price directly*? To be sure it would; for, though the landlords would then, as they do now, pay a part of the five millions, others would help to pay, and the land would be the *gainer*. This would make the land worth five per cent., and would bring the Funds down to *twenty*, perhaps, instead of their being at *eighty*. This, indeed, would bring the landlord *relief*. A sinking fund of this sort would afford hope to him; but, the present sinking fund is an addition to his loss and to the fundlord's gain. It is accelerating the fall of the former and the domination of the latter.

266. And, why are the Ministers *so partial* to the fundlords? They are not partial to them. They do not care a straw about them. But, they know, they *feel*, as the lawyers and parsons know and feel in the case of the gold. They feel that if the fundlords fall, they *themselves fall* and the THING falls. They *smell* this, as pigs do the wind. But, let us be just. It is not the *Ministers*: it is the *seat-gentlemen*: it is this body that fear to shake the Funds; and a great part of these have the means of *indemnifying themselves* for their share of the taxes. These gentlemen see the danger *to them*, and especially to those precious things which give *fatness*; they see the great danger that would arise from a *shaking of the Funds*. The Funds now form an integral part of the system. Indeed they are the key-stone of it. It must fall if the Funds give way. Seats and funds are now mutually dependant. Liver and lights are not more closely connected. And *this* is the reason, and the only reason, why the land and the labour are taxed at this rate for the support of the Funds.

267. A very sufficient reason it is, I grant; but, then, let us not be *bamboozled*! Let us not be made to believe, that we, who have no share of the taxes, are to be *relieved* by our paying the fundlords five millions a year in *addition* to the *three for one* that we are paying them in the shape of interest! Let us not be fools enough to swallow this. Let us not, unless we have the strange ambition to pass for idiots, suck this down, as a turkey takes in its cramming.

268. Having disposed of this point; having made this matter plain to the eyes of every one who is not blind, let us proceed to the remaining points.

269. *Fourth*. "That the Committee look forward, with the *more anxiety*, to the lowering of the interest of money generally, as it is the *only means* which they can discover, *without a reduction of the interest of the Debt*, of affording *relief to the landlord*." Well, then, here we have the REMEDY!

270. The Committee do not say, in so many words, "without reducing the interest of the Debt;" but that they *mean* it by the words, "without inflicting *greater injury and greater injustice*," is evident enough; and then they, as we have seen before, conclude by an appeal to *public faith* and *national honour*. Now, we may dismiss this at once by referring to Letters V. and VI., where the origin and nature of the Debt are fully set

forth, and where the justice of reducing it is fully proved. This part, therefore, of the proposition just quoted we may pass over without further notice.

271. What we have now to fix our attention on, is, the assertion of the Committee, that the *lowering of the interest of money generally* is the *only means* that the Committee can find out of *relieving the landlord*. God help him, then! say I; for the poor soul, unless he be a *tax-eater* as well as a landlord, is in a fair way of exchanging his title-deeds for a place in the poor-book; and of exchanging his hunter for a stool to sit on to pick oakum. We have seen before, that the interest of money becomes *low* only in proportion that labour and materials of labour become of less value; and, that the lowering of the interest of money generally is a sure sign of a decline of means and of gains generally. But, here we have the monstrous proposition, that the landlord, who is to pay the fundlord at the rate of *five per cent.*, is to be *relieved* by the depression of things being such as to reduce *all other interest to three per cent.*!

272. Need one say another word upon such a subject? Need one to enter into any argument; need one use any illustration, in the way of controverting a proposition so monstrously absurd as this! If, indeed, ALL interest were reduced to *three per cent.*, there might, and would, be some relief. All interest on mortgages, and other private engagements, and *on the Debt*, the everlasting, all-devouring Debt, at the same time. But, to make the landlord pay the fundlord *five per cent.* interest, while every body else is getting only *three per cent.*, and to tell the landlord that he is to get *relief* in this way, and that this is the ONLY REMEDY for his *distress*, is, surely, something more outrageously insulting to the understanding than any thing that was ever before seriously addressed to any class or description of rational beings.

273. There remain two points to be noticed: *Fifth*. "That the diffculties of the country will grow less, as *contracts, prices, and labour* adjust themselves to the *present value of money.*" And, *Sixth*: "That this change is *in progress*, and that the Committee are satisfied, that the progress will continue, till labour shall *obtain its due remuneration* and capital its *fair return.*" And, I am *satisfied* of it too! The change is *in progress*; that is to say, things are working to this end: the breaking of the farmers and the loss of estate to the landlords. All will be *relieved at last*; but the *present race* of farmers, and also of landlords who are *not tax-eaters*, will go off with the paper-money. Another race will arise; and the change will be greatly beneficial to the country in the end. All these matters I have fully discussed in former Letters, and need not repeat the discussion here. I will only just add, that, while the Committee state, and, apparently with exultation, that contracts are *adjusting* themselves to the *present value of money*, they seem to overlook the GREAT CONTRACT; that with the fundlord! That is not to adjust itself. That is to remain, though it gives the fundlord *three times as much as he ought to receive*, even if his title were the best, instead of being the worst, that ever was heard of in the world. This *contract*, if contract it can be called, is to be "*rigidly adhered to,*" while all other contracts are to *adjust* themselves to the *present value of money*!

274. Well: but let it be adhered to, *for me*. I do not wish to see it altered, except the people have their rights at the same time. However, I will say more about this presently, when I have made my observations on the 13th and last assertion, or proposition of this ever famous and

renowned Committee of the Collective Wisdom. But, these observations I must, though with great reluctance, put off till next week, when, in the *tenth letter*, I shall close this long, and to my readers, I am afraid, wearisome examination.

WM. COBBETT.

COBBETT'S LETTERS TO LANDLORDS,
ON THE AGRICULTURAL REPORT AND EVIDENCE.

(*Political Register*, November, 1821.)

LETTER X.

Bollitree Castle, Herefordshire, 15th Nov. 1821.

LANDLORDS,

275. We now come to the last proposition of the Committee, which is, in meaning, as follows :

XIII. *That the ASCENDANCY of the landed interest, as EVINCED BY THE PRACTICE OF THE CONSTITUTION, is most beneficial to the country.* 55.

276. Why such an observation as this should have been brought, neck and heels, into such a paper as this Report, may very well be asked ; but, we shall see the *reason* presently ; and, when we have seen that, we will, with the Committee's leave, inquire into the *truth* of the proposition. Let us first, however, take the very words of the Committee. " Looking " to the possible contingencies of war, your Committee are not insens- " ble to the importance of securing the country from a state of depend- " ence upon other, and possibly hostile, countries, for the subsistence of " its population ;—looking to *the institutions of the country*, in their " several bearings and influence in the *practice of our Constitution*, they " are still more anxious to *preserve to the landed interest, the weight, " station and ascendancy, which it has enjoyed so long, and used so " beneficially.* Their first wish, therefore, is, that, whatever general " suggestions they may offer, should be scrupulously examined with a " due regard to these two considerations."

277. Do they indeed ! Do they look to the "*possible contingencies of war* ?" They *ought*, indeed ; but, *do* they ; *can* they ; and, in the same breath, propose to continue a debt of *eight hundred millions* ? Can they think of a war with France and America, and yet propose to keep a paper money afloat ? And can they hope to carry on war for *half an hour* without a paper-moner, just such as it was, or a great deal worse than it was, before ? If they *can* really think of any of these things

they must be what (with *Six-Acts* in my eye) I dare not trust my pen to describe.

278. However, we will not now criticise the Ministers as *warriors*: we will leave them to have another war-frolic as soon as they please; they are harmless enough *now* in that way: they are like a lately-mischievous but now miserable old boar, deprived of his spirit and his tusks knocked out; and a more dejected and deplorable creature it is hardly possible to find in existence. We will leave them as *warriors*, and come to their eulogium on "*the practice of the Constitution.*"

279. It is not very easy to discover what they mean by *institutions of the country* having *bearings* on the *practice of the Constitution*. This is a fine specimen of the *deep and dark*. Make a puddle *muddy*, says SWIFT, and it seems as deep as the sea. However, in plain English, this is the meaning of this passage: that, in whatever they propose, they would wish to keep in view, the *upholding of the great landowners*, in order that they may not lose the power which they now have of *putting members into the House of Commons*, which power has been so long enjoyed by them, and so *beneficially used*.

280. No man denies that the great landowners have long *enjoyed* this power: no man denies, that this is the *practice of the Constitution*: but many even openly deny, and a great majority of the people, of all ranks and degrees, *now* begin to deny the opinion, that this *practice* has been *beneficial* to the country at large, and that it finally will be *beneficial even to the great landowners themselves*, whose means of escape from the present perils are not as clear as the sun at noon-day; for, it would be strange indeed, if, during a general wreck of fortunes, theirs were wholly to escape even a sousing in the water.

281. The best, and indeed, the only way to judge of the goodness or badness of any practice is, to ascertain its effects, its consequences. Thus, in judging of the French Revolution, for instance, we are not to inquire what fooleries or violences were committed during its progress; but, we are to ask, *what has it produced in the end?* And, if we find, as we do find, that it has freed that fine and populous country, from a tyrannical noblesse, who played the despot in every village, who compelled the people to bake their bread at the ovens of these tyrants and to pay a tax on it, and who held them in a state of the most abject slavery; if we find that it has taken a third part of the real property of the country out of the hands of a set of lazy, luxurious monks, and distributed it amongst the industrious cultivators of the land; if we find, that it has swept away an enormous debt, and the most odious, vexatious and oppressive taxes that ever were known in the world, those of *one other country* only excepted; if we find, that it has produced a representation of the people that it is *not a mere sham*; if we find, that fair and open trial has taken place of those base and cruel private condemnations that used to take place; if we find, that the Revolution has made a happy people of the most wretched peasantry that ever disgraced the globe; if we find, that it has renovated the French nation, made it really prosperous; given solid means; enabled it to prepare, slowly and surely, to assert its rights, or, to take just vengeance on its base foes, by means of war; if we find, that the French Revolution has done all these things, we must declare it to be *a very good thing itself*.

282. SOLOMON tells us to look at the *end*; not at the beginning or the middle, of a course of action. Let us try the "*practice of our Consti-*"

tution" by this unerring test. But, why the *practice*? Why not talk of the Constitution *itself*? Can the *manner* be of more importance than the thing itself? Why resort to the use of this word *practice*? It would not do to say, that, "above all things we must take care *not to do any thing to let in Reform.*" It would not do to say that in so many words; and, hence, I imagine, this word *practice* was resorted to. But, let us proceed to try this *practice* by the test of experience.

283. This *practice* has been going, full swing, for a *hundred and four years*; that is to say, ever since the Whig-parliament, which was chosen to sit for *three years*, passed an Act to lengthen its term to *seven years*, and to cause all future Parliaments to sit for the same length of time. There began this famous "*practice.*" And what has it produced in the end? Not in the *end*, indeed; for that is to come; but what has it produced *up to this time*? We have had many wars, many victories, more defeats, the *gain* of India and the loss of America. But, how do we *stand*? Externally the *practice* has created a new nation; a great maritime nation, with the best ships and best seamen in the world, ready to cope with us at any moment; and, it so is, that, if we were at war with France and America, an event naturally to be expected would be an *invasion of Ireland* from New England. In short, to preserve the West Indies, and to prevent, at the same time, an invasion of Ireland, in case of a war with these two powers, appears to me impossible; that is to say, unless the whole of our system be changed, and of course unless the famous *practice* be abandoned, before such war shall take place.

284. This is one thing that the *practice* has produced; for, most assuredly, if that *practice* had not been in vogue, the United States would still have been colonies of England, instead of being a nation able to beat her single-handed; able to defeat and capture two of her fleets with an inferior force. I beg the reader not to think that this was owing to some *accident*. It was owing to natural causes; owing to superior skill in the making of the ships, in the managing of them, and to superior strength and activity in the seamen. The American officers are not selected through the influence of the "*practice*;" and the seamen share largely in the gains of war, and are therefore *selected* for their bodily powers and moral character united.

285. This, then, the creation, the raising up and establishing of this formidable maritime rival and enemy, is one of the deeds of the "*practice*;" and, whether this be one of its *beneficial* effects, I may safely leave the reader to judge. At the same time the *practice* has done and is doing, all it could and can do, to add to the maritime power of France. It is doing this in the most effectual of all possible ways: that is to say, by driving people from this country to spend their money in that country. This is neither more nor less than sending a part, and a considerable part, of the fruit of English labour to be carried to France, to assist to make her prosperous and to add to her strength; and, of course, to her means of injuring and humbling England.

286. Many things in addition the *practice* has done with regard to external matters, all having a tendency to make this country feeble in the scale of nations; but, we will pass these over, for the present. I confine myself to *France and America*; and I put it to any man of common understanding, whether he think, that we should now be able to meet those two nations in war, with a debt of eight hundred millions hanging about our necks? Freed from that, we might do great things; but, and let

this be well observed, this *debt* has been produced by "*the practice*;" is the creature of "*the practice*," and must *live*, or *die*, with it, one being the root and the other the trunk of this tree of *benefits*.

287. As to the *internal* state of the country, the internal effects of the *practice*, Ministers' speeches and kings' speeches, and hired newspapers, magazines and reviews, say that those effects are excellent. I say, that they are the worst that can possibly be. But, in order to avoid all *dispute*, we will take the state of the country as it is described to us in this very Report. And what is it? It is this: that the cultivators of the land (three-fourths of the people) are in a state of *distress*; that the land cannot now be cultivated *without loss*; that *all classes* of the community have, each in its turn, *smarted under the injury inflicted on it by the Bank stoppage*, and that the owners and occupiers of the land are now smarting under injury inflicted by this cause; that the state of the country is one of *great difficulty* and *distress*; that *abundant crops and fine harvests tend to augment this difficulty and this distress*!

288. Now, what do we want more than this? What do we want more, to show the nature, tendency and result of "*the practice of the Constitution*?" This is the state of things, which the Committee say exists; and we know well, that it has not been produced by any convulsion in nature; by any flood, hurricane, or tempest. We know, that God has dealt by us as he was wont to deal by our forefathers, in whose time it was, as it had been from the foundation of the world, looked upon as a *blessing* to have abundant crops and fine harvests. This state of things has, then, been produced by those amongst us who have the power of making the rest of us do what they pleased; by those amongst us who have had the power to put us to death if we disobeyed the laws that they made; by those, in short, who derive their power from "*the practice of the Constitution*."

289. And let us now see *how* they have gone to work, and how they have proceeded in producing this state of things. The people, or, at least, great numbers of them, wished, thirty years ago, to do away the *practice* of the Constitution, and to revert to the Constitution *itself*; and, at this time, they were encouraged in their endeavours to effect this by the people of France, who had just begun that revolution which has, in the end, produced their present ease and happiness. Those who were engaged in "*the practice*" made war upon the French people, and persuaded a great part of the people of England, that it was necessary to destroy the revolution in France in order to *preserve* the *property* and the *religion* of the people of England! This war required immense sums of money to carry it on. It was impossible, by the means of *taxation*, to raise money enough for this purpose. Those who derived their power from "*the practice*" had, therefore, recourse to *borrowing*, and they issued large quantities of paper-money, in order to make borrowing more easy. Having gone on in this way for about *five years*, the people began to suspect the solidity of the paper-money; and they, accordingly, ran, in great crowds, to the Bank, to get gold and silver for the paper that they held. The Bank had not gold and silver enough to pay them. In a fright, the Directors of the Bank went to the Minister, told him their state, and asked him, "*when he would think proper to INTERFERE*." The Privy Council issued an *Order* to the Bank not to pay any more gold or silver!

290. This is a memorable epoch in the history of the "*practice*" of

the Constitution. The *practice of the Constitution* produced an Act of Parliament, called an Act of *Indemnity*, to screen the Directors, the Ministers, the Privy Councillors, and all others concerned in this violation of the law. It next produced other Acts, in succession, to make the paper-money, down to one-pound notes, become the sole current money of the country; and without placing any check on the issuers as to the quantity that they issued. This caused a revolution in all prices; so that a thing that used to sell for five shillings now sold for fifteen shillings. Thus all contracts for time were virtually violated; servants were robbed of part of their wages; deductions were made from the wages of the labourer; the labouring classes became miserable; and the number of parish-paupers received a frightful addition.

291. In the meanwhile the *practice* pushed on the war, and carried on its borrowings, till, at last, it got a debt, the *annual interest* of which required more, in various shapes, than 40 millions. It did not, with all this, effect its grand purpose; for, though it hired more than a million of armed men to fight against the French, the French got rid of their swarms of petty despots; of the gormandizing monks; and of all their grievous oppressions. The *practice* defeated them in war; overwhelmed them with myriads of armed men brought together, by means of its paper-money, from all parts of the earth; but the French have, as we have seen, ended their strife in obtaining a representative government, and in being in a state of great and solid prosperity.

292. The persons engaged in carrying on "the *practice*" now found themselves at *peace*; and they had enacted, that, *when peace should come*, they would cause the Bank to pay its notes in gold and silver. This was not done; it is not done even yet, though the peace has been made more than *seven years*! However, in 1819, they enacted, that the Bank should be compelled to pay in gold and silver in 1823. This Act contained promises, that caused the quantity of paper-money to *grow less*. This caused prices to *begin to go back* on their way from 15s. to 5s. Prices are now on their march downwards, and have made considerable progress.

293. This has produced a virtual violation of all contracts the other way. A man, who, in 1813, bargained to pay 100*l.* in 1821, has 200*l.* to pay instead of 100*l.* But the great thing of all is, that the interest of the *Debt*, which had been contracted by the persons who carry on the *practice*, has now to be paid in gold and silver, and, of course, the persons receiving that interest, will now receive *three* for one, long before we come to actual legal payments in gold and silver!

294. Thus it is that *distress* and *difficulty* is coming (for they are *hardly felt yet*) upon this nation; thus it is, that England is becoming a poor, feeble, crippled nation, borne down by debt, and wholly unable, while that debt hangs on her, to attempt to go to war, or even to *talk* of war. And, as we have seen, she has been brought into this miserably degraded state by no convulsion of nature; by no visitation of God; but, merely by human means. We have all the chain of causes clear before our eyes. These causes are *Acts of Parliament*, which are all now to be seen in the statute-book, and all proceeding directly from the will and pleasure of those, who have derived from "the *practice of the Constitution*" their power of making those Acts.

295. Now, then, is not this statement of mine *true*? Can any part of it be *denied*? And if it be true, has this *practice of the Constitution*

been beneficial to the kingdom? Are the Committee correct in describing the tendency and effects of this practice? Will any man, at *this* day, and with the difficulty and distress in his eye, say that he sees any proof of the *benefits* of this practice? Will any man say, that he can discover any danger in this practice being *changed*?

296. Nor let it be pretended, that that which has now come upon us could have been anticipated by no human foresight. There are my twenty years' Registers to prove the contrary. But, if we were to choose to avoid adverting to particulars, is it not enough to have shown, that the ruin of a great body of as skilful, as industrious, as moral, as prudent men as ever existed upon the face of the earth; is it not enough to have shown, that the ruin, the heart-breaking, of a body of men like this, have been caused by, have directly proceeded from, Acts of Parliament; is it not enough to have shown this, in order to be justified in flatly denying the proposition of the Committee, and in asserting, that the present manner of choosing Members of Parliament is *not beneficial to the nation*?

297. Those who contend for the present mode of choosing this body of lawgivers have always this dilemma to get out of: either the Parliament *intended* to bring things to this pass, or they *did not*. If they *did intend* to spread ruin around amongst the farmers of this industrious land, what are we to say of their *hearts*; if they have done it *without intending to do it* (as they assuredly have) what are we to say of their *heads*? They themselves now confess, that they have got the nation into a state of difficulty and distress, for which they have no *remedy*; and, are we still to say, that their measures have been *beneficial to the nation*? Was such a conclusion ever before come to by rational beings? It is clear to all eyes, that a *great change, a radical change*, must take place; and yet, are we to say, that the *root of all* is to remain untouched? That the *cause* is still to remain, and that we are to hope to see the effects put an end to?

298. If we look a little more into particulars, what proof shall we discover of those beneficial effects which the Committee ascribe to the predominant influence of what they call the landed interest? Are we to look for it in the Act which quashed proceedings against the *non-resident clergy*, and which has caused those clergy to carry the produce of their livings to be spent at a distance from the spot whence it proceeded, and not unfrequently out of the kingdom? Shall we find it in the *sinking fund*, which was the joint work of the two parties, and which is now called a *humbug* in the Parliament itself? Shall we find it in the appropriation of millions upon millions of the taxes to *public works* for the express purpose of *preventing the people from emigrating*, and in the appropriation of other large sums to *cause the people to emigrate*? Shall we find it in the appropriating of these sums to this latter purpose, while the Committee tell us, at the same time, that the "*increase of our population*" is to be reckoned amongst the *means of our extricating ourselves from the present distress*? Shall we find it in the notorious fact, that, in 1816, the House ascribed the distress of the nation to an *insufficiency of mouths*; and, in 1817, to an *insufficiency of food*? Shall we find it in the opinion of the Prime Minister, seconded by that of this Committee, that a short crop or wet harvest would tend to the *relief of the grower of the corn*? Shall we find it in the *Resolution*, solemnly passed in 1811, that the paper-money had *not depreciated*, and

in the Act of 1819, which declared it *to be still depreciated*, even after it had been raised greatly in value since 1811? Are we to find it in the Act of 1819, which compels the nation to pay *three for one* for money which the House had taken on loan; which attempts that which never was attempted before in the world, namely, to force a degraded currency back to its sterling value, without any alteration in the *letter of contracts*? Shall we find it in the present obstinate perseverance in a scheme, which is manifestly as impracticable, as impossible to be carried into full execution as it would be to pluck the sun from the sky? Shall we find it in a parrot-like repetition of the words *national honour and good faith*, applied to a thing, which is in effect *a violation of all the laws of debtor and creditor, and of every contract for time*? Shall we find it in that series of measures, which has rendered "*necessary*" (as the advocates of them assert them to have been) laws to suspend the people's personal liberty, and to place the imprisonment of their bodies, for ten years out of the last thirty, at the will and pleasure of the Ministers of the day? Shall we, without, as we might do, swelling the list out to the length of a volume; shall we find it; shall we find the beneficial effects of this *influence*; shall we find an evidence of its utility; shall we find a proof of its goodness, in the ever-memorable fact, that the persons chosen by this influence have passed an Act to subject to *banishment for life* any man that may say any thing which shall have a TENDENCY to bring them into CONTEMPT?

299. Good God! And, with all these, and a thousand other things, before us, are we still to be told, that this *influence* has been beneficial to us? While, indeed, all wore the *outward face of prosperity*, though it was a *false face*; though it was a painted and plastered face; while our affairs wore that face, it might be endurable to be told of the good effects of the *influence*. It might, then, in answer to those who prayed to have the *Constitution* restored, be not so very impudent to say, "the *practice* of the *Constitution* is better; for, see, how it produces *prosperity*!" But, now, when it is acknowledged, even by the Committee themselves, that the nation is in a state of difficulty and distress, and when this Committee declare, that an arable farm cannot be cultivated without loss, and when they have *no remedy* to offer; to assert *now*, that this influence has been *beneficial to the nation*, does certainly require powers of front that rarely fall to the lot of human beings.

300. If, as I before was about to observe, it be contended, that *nobody could have done better*; that that which has happened might have happened in spite of all that human wisdom could have done, I, for my part, have my answer ready. I have to appeal to *forty volumes of Registers*, the work of *twenty years*. Numerous others have used their endeavours to prevent that which is now coming upon us. Let each speak for himself; let every one come forward and claim his due. I shall claim mine; and there are my forty volumes, or, at least, thirty-eight of them, to bear witness against this system of the *practice*. For the whole of these nineteen years have I been pointing out the dangers which must, in the end, result from this system of paper-money. I have been warning the Government of the consequences; showing it how those consequences might be avoided; doing, in short, every thing in my power to obtain the adoption of *timely remedy*, and to prevent those *shocks* which we are now experiencing, and that final *convulsion* which now appears to be inevitable.

301. My reward has been punishment of body, loss of the fruit of nineteen years' of unremitted labour, exile to avoid a dungeon, and calumny, public and private, from three hundred publications almost incessantly pouring forth upon me their polluted streams, while the *tongue* of still baser calumny has been busy in tens of thousands of channels. Every thing that craft and hypocrisy, at some times, and that bold and unblushing falsehood and villany, at other times, could invent and execute, wherewith to delude honest ignorance and to feed honest prejudice, has been in constant play against me, and against my zealous endeavours to prevent the calamities that are now staring the nation in the face. Falsehood, fraud, violence, treachery of every description; the dreadful enmity of irresistible power; the deadly envy of associates; the heavy blows of the strong; the viperous bite of the feeble: all, every thing hostile to human efforts have I had to bear up against. And the wonder with reasonable men, is, not that I have not succeeded in preventing those mischiefs that it was the object of my labours to prevent; but that I have not been, long and long ago, utterly destroyed both in body and in mind. The laws, which protect other men, have, in *effect*, been no protection to me. I have been as a stranger in my native land, the interest and honour of which I have always endeavoured to promote and uphold, and to turn my back on which, even in the days of my exile, I never did in one single instance by deed or word. I have been as an outlaw in the midst of society, without any offence legal or moral. Exemplary in every department of life; gentle, kind, indulgent and generous to every creature coming within the sphere of my power, I have been held forth and generally believed to be a monster of severity, injustice, and cruelty. That which is accounted foul and base and deserving of universal execration, when practised towards other men, has been reckoned fair and meritorious when practised towards me. Villains who would have been hunted out of society had the injury of another man been the object of their frauds and treasons, have been applauded, caressed, hugged and rewarded, because their villainies were thought to tend to my destruction.

302. As to the persons in authority, if every drop of ink from my pen had been to the nation what a burning coal is to silk and fine linen, they could not have taken greater pains to prevent the circulation of my writings; and, as is clear in the recollection of the country, one of the Ministers distinctly urged as an argument for passing the *power-of-imprisonment Bill*, the inability of the Law-officers of the Crown to find anything criminal in the "Cheap Publications." To clip the wings of these, it has been *enacted*, that they shall be sold at a *higher price!* And, that *I may not largely profit by them*, that they shall contain a *large quantity of paper!* By dint of talent, and of industry without a parallel, even these deeds of power have been rendered nugatory; and, at this very time, in spite of all that has been done, I have more readers, and more ardent friends, than at any former period; and it is impossible for any one but a *besotted aristocrat* not to perceive, that I have *now*, even amongst the middle class of society, a stronger party than either of the factions can pretend to, while *reason* and *events* are constantly at work to augment its numbers and to add to the weight of its character. After all these years, after this *whole age*, of detraction employed against me, there are a greater number of men to have *confidence* in me than in either of the factions, and who would rather stake their fortunes upon

measures suggested by me than on those suggested by those factions united. What, then, will be the case, when ruin shall have advanced further in its progress? When the losses, the sufferings, shall be multiplied a hundred fold, and when absolute despair shall have succeeded to the tantalizing uncertainty and racking anxiety that now prey on the minds not only of tradesmen and farmers, but also on those of the inferior and more numerous class of Landlords!

303. Will calumny still be at work with her hundreds of presses and her hundreds of thousands of tongues? Let her! Will stupid pride still say that destruction from other hands is preferable to salvation by mine? Let it! Will both factions, dog and cat as to every other matter, cling together like oysters in the vain attempt to *keep me down*? Let them! Be the consequences on their own heads. I shall have no part of the ruin to answer for, and shall not participate in it; and the satisfaction which I shall be fairly entitled to feel in the hour of confusion and dismay will be no more than the just and appropriate vengeance for indignant talent to take on conceited, insolent and malignant imbecility.

304. Thus I close my commentaries on the Report of the Agricultural Committee, which commentaries would, if I had been in Parliament, have been made there, on the very next day after the delivery of the Report, and would, of course, have been read by the whole country in a few days afterwards. It has pleased the *rich ruffians* of Coventry to order it otherwise; and to place there, in my stead, *Peter Moore* and *Edward Ellice*, of whom I give them and the country joy with all my heart. I ought, too, perhaps, to congratulate myself; for this nation *must suffer*, and *greatly suffer*, before the dictates of reason and of justice can prevail.

WM. COBBETT.

POSTSCRIPT.—Mr. WEBB HALL has published a pamphlet, containing *his* commentary on the Agricultural Report. I think, and, indeed, I *know*, that Mr. HALL is in error; that, though he possesses great ability as a farmer, and writes exceedingly well, he deceives himself; *wholly deceives himself*, as to the *real cause* of the frightful ruin that is now spreading itself over the once prosperous families of the farmers of this kingdom. If I had wanted any thing to satisfy me *as to this cause*, I have seen and heard quite enough since I left home. Now, the desirable thing is, to *put a stop to this ruin*, or, at least, to mitigate it, in cases where it can be *mitigated*, amongst *renters*. From their ignorance of the *cause of the low prices*, they are led to hope that *things will come about*; and, in that hope many have proceeded, and many more are proceeding, to the spending of their last shilling, and to bring utter ruin on their families. This fatal delusion has been, in great part, occasioned by the importance attached to a *Corn-Bill*; and Mr. HALL's endeavours, the object of which has been to benefit the farmers, have, I am convinced, greatly aided in producing their ruin. It is, therefore, my intention to address, the week after next, a *Letter of Remonstrance* to Mr. WEBB HALL; and to make to him a proposition for making a *fair appeal* to the minds of the farmers. They are, at present, the geese with the golden eggs; and they are suffering themselves to be *ripped up* by the *Landlords*.

If we consider the means that have been made use of to deceive and cajole this class of the community, we are not to be surprised that they are going headlong into ruin. Now, I think it my duty to do all that I

am able to do to prevent the total ruin of so many thousands of respectable families; and this is the plan which I have in contemplation for effecting that purpose. The Register, if it could go into every farmer's house, would put a stop to the ruin *at once*; and would send off to America, or to France, every man *sentenced* to his utter and inevitable ruin by Peel's Bill. It would *put a stop to the taking of ruinous leases*. In short, it would *save those who are not already ruined*. But, alas! How many farmers read the Register? Some do, and not one of them has been ruined by *the times*, which gives me great satisfaction. The object is, to make renting farmers see the *causes* that are at work! If they could *clearly see these*, they would be right in a twinkling. Now, I could put upon one single sheet of paper an explanation of these causes. But, then, how am I to get this sheet of paper into every farm-house? I intend to make a proposition upon this subject to Mr. WEBB HALL, which, I think, he will not reject, seeing that he cannot do it consistently with a due regard to the interest of the farmers, whose cause he espouses with so much zeal.—Another measure which I intend to take, having the same main object in view, is, to invite *two substantial farmers from each county* to meet me in London in the *second week after the meeting of Parliament*; and to dine at some Tavern. There we could agree upon the promulgating of some paper, in the form of *Resolutions*, or otherwise, tending to place clearly in the minds of the farmers the *causes of low prices*. This would be a sure guide to them in all matters of *purchase* or of *lease*; and would save thousands upon thousands from ruin. I would propose to mix up nothing of what is generally called "*politics*" with the business of the day; but, would have the proceedings confined entirely to the *causes of the present ruin* and to the probable duration and final effects of those causes. By the end of the second week after the meeting of Parliament we shall be able to discover what that renowned body meant to be "*after*." Whether it *balanced* about Peel's Bill; whether it thought a little less steadily about *national faith*; whether the *Little Shilling* project had any avowed advocates; or, whether it were resolved to push on in the present "*stern path of duty*." For, observe, *prices, rents, leases, mortgages, debts, purchases and sales* even of *farm-stock*, will be greatly affected by what we shall perceive to be the bent of the mind of the renowned assembly in question. And, therefore, such a meeting of farmers, from the several counties, as I propose, would be attended with the greatest possible benefit. I shall, in another Number of the Register, state more in detail the means and manner of accomplishing this great object. It may, probably, be better to meet in the *third or fourth* week after the renowned body shall have assembled. But, I will fix on the day long enough *beforehand to give good time for preparation*. The newspaper *wits*, who are surprisingly brilliant, will call this meeting "*Cobbett's Parliament*;" but, while, I trust, we shall take care to leave nothing to *laugh at* in any part of our proceedings, we will not call ourselves *delegates*, or *deputies*, for fear of enabling the greatest knaves in Christendom to frighten the greatest fools in Christendom out of their senses; but, we will use the modest appellation of "*Farmers' Meeting*," not after the manner of the gentlemen assembled at *Henderson's Hotel*, but with the hope of doing a little more for the farmers in one single evening, than those gentlemen would have been able to do if they had sitten till doomsday. Their eggs were addled; ours, I trust, would contain the principle of life and effective animation.

TO MR. HUSKISSON.

ON THE EFFECT OF TAXATION ON THE AFFAIRS OF THE FARMER
AND THE LANDLORD; PARTICULARLY ADDRESSED TO THE
PEOPLE OF CHICHESTER.

(*Political Register, March, 1822.*)

Kensington, 5th March, 1822.

SIR,

I, on Wednesday, the 20th of February, took occasion to cite a very glaring contradiction in your opinions with regard to the effect of taxation on the interests of those concerned in the cultivation of the land. This happened at CHICHESTER, the city where your constituents resides. I had a full right to show the existence of such contradiction; but it is but fair that I bring the whole evidence before the public; and I think, that, by doing this, I shall be able to produce matter likely to have a tendency totally to remove that dangerous error, which now appears to have taken possession of some minds; namely, that the *repealing of taxes is not the way to go to work to relieve the distresses of agriculture.*

This proposition, though so monstrous upon the very face of it, was first broached by your colleague the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has since been adhered to by Mr. Ricardo; and you yourself, Sir, in answer to Mr. Brougham, on the 15th of February, are reported to have said, that you hoped "to be able to convince the House, that taxation, instead of occasioning the present low prices, was one of the means, indeed the principal means, by which these prices were prevented from falling lower. Taxation increased the wages of labour, and that enabled the labourer to pay a higher price to the farmer!"

How strange is the perversion of human intellect! What can this mean? If, for instance, the labourer use ten pounds of candles in a year; if a tax of sixpence a pound be laid upon the candles; this causes the labourer to demand five shillings a year more in wages; but in what way, will you be so good as to show me, can this tend to *prevent the price of corn falling?* You have resented, Sir, the imputation of mystification, in the Agricultural Report, but if this be not mystification, perhaps you will be able to tell me what mystification may mean.

However, not to waste either your time or mine in this sort of way, let me come at once to the plain matter of my letter. Subterfuges, equivocations and reservations laid aside, the proposition that you, your colleagues and Mr. Ricardo maintain, is this: that to repeal taxes *would not relieve the farmer.* This, I am sure, the public will say is the fair construction to be put upon your words. Upon this ground it is, that you oppose the repeal of taxes. And, therefore, I am now going to show what was, as to this very matter, your opinion, in the year 1814; and not 1815, as I, from mistake, stated at Chichester.

That speech of yours which I am now about to quote, was made in the

House of Commons on the 6th of June, in the year just mentioned. It contains observations well worthy of your own attention at this moment, and still more worthy of the serious consideration of every farmer and landlord in the kingdom. Before I make the quotation let me here give the history of the speech. It was made during the debates on the present existing Corn-Bill; which was proposed, as you very well recollect, in 1814, and passed in 1815. The people of HAVANT, in consequence of this speech, hanged you, and burned you in effigy. For this act of theirs I, in the Register of the 25th of June 1814, bestowed on them the only species of chastisement which I had it in my power to bestow.

In the preceding Register I had spoken of the speech in these terms : —“ It does the speaker great honour : not on account of its originality, “ for I had said the same thing two or three times before ; but on account “ of its *manliness*. Mr. Huskisson is the only man, who, as far as I “ have observed, has had the sense to discern, and the courage to state “ in plain terms, the truth of the case. His speech comes at once “ home to my notions about old prices.”

Now, Sir, with this preface, I proceed to remind you and the public of what you said upon the occasion here referred to. Were I to take the rest of my lifetime to think upon the subject, I could not, as an answer to your present opinions and assertions, give a better, and perhaps not so good, as I here produce in your own words.

“ With respect to the encouragement which ought to be afforded to the farmer, it should be considered that there was now a *great diminution in the value of money*; and that the capital necessary for carrying on of farming operations, must now be double to what it was before the war. The noble Lord (Lord A. Hamilton) *deceived* himself, therefore, if he thought, *that prices could return to what they were before the war!* This was one of the most *dangerous errors* which could be entertained. What was likely to be the permanent charge of this country, now that the war was at an end? The whole expenses of this country, including all our establishments before the war, only amounted to *sixteen millions*. He could not anticipate what part of our present establishments would be kept up; but whatever they might be, he believed that our peace establishment must *entail* on us a permanent charge of nearer *sixty than fifty millions*. Would this produce no alteration in the money value of articles? When gentlemen talked of the increased price of bread, was not everything else raised in proportion, and that not in consequence of the high price of bread, but in consequence of the altered value of money and amount of taxation? *It was impossible then for the country to return to the prices that existed before the war.* It had been said that the obvious remedy was to LOWER THE RENTS. He had not the good fortune to be a landholder, and he had no interest but that of the public in a general view. The proportion of the gross proceed of land, which came to the landlord, however it might be represented in money, was now much less than it was in 1792. Previous to the war, in a farm of moderate extent, the farmer considered himself requited if he made *three rents* from it. But it was necessary, in the case of such a farm *now*, that the farmer should make *at least five rents to be enabled to go on*. If even the **WHOLE RENTAL OF THE COUNTRY WERE REMITTED**, it would be **IMPOSSIBLE TO RETURN TO THE PRICES OF BEFORE THE WAR**. He was not afraid to declare that the people of this country must not expect, be the *law* on the subject what it may, that, **WITH OUR PRESENT BURDENS**, the price of bread can ever **BE LESS THAN DOUBLE TO WHAT IT WAS BEFORE THE WAR**.

Well, Sir! How do you feel now? Can you very well look the people of Chichester in the face again? At the time of your making this speech, I was (through the whole of volume 25 of the Register) *protesting against* the Corn-Bill; showing that it could do the farmer *no good*;

that it could only enable him to *pay taxes*; that the placeman and the fundholder would be the gainers. *I hold* to my opinion, which have been verified by ample experience. A very malignant and very rich man has employed bands of *lawyers*, and others of the vilest of mankind to make speeches, and to write paragraphs and pamphlets, about what he and they call my "*inconsistency*." But, though he may prove that I was deceived, when I thought *him* worthy of praise, can he show, that I have, in the whole of my *twenty years* of writing, ever changed my opinion as to *this great subject*? What change have *your* opinions undergone! For you *now* contend, that the *high taxes can be paid*, and that, too, with prices *one-third* in amount of those of the years during the war! What, then, is *your* judgment worth? What a *guide* you are to the farmers and landlords!

Let us now see how you stand in another respect. You are *now* the great trumpeter for "*national faith*." For the funding system. For the race of Jews, loan-jobbers and stock-jobbers. The safety of the nation *now* depends, according to you, in making this race the possessors of the rents and of the fruit of the labourer's toil. This race must, in short, be cherished let what may come of the rest of the nation. Let us therefore hear what were your opinions when you belonged to the *Jacobin Club* at Paris, in the year 1790. It is, to be sure, thirty-two years ago, come next August, since you made the speech that I am about to quote; but *principles* are immutable. That *opinions* are not we have seen above and shall presently see again. The speech which I am about to insert, I find in a pamphlet, in the French language, printed at Paris, by "DUVAUX, Rue des Boucheries, Saint Honoré, No. 7." At the time when the speech was made, M. MIRABEAU had supported the project for issuing *assignats*, as the means of making the holders cling to the new government. This base idea roused your indignation; and gave rise to the following manly and excellent speech, which one cannot read without lamenting, that you did not continue a Jacobin; and I am very much deceived if you will not, if you live a few years, see good reason for *lamenting this yourself*; for, mind, though you have, *thus far*, greatly gained by becoming a thorough-paced courtier, we must see the *end*, before we pronounce that you have acted the prudent part, even for your *own interest*.

FRENCH.

Discours prononcé par MONSIEUR HUSKISSON, Anglois et Membre de la Société de 1789, à la Séance de cette Société, le 29 Août, 1790.

Ou a cru que cette grande émission d'assignats attacherait à la révolution beaucoup de personnes mécontentes, ou qui la voient avec indifférence. On a fait valoir cet argument comme s'il étoit de la plus grande importance; c'est avec un sentiment de douleur que je me suis dit, en lisant cette partie du discours de M. Mirabeau; eh quoi! une révolution qui a tiré 24 millions d'hommes de l'esclavage, pour leur rendre les droits sacrés de la nature, auroit-elle besoin d'un appui aussi dan-

ENGLISH.

A Speech made by Mr. Huskisson, an Englishman, and Member of the Society of 1789, at the Sitting of that Society, on the 29th of August, 1790.

It has been believed that this great emission of assignats will attach to the revolution many persons now discontented with it, or who view it with indifference. This argument has been dwelt upon as one of the greatest importance. It was with a sentiment of grief that I said to myself, in reading this part of the speech of M. Mirabeau: What! a revolution which has extricated 24 millions of men from slavery, in order to restore to them the sacred rights of nature; can such a revolution

gereux? Non, je ne puis le croire; voulez-vous d'ailleurs diminuer le nombre de ces égoïstes agitateurs? voulez-vous en faire des patriotes? faites-en des propriétaires: au lieu de tant de droits se'odaux, de dimes et d'impôts vexatoires, au lieu de ces privilèges, de ces exemptions accordées au hazard par cet amas de sous-despotes, qui ne protégeoient les unes que pour peser plus durement sur les autres, les nouveaux propriétaires n'auront plus à payer qu'un impôt juste, égal et modique, dont la perception et l'emploi seront surveillés par eux: que de motifs pour aimer la révolution, pour la défendre comme le plus grand de bienfaits, que de motifs pour s'attacher à la constitution, comme à l'unique appui de cette égalité dont ils jouissent, et à l'unique sauvegarde de leurs propriétés nouvelles.

stand in need of a means of support so dangerous? No: I cannot believe it. Would you diminish the number of the *selfish and base stock-jobbers, and money-lenders*? Would you make them love their country? *Make them proprietors of the soil.* Instead of so many *feudal rights, tithes, and vexatious imposts*; instead of those privileges, those exemptions granted at hazard by a *swarm of petty despots*, who protected some men only for the sake of squeezing others with a hand more cruel and remorseless, the new proprietors will have nothing to pay but a *just, equal, and moderate tax*, of which they themselves would watch over both the collection and the expenditure. How many motives are here for loving the revolution, for defending it as the choicest of blessings! How many motives for attaching men to the constitution, as the sole guarantee of that *equality* which they enjoy, and as the only safeguard of their newly-acquired property.

Far from me, Sir, to *blame* you for this excellent speech. It is your *present* speeches that I blame. I do not blame you for changing your opinions: I blame you for changing from good to bad. I blame you for now saying, that between fifty and sixty millions of taxes can be paid out of the prices of 1790; when your speech of 1814 shows that you know better. I blame you for saying now, that the paper-race is every thing; when your speech at the Jacobin Club proves that you know that race to be a curse to any nation. And, I have a full right to blame you, because your opinion, or, rather, your professed opinion, has changed *in accordance with your interest*.

I must notice, however, before I conclude, that, when you and I agreed so well, in 1814, we were *both wrong*. We said, that fifty or sixty millions of taxes *never could be collected* with the prices of 1790; and they *have been and are* collected with those prices. But, neither of us, whatever else we might think of the landlords, ever dreamed that they would be content to *give up their rents*! When we say to a man, "You cannot jump down that chalk-pit;" we mean that he cannot do it without *killing himself*, which we look upon as impossible that he should willingly do. So, when we said, that fifty or sixty millions of taxes *could not be raised* with the prices of 1790, we meant that it could not be done, without the landlords *giving up their rents*, which we naturally looked upon as impossible for them to be persuaded to do. They have gone very far, however, in the surrender, and, I think, about January 1824 will see the surrender completed.

You and I, who started in politics at the same time and at much about the same age, have generally gone on in exactly opposite directions. It will not now be very long before events will decide which of us has been right and which wrong. You have been rolling in riches derived from the taxes; you have got a large pension for yourself and one for your

wife out of those taxes : while I have been, by the system that you have assisted to uphold, stripped of my own earnings three or four times over, and hunted almost off the face of the earth. Yet, is there *now*, in this whole world, a single man to be found, who would rather be *William Huskisson* than

WM. COBBETT.

THE FARMER'S WIFE'S FRIEND.

r, the way for the Farmer's Wife to assist in saving her family from ruin ; showing how it is that the taxes and the present rents and tithes produce the present distress ; and showing also what sort of life the farmer's family is to lead, according to publications put forth under the name of the Duke of Buckingham.

ADDRESSED TO ENGLISH FARMERS' WIVES.

(*Political Register*, March, 1822.)

Kensington, 20th March, 1822.

FARMERS' WIVES,

It is now just about a year, since I made an earnest appeal to you in order to induce you to stir up your husbands to stand forth for a *Reform of the Parliament*, as the only means of saving them, you, and your children from beggary. The progress of things since that time has shown that that appeal was founded in reason and in a pretty accurate knowledge of what was going to happen; for, where is *now* the *renting* farmer, who does not expect to be totally ruined, unless something effectual be speedily done to save him?

The reasons why a *Reform of the Parliament* is the only means of salvation I shall explain to you clearly before I have done. My first business is to convince you, to make you see clearly, that it is the *taxes*, the *present rents* and *tithes*, which produce the *present distress*, which cause the embarrassment of your husbands, and which threaten to make you and your children paupers. I shall, before I have done, show you that the far greater part of these taxes are wholly unnecessary to any good purpose. The three things, which I undertake to prove to you, are,—1. That it is the taxes, and the present rents and tithes, which cause the distress;—2. That rents and tithes ought to be altered;—3. That a *Reform of the Parliament* is the only means of getting the taxes effectually reduced, and of getting things to be on a fair footing. If I prove these things clearly to you, I shall hardly need to have to urge you to endeavour to stimulate your husbands to stand forward like *men* in the cause of *Parliamentary Reform*. But, at any rate, I shall, in the course of this Letter convince you, that you ought immediately to resolve to put some *few pieces of gold* in a state of safety; that you ought to save some little matter from the wreck; and not suffer the last shilling to go to the *landlord* and the *parson*.

I beseech you to listen to what I say upon *this part* of my subject particularly; for, when the landlords' and parsons' "*ladies*" have got your last shilling to spend upon their fine dresses and fine carriages, and when you and your daughters are come to rags, it will be too late for you to listen to advice from anybody. I implore you to think of this *in time*; and, if you slight my warning, remember, that you will be the makers of your own misery and the misery of your children. You have already seen a great change, but you have a much greater to see: you have already fallen very low, but you have a great deal lower to fall, unless you immediately follow my advice.

Not to trouble you with further preface, I shall now proceed to the three points before mentioned; and, if I trespass longer on your time than I could wish, recollect that I can *gain* nothing by saving you from utter ruin; that whether you become paupers or not, it is all the same to me; and that, therefore, it is impossible, that, in the writing of this address to you, I can have any other object in view than *your good*.

1. *That it is the taxes and the present rent and tithes that cause the present distress.*—You will have observed, that the King's Ministers and a majority of the House of Commons *deny this*, particularly as relating to *the taxes*. One of the arguments that they make use of is this: that the taxes were *greater in amount* during the war; that the farmers were then *prosperous*; and, that, therefore, it *cannot be* the taxes that produce the distress. This is a specious, a deceiving falsehood; and, if those who make use of it be deceived themselves, all that that does for them, is, to show that they are *ignorant men*; and you will, before I have done, be convinced, that high rank and profound ignorance are not always inseparable.

It is very true that a *larger sum* was collected in taxes during the war; and, it is also true, that farmers were then *prosperous*. But, pray remark, that *wheat* then sold for about *fifteen shillings* a bushel, and that it now sells for less than *five shillings*. During the war there was the *property-tax* and the *war-malt-tax*. These were taken off. Half this malt-tax was put on again in 1819, and it is now to be taken off again. However, upon the whole, about a *fourth* part of the taxes paid during war have been taken off since the war; but (and I pray you to mark this) the Ministers and the Parliament have, since the war, adopted measures and passed acts, that have made the wheat sell at five shillings a bushel instead of fifteen. So that, while they have taken *three shillings and ninepence* off from every fifteen shillings of the taxes, their measures and acts have taken *ten shillings* from every fifteen in the price of wheat. Therefore, though the taxes be less in *name*, less in mere *show*, than they were before, they are, in reality, greater than they were before, and indeed, nearly *three times as great* as they were during the war. Thus it is that your husbands find themselves ruined without knowing why. They know well enough, that it is the *low price* that keeps them from receiving the money that they want to pay their way; but their heads have been puzzled to know what it is that *causes the low price*. They see, indeed, that there is *less money* about than there used to be. They know that the country banks have not half so much out as they used to have. The measures and acts of the Government have caused this *want of money*; this want of money makes the *low prices*; and these low prices cause the *distress*, because the taxes, which used to be paid by high prices, have now to be paid by low prices; or, in other words: because your husbands have to

pay, all but one-fourth, as much taxes out of *five shillings* as they used to pay out of *fifteen shillings*.

Some of you, like me, are old enough to remember, the *peace* that took place after the *old American war*. You know that farmers greatly flourished as soon as *that peace* came. You know that *that peace* brought us all *prosperity*. And, our fathers told us, that *peace* always brought *plenty* and *happiness*. How comes it then, *this peace* brings swift decay, ruin, and misery to the farmer; to him, who, of all others, ought to be benefited by peace? The reason of this strange difference between the effects of *this peace*, and of every *former peace*, is this: the taxes have now, as I have before shown, been made nearly three times as great as they were before this peace took place; the rents and tithes, as I shall show, have been augmented in the same proportion. This has been done by measures and acts of the Ministers and the Parliament; and, observe, this *never was done at any former peace*; and, I may add, that such a thing was never before done, or thought of, by any government in the world. This is the reason why the return of peace has seen such misery now, instead of that happiness which used to be formerly witnessed by the return of peace. There is one of the Ministers, whose name is Castlereagh; who tells us, that the distress has been caused by a *sudden* change from war to peace. Are not such changes *always* sudden? And how is it, then, that this distress has been growing *greater* and *greater* for *eight years*? This is not very sudden! There is another Minister that tells us, that the distress of the farmer arises from low price occasioned by *too abundant crops*. But, you know well, that the *last* harvest was *not so abundant* as the harvest before, and yet, as you well know, prices have *fallen since last harvest*. Now, then, these Ministers must be very *insincere*, or very *foolish* men. One or the other they *must* be; and, be they which they may, you ought to put no trust in their opinions and sayings. There is a very wild person, whose name is WEBB HALL, who says the low prices and the distress arise from the importation of *foreign corn*; but this must be impossible, because no corn has been imported for *three years*, and yet the prices have been getting *lower and lower* from that time to this.

O, no! Farmers' wives have too much sense; too much sense and reason, if King's Ministers have not, to believe that those are the causes of that horrible ruin that now stares them in the face. You must see clearly, that the real cause of the ruin is to be found, only in your husbands' being compelled to pay as much taxes out of five shillings as they formerly paid out of fifteen shillings. In most cases they have been, hitherto, compelled to pay *rent* and *tithes* in the same monstrous proportion; but, the *taxes* are first to be considered; and, it is now my business to show you what taxes you do pay, and how you are ruined in *this way*, and not by *peace*, not by *too abundant crops*, not by *foreign corn*.

The Ministers assert, that taxes do not cause the distress to the farmer, because, as they say, he *pays so little in taxes*. And there is a *Duke*, under whose name a list of the taxes, paid by the farmer of 400 acres of land, has been published in all the newspapers. This Duke is the Duke of Buckingham; the man who was made a Duke the other day, and of whom and whose family I will say more by-and-by. This Duke said in the House of Lords, that the taxes paid by a farm of 400 acres were a mere *trifle*; and, in a few days after he made this speech, the following list was published in the newspapers, as coming from him and as

making good his assertion, which list I insert just as I find it in those papers.

The following are the calculations which were referred to by the Duke of Buckingham in the House of Lords, on the 26th February, to prove how small is the Effect of Taxation, direct and indirect, paid by the Farmer and his Labourers, on the Price of Wheat.

No. 1.

Estimate of Taxation paid by a Farmer renting 400 Acres—Himself, his Wife, one Woman Servant, and three Men Servants in Family.

Articles.	Quantity consumed.	Total cost.	Rate of Duty.	Total Tax.
		£ s. d.	New Rate.	£ s. d.
Malt	15 Quarters	30 0 0	2s. 1½d. per bushel.	12 15 0
Hops	60 lb.	3 0 0	2d. per lb.	0 10 0
Salt	5 cwt.	8 10 0	30s. per cwt.	7 10 0
Leather for shoes ..	12 lb.	2 4 0	3d. per lb.	0 3 0
Ditto for harness ..	30 lb.	.....	3d. per lb.	0 7 6
Tea	10 lb. 7s.	3 10 0	100 per cent.	1 15 0
Sugar	52 lb. 6d.	1 6 0	100 per cent.	0 13 0
Soap	72 lb. 8d.	2 8 0	3½d. per lb.	0 19 6
Candles.....	72 lb. 7½d.	2 5 0	1d. per lb.	0 6 0
Brandy	1 Gallon ..	1 5 0	12s. 7½d. per gallon.	0 12 7½
Rum	1 ditto ..	1 0 0	10s. 4½d. per ditto.	0 10 4½
Gin	4 ditto ..	2 4 0	1s. 4½d. per ditto.	0 10 6
Wearing apparel .....	.....	.....	.....	1 0 0
Riding Horse	1 .....	.....	.....	2 17 6
Groom	1 .....	.....	.....	0 10 0
Windows	9 .....	.....	.....	2 2 0
Farmer's Taxes				33 2 0

No. II.

Estimate of Taxation on the Labourers required to cultivate a Farm of 400 Acres, half Grass, half Arable.

Number of Labourers.	Articles.	Quantity consumed.	Total Cost.	Rate of Duty.	Total Tax.
			£ s. d.		£ s. d.
3 in the house 1 married with wife & child.	Leather	24 lb. 6 pr. shoes	3 12 0	3d. per lb...	0 6 0
	Leather	10 lb. 4 pair	1 18 0	3d. per lb...	0 2 6
	Candles	20 lb... 7½d.	0 12 6	1d. per lb...	0 1 8
	Salt ..	52 lb... 3½d.	0 16 3	3½d. per lb..	0 14 1
	Soap ..	13 lb... 8d.	0 8 8	3½d. per lb..	0 3 6½
	Tea....	5½ lb... 7s.....	1 18 6	100 per cent.	0 19 3
	Sugar ..	13 lb... 6d.	0 6 6	100 per cent.	0 3 3
	Ale....	1½ pint per day home-brewed.	.....	½d. per pint	1 2 9½
2 labourers ..	Leather	16 lb. 4 pr. shoes	2 8 0	3d. per lb...	0 4 0
Single men ..	Salt ..	26 lb. at 3½d. ..	0 8 1½	3½d. per lb.	0 7 0½
	Soap ..	13 lb. at 8d.	0 8 8	3½d. per lb.	0 3 6½
	Ale....	365 quarts .....	.....	1d. per quart	1 10 5
2 Boys	Leather	12 lb. 4 pair	1 10 0	3d. per lb.	0 3 0
	Soap ..	6½ lb. at 8d	0 4 4	3½d. per lb.	0 1 9
	Salt....	6½ lb. at 3½d. ..	0 2 0	3½d. per lb.	0 1 9
Total Tax on Labourers					6 4 6½
Add the amount of No. 1.....					33 2 0
Total Taxes paid by the Farmer					39 6 6½

Before I enter into particulars, let me point out the monstrousness of the idea, that, in the house of a farm of 400 acres, there is to be only *one* maid servant, and that there are to be *no children*; and also the idea, not less monstrous, that there is to be but *one married labourer* to such a farm, and that even he is to have but *one child*. Pray observe, that this Duke has here *nine* men and boys, and only *three* of the female sex. So that, according to his account, there must be three men to one woman throughout the country; for, it is impossible to give any reason to show, why the females should abound in any class *more* than in that of husbandry. The grossness of the *ignorance*, or something else, that we behold here, would make us cast aside this list as rubbish, unworthy of our attention; and this is what I should do at once: but the list is a thing that ought to be *recorded*; it presents us with a *Bill of Fare* which a *Duke* has provided for the farming people; and, as such, it is worthy of being preserved.

A mere glance at this Bill of Fare will, doubtless, let you into the light as to what is *intended for you*. What do you think, my dear Abigail, of a pound, a *whole pound of sixpenny sugar* for only *one week* in the house of a farm of 400 acres; and of *three ounces and $\frac{3}{4}$* or one fourteenth part of another ounce of bohea tea for a week for the same house? What do you think of almost *a pound and a half of candles* and the *like weight of soap* for a week for such a farm-house? No *starch*, of course; for the devil of any frills or caps are you to have, and the devil of any shirts your husbands. What think you of twelve *pounds* of rough leather, or about six when made up, in the *year* for you, your husband and maid, in shoes, boots, gloves, breeches, and all other things in which leather is used? But, why need I say anything more, in this way, than just to congratulate you on the *comfortable dish of tea* that you and your husband and the maid will have out of two ounces and better of nice red sugar and almost half an ounce of black tea, in a day! Ah! silly Yeomanry Cavalry! Could the *Radicals* have brought you *lower* down than this? Would they have allowed your wives *no caps* and you only one pair of shoes in a year, and no boots? Would they have allowed you neither pepper, vinegar, tobacco, paper, books, tables, chairs, coals, physic, nor coffins? Would they have allowed you to have *no children*? Would they ever have thought of bringing you and your wives down to the Buckingham Bill of Fare, which is a vast deal *lower*, a vast deal meaner and more degrading than that of the negro-slaves either in Virginia or Jamaica: they are allowed to *breed*, at any rate!

Seeing that this is the Bill of Fare, which a *Duke* has allotted to the farmers and their wives, it may not be amiss for us to see *who* and *what* this Duke is, and what sort of Bill of Fare *he and his family* have out of the produce of these same taxes of which I am speaking. This Duke's name is *Grenville*, and there is a large family of these Grenvilles. This one was made a Duke but the other day; and, therefore, we must suppose, that those who advised the King to make him a Duke, discovered some great merit in him; and, we must also suppose, that his sentiments, as to the life that you ought to lead, are the sentiments of the King's ministers. But as to the Bill of Fare of these Grenvilles; this Duke's father received, out of the taxes, for a great number of years, a very large sum of money every year, and that, too, for a *sinecure-office*; that is to say, an office where there was *nothing for him to do*. So that this Duke had, in all likelihood, more than a pound of sixpenny sugar a week

to himself even when he was a boy. The whole family must have fared pretty well; for this is the statement respecting them, made by Mr. BENNET, in the House of Commons, only a fortnight ago.

“He would read a short statement of their allowances in pensions and salaries of sinecure offices. In the year 1795 Lord Grenville became an Auditor of the Exchequer, at the regulated salary of 4000*l.* per annum; so that he received during the whole of the period for which he held the office (twenty-one years) 85,000*l.* of the public money. Mr. Thomas Grenville was presented with the sinecure of Chief Justice of Eyre, with a yearly salary of 2000*l.*; and he took altogether no less than 44,000*l.* In 1763 the late Marquis of Buckingham was appointed first teller of the Exchequer. He enjoyed this office for the space of fifty-six years, and, taking the average salary at 10,000*l.* a-year, which he (Mr. Bennet) thought was rather below the mark, his Lordship must have derived from the public purse during that period, the enormous total of 560,000*l.* Another branch of this family, in 1762 was presented with a sinecure appointment of not less than 3000*l.* a-year; and up to the present moment, consequently, he had taken 180,000*l.* altogether. He had spoken in round numbers; but by the paper which he held in his hand, it appeared that from the earliest of the periods he had named, up to the present year, the Grenville family had shared between them no less a sum than 872,000*l.*”

This was pretty well; but, the sum is greatly understated; and Mr. Bennet forgot one of the family; a Mr. WYNN, a first cousin of this Duke, who at a very early age, was sent to be an ambassador at Dresden, where he remained *four years*, when he came home; and, from that day to the other day, when he was sent out to some other place, he received out of the taxes, 1200*l.* a-year *pension*; so that, for four years' service, he got the four years' salary about 12,000*l.* and in pension he got 15,000*l.*

Lord Grenville and a Mr. Thomas Grenville, who are uncles of this Duke, have *now*, the former 4000*l.* and the latter 2000*l.* a-year, in *sinecure offices*; and, in a Report laid before the House of Commons, in 1808, it appears that *Lady Grenville*, the wife of the former, had a *pension* settled on her of 1500*l.* a-year, to commence at her *lord's* death! So that, you see, the females of this Duke's family must want *rather more than a pound* of sixpenny sugar and *three ounces* of bohea tea a-week! However, if your husbands *like* all this; if they like to pay taxes for these and such-like purposes; if they would *rather* that you should be capless and smockless and shoeless; if they would rather that this should be, and that the Grenvilles should have all this money out of the taxes; if they would *rather* that things should go on thus than help to get a *Reform of Parliament*, why, all that I can say is, that it is much more their and your affair than it is mine; and, with all my heart I wish you joy of your beggary and of your *Buckingham Bill of Fare*!

But, upon the supposition, and, indeed, in the hope, that you do not relish this Bill of Fare, and that the “gallant Yeomanry” are coming to their senses, I will now proceed to prove to you, that the taxes (with present rents and tithes) are the cause of the distress and ruin of your husbands.

The list of the Duke of Buckingham does not contain more than a *twentieth part* of the articles on which you pay taxes. Then it does not contain half the number of labouring people employed upon such a farm. Then it leaves out the taxes of smiths, collarmakers, wheelwrights and other tradesmen, a portion of which taxes the farmer must pay. And

then (which I shall first notice) it shamefully and impudently understates the taxes paid by the farm-house family and the labourers, whom it supposes to exist on the farm.

The fifteen quarters of *Malt* might be enough for the six persons; but, in the first place, the tax on Malt is 2s. 6d. a bushel after the 1s. shall be taken off. Why, then, does this *Duke* call it 2s. 1½d.? But, this is not all; for the tax causes *expenses* beyond its bare amount. The trouble that the maltster has with the exciseman; the hindrance this fellow gives him; the advance of money to pay the tax; the capital required for this; the sort of *monopoly* that it gives; all these add to the price of the malt. In short, the well-known fact is this: that a bushel of barley will make nearly a bushel and a peck of malt, and that this increase is more than sufficient to pay for *malting*. So that, *all* that is not cost of barley is *tax*; and, as malt, with the 1s. duty taken off, is 7s. a bushel, and as barley is 2s. 6d. a bushel, the farmer pays 4s. 6d. a bushel in tax. This is the true view of the matter; and therefore, the tax on the fifteen quarters is 27l. instead of the Duke's 12l. 15s. But, is nobody to drink beer from the farm-house but these six persons? Are the *haymakers* and *harvest people* to have none? If they do not, the beer must be *paid for in money*, which is the same thing in the end; so that tax on malt must be, on such a farmer, about 60l. or 70l. a-year instead of 12l.

Of *Salt* the Duke allows ten bushels, which may be enough for the six persons. And the tax he states at 15s. a bushel. But, as in the case of the malt, he omits the *expenses* which the tax occasions. You give 19s. a bushel, when, if there were no tax, you would give at most 1s. 6d. For (and now *mark* this), when salt is sent to *America*, the tax is taken off; and, when it arrives there, the grocers sell it out there by retail at 2s. 6d. a bushel! So that, if we allow 1s. 6d. for lading, unlading, freight, wharfage, insurance, tonnage-duty, and for merchant and grocer's profit, the salt costs at first but 1s. It is notorious that it costs *less*; but, allowing 1s. 6d. then you pay 17s. 6d. tax. So that here would be 8l. 15s. instead of 7l. 10s. And only think of this monstrous thing; that this very same quantity of this very same salt, the American farmer, who lives across the Atlantic Ocean, can get at 2s. 6d. a bushel, while you are compelled to pay 19s. a bushel for it! When I lived at Botley, within a few miles of a *saltern*, I paid 19s. a bushel for my salt, and, the very same year, I paid, in *America*, 2s. 6d. a bushel for the salt brought across the sea from this very *saltern*! Well enough American or any foreign farmers may *undersell* your husbands! On malt the American farmer pays no tax at all. Things are somewhat the same in all countries but this; and this is the reason why foreign farmers are able to *undersell* you. But, then, those countries are not so happy as to possess *Grenville families*!

How came the *Duke* to think that a half pound of hops was enough for a bushel of malt? Let us put down one hundred and twenty pounds of hops, if it please your Grace; and let us charge the *expenses* of the hop-tax, and we shall find the hop-tax 30s. instead of 10s.

But only think of twelve pounds of *Leather* in a year for the farmer, his wife and maid! Shoes, boots, gloves, breeches, gaiters, and all other things, only twelve pounds weight; and that, too, mind, in the *whole hide or skin*, one half of which, as to weight is cut away in the working up. So that here is only two pounds of leather each for this farmer, his wife and maid. If we allow about forty-eight instead of twelve, and that is only about twenty-four pounds in the weight of the articles when made,

and allow, as in the case of malt and salt, for the *expenses* of the tax, we shall find this tax amount to 18s. for these three persons instead of 3s.

Now comes the Leather for "*harness*," and the Duke allows for a farm of 400 acres, requiring *two teams*, thirty pounds of leather a-year; that is to say, for the wagon-harness of *eight* horses, the plough-harness, the straps on the wagon and cart shafts, the horse-collars, the collar-laces, the thongs, the whips, the bridle, the saddle, and a hundred other things. Upon such a farm half a *horse hide* is wanted to cut up into thongs and straps and laces, in the course of the year. The bare repair of horse-collars will require a dozen pounds in a year. I have forgotten the ox-collars where oxen are tied up to fat; and also halters for horses. *Two hundred* pounds of leather of all sorts is not enough; and if the *expense* of the tax be added, here are 70s. a-year tax instead of 7s. 6d.

Next comes the *tea* and the *sugar*; but of these I have said enough for the present, though I shall touch on them by-and-by; just observing, here, that the *expenses* of the tax are to be added here, as well as in every other case. And now for the *soap* and *candles*. Here are seventy-two pounds of each allowed for the year: that is to say, *one pound* and six ounces a week. What *cleanly* people you will be; and what a deal of *light* you will have! This is to be a *dairy farm* too, in great part. And what clean clothes, and tables and dressers you will have! And how nice you will look about your butter! As to caps and smocks there are to be none allowed by the Buckingham Bill of Fare. In short, as to *soap*, look at you who *likes*, and touch or smell you who *dare*! You well know that this allowance of candles (a dip-candle and a half a day) is hardly enough for the *stables* during six months of the year. That you are to have no candle to do needlework by, much less to *chat* by, is evident enough; but, even with all these restrictions you will require twice the quantity allowed you in this Bill of Fare; and, observe that, in the case of *soap* and *candles*, even more strikingly than in the case of Malt and Salt; the tax is injurious to the farmer, because *you and your maids can make these*, and from the farm go the principal of the *materials* to make them of. In America, where there is *no such thing* as an excise-man, the farmers make their own soap and candles. I bought both at a neighbouring farm-house, till I killed some sheep and an ox myself; and then my maids made better candles than I have ever seen in England, and as good soap as I wish to have. In *soft soap* there is little to buy. In the hard soap not much, if the tax be taken from the ashes and alkali; and as to the candles, take the tax from the *cotton*, which is very heavy, and you can make your candles for 3d. a pound. Your hard soap you can make for 2d. and soft soap for 1d. So, my Lord Duke, we will, if you please, allow some caps and smocks and shirts, and allow a little light to work by and to go to bed by, at any rate, and to feed and curry the horses by, and these will demand, even on your establishment of persons, two hundred pounds of soap and as many of candles; and, as these now cost, according even to *your* account, 12*l.* 18s. and as they could be made in the farm-house for 3*l.* 15s. if the taxes on them were removed *clean away*, here is 8*l.* 3s. tax on soap and candles, for the *farm-house alone*.

We now come to the *Brandy*, *Rum*, and *Gin*, the tax on which I count as *nothing*; because I hold them to be *pernicious*, and that the farmer, or any other man, who is in the habit of using them, is a *criminal*; and that, if any woman be in that habit, she is a *loathsome beast*, and ought

never to be honoured with the appellation of *mother, wife, or daughter*. The heavier the tax on these pernicious and brutalizing things the better; and, is it not scandalous to see a tax of only 1s. 4½d. on *nine or ten shilling's worth of gin*, while there is a tax of 15s. on *one shilling's worth of salt*! Is this the way to promote sobriety and "*mortality*?" Lord Castlereagh, the other day, said, that he preferred the use of tea to *beer*, by the people, on the score of *mortality*; why, then, not tax the *gin*, as much, at least, as he does *salt*, which is an absolute necessary of life? Why not tax it as much as he does the *soap*? And, pray, observe how *generous* our new Duke is as to spirits. He will allow Rum, and even French Brandy, though he will not allow you starch, pepper, vinegar, paper, books, tables or chairs, coals, or physic or coffins; and though he will allow you *no children*! He will allow your house nearly *as much for spirits* as for *sugar and tea*; he will allow you as much, within a shilling, for French Brandy alone as for *all the sugar used in a farm-house*? He will allow more half pints of spirits than he allows pounds of sugar, and nearly as many half pints as he will allow pounds of soap or of candles! He will allow as much to be spent, all but 4s., in spirits as in soap and candles, and more than twice as much as he will allow to be spent in shoes, boots, gloves, breeches, gaiters, and all other articles used in the family, made of leather. There's a *generous* Grenville! There's a noble soul! There's a new Duke, and a great statesman to judge of the means of making a people happy!

But the Duke is so good as to allow something for *wearing apparel*. He does not state the *amount* of the clothes here, but merely the amount of the tax, and he generously gives a *pound* on the whole for the farmer, his wife and maid. He allows of no *lucres*, no *tapes*, but, let him know that of every yard of cheap *calico two-thirds and more* are tax and expenses of tax. Tax on the raw cotton, tax on all the colours, tax on all the materials that the machines and manufactory are made of, tax on all the manufacturers consume, and tax in every shape, till the thing is on the back, besides a *direct tax* of one-fourth of the present price of cheap printed calico. Nearly the same may be said of all the woollens, and linens of all sorts; and though the stamp tax is taken off the hat, it comes to be loaded with tax on the fur, tax on the oil, tax on the dye, tax on the bristles that make the brushes used in making the hat, and on those that make the brush that brushes the hat while in wear; unless indeed, which is most probable, his *Grace* does not think it necessary that the farmer should have his hat brushed at all: for, to see a brushed hat or any hat upon the head of a wretch who is to be the daily participator, morning and evening, in *one ounce of brown sugar*, which he is to share with two others; for such a convict-fed wretch to pretend to have a *brushed hat* would be to show a mutinous spirit, a spirit of insubordination, and might bring down on his rebellious head a charge of "*sedition and blasphemy*!" But, to dismiss this rubbish; this impudent statement of a *pound* a-year tax on the wearing apparel of the farmer, his wife and maid, consider all the above taxes, and the taxes on the draper and the tailor, of which the *consumer must pay* a share, and you will find, that more than *two-thirds* of every article of wearing apparel is tax; and, if the clothes cost those three persons 12l. only a-year, eight of them are tax.

Thus have I gone through the list of No. I. As to the *second*, or No. II., reserving for a moment what I have to say of the *number* of labourers,

only think of the *one* married man with *one* child ! Only think of these three persons being allowed a little more than *half an ounce of brown sugar a day*, and one and a half pint of beer a day ! Only think of the two single men to be allowed (harvest time included) a pint of beer a day each, and *no tea or sugar, and no candlelight !* And only think of the *tax* on their beer being *1d.* a pot, when Mr. Calvert says that *he* pays the Government *1½d.* besides what the publican pays, which is not less than *three farthings more*, besides the tax on the brewers horses and harness and on his tubs and every thing else ! And only think of the "*two boys*," who, mind, are not to be in the farm-house, and who, be they where they may, are to be allowed neither *tea*, nor *sugar*, nor *beer* of any sort or kind ! His *Grace* does, in the overflowing of his *generosity*, allow those two boys *6½* pounds of *soap* in a year ; and a brace of pretty dirty devils they must be ; for, to wash a smock frock, a shirt and a pair of stockings a week, for each, will take 20 pounds of soap in the year for the two ; and still leave their *flesh* as black as that of negroes, so that to make this a brace of *real slaves*, they will not be deficient even in colour of skin.

So much for the *Buckingham Bill of Fare*, put forth in the face of a nation that used to boast of its *good cheer* ; that used to sing "O ! the roast-beef of old England," and that used to laugh at the French for eating *frogs* and *sallad* ! And now let us see what articles the noble Grenville has wholly omitted.

Tobacco and *snuff* he allows *none* to his *seven men* and three women. If these seven be to have none, nobody else can have any : *slap* goes, then, *two millions and a half of revenue*, unless the *Grenvilles* and others of the "*high orders*" be to use all the tobacco ! And this would be his *Grace's* way of supporting "*public faith*" and preventing "*national bankruptcy*." As to *raisins* and *currants* and *spices* of all sorts, his *Grace* allows none of them in a farm-house ; neither does he allow of *starch*, *pepper* or *vinegar* ; and away, of course, goes *another million* of revenue. His *Grace* will not allow the farmer of four hundred acres of land to have any thing to pay for *stamp-duty*, no lawsuits, no deeds, no buying any thing of a licensed person, no wills, no legacies, no notes of hand, receipts, newspapers, almanacks, fire insurance, medicines (for horses or wife), no gold or silver plate, no pamphlets, advertisements, no riding in coaches, hack or stage ; and, as the farmer of 400 acres is to touch none of these, *who is to do it ?* So his *Grace*, in order to "*support public credit*," sweeps away nearly *seven millions more of revenue*. His *Grace* suffers the farmer of 400 acres neither to sell nor buy at *auction* ; nor to use any *paper* ; nor to have any *books* (not even a Bible) ; nor to receive any *letters* ; nor use any *coals* ; or *bricks*, or *stones*, or *slate*, or *hemp* (either in *ropes*, *cords*, *string*, *halters*, or *sacks*), or any *Swedish iron* ; and, as to *wine*, it is an abomination in a farm-house, especially where there are to be no *christenings* and *groanings*, and where they are to keep Christmas and Harvest-home with two *whole ounces* and *more* of red sugar a day ! But, then his *Grace* must mean to lop off another *three or four millions of revenue*, in order to preserve the "*national faith* !" In short (and this is the right view of the matter) there are no taxes, of which the farmer of 400 acres does not *participate* in the payment. Now, then, this Grenville Duke of ours will let him partake in those only which yield about *eighteen millions a year* of clear revenue ; and, as the whole of the taxes do now

yield a revenue of *fifty-four millions*, his Grace must mean to cut off *thirty-six millions*, which is precisely what *I want to see done*; but which would be an odd way of supporting what his Grace is pleased, in condescending imitation of the monotonous harbinger of summer, to call "supporting of national faith."

Let us now see a little about the *number of persons* that his Grace allows to this farm of 400 acres. He *will* have it *half grass land*. Will he cut the grass for hay? Let him add at least *thirty women* for a month. Will he *graze it*? This will want shepherds and drovers and boys. But, in *half* the cases at least, it must be *dairy*. Let him put three more maids into the house and two more men. And even, then, he has not more than *half* men and boys enough for the arable land, including the harvest. And, as to the monstrous idea, that there is to be only *one* married labourer out of *six*, and that that one is to have but *one child*, do you not treat it with scorn and contempt inexpressible?

His Grace, who does not appear to have the faculty of seeing far beyond his nose, seems not to have been able even to get a glimpse at one *large branch* of the taxes paid by the farmer; namely, the taxes of the smiths, collarmakers, wheelwrights, shoemakers, tailors, and all other tradespeople that he employs, or with whom he deals, in any way whatever. I shall have no difficulty here, because his Grace has, in his lists, admitted the principle; for, if the farmer pay the whole of the taxes of his ploughman, who does not live in his house, he must pay the whole of the taxes of a *smith* who works for nobody but him. This is evident; and, *how many* farms of 400 acres are a smith, his man and a boy able to do the work of? Not more than *four*. Here are pretty nearly forty horses to shoe, besides all the work to be done to wagons, carts, ploughs, harrows, prongs, shovels, gates, and God knows what besides. *One collarmaker* may do for eight such farms; a *wheelwright* for six; but, if you add the shoemaker, the tailor, the carpenter, and the bricklayer, you will find that the farmer of 400 acres has to pay out of the produce of his crop, taxes, direct and indirect, for about fifteen persons (including children) in the *tradesman branch* of the labour performed on his farm, and which labour is as necessary to him as is the labour of the ploughman himself.

I marvel that his Grace overlooked this; his Grace who is so profound a *statesman*, and, withal, so liberal in his allowances! In short, on every thing that the farmer wants for his use there is a *tax*, and, besides this, he has to pay a share of the taxes of the persons who supply his wants. Well, then, his Grace will exclaim, and do not the eaters of bread and meat *pay the farmer all his taxes back again*? Yes, if he can get a *price high enough* to make them pay him again; but, if he cannot; if the Parliament, by its acts, make the money in the country so small in quantity, that he cannot get a price high enough to enable him to pay himself for what he lays out, those who eat the meat and bread do not pay him back what he has paid in taxes; and he sinks his capital, and becomes a *ruined man*. And this is the course in which your husbands are now proceeding. If so much were not taken away in taxes, there would be more left for other purposes; but, if the produce be so heavily loaded with taxes, that the farmer has not enough out of the produce to pay rent with, the rent must go unpaid; or, it must come out of the farmer's capital. Suppose, for instance, that I rent a hundred acres at a hundred a-year and am doing very well; keeping up my stock,

and saving 40 pounds a-year. Suppose the government to lay taxes on my necessaries of life and implements, things that I cannot do without, to the amount of 140 pounds a-year. What is the consequence? Why, that I cannot save any thing, and that I can pay no rent, unless I sell off part of my stock, to pay the rent with. The next year I must sell more of my stock to pay rent with. And, thus, the landlord gets my capital, and I am ruined. Well, but *why do I not put a price on my produce* sufficient to enable me to pay my rent and to save as before? So I would; but, the general amount of prices in any country *depends on the quantity of money circulating in that country* compared with the number and amount of money transactions; and, if the quantity of money be the same after my taxes be laid on as it was before, *my prices cannot rise with my taxes*. During the last war, the taxes rose from thirteen to more than sixty millions a-year and still the farmers grew rich; but, then, observe, the *money increased even faster than the taxes*, and the *prices rose in proportion*. But now, the *same taxes* (all but a fourth) remain; and the quantity of money is brought back to *nearly what it was before the taxes were augmented*. This is the reason why your husbands cannot get *high price to pay them back the taxes*; and therefore it is that they cannot pay *rents*, except out of their capitals.

This brings me to the other causes of the farmers' ruin, the *present rent and tithes*. The *taxes alone* would, in time, leave the farmer little; they would make him a low and poor man; but, when there are *rent and tithes*, in addition to the taxes, the candle is lighted at both ends; and especially where the rent and tithes were agreed on at a time when *prices were higher* than they are now. Precisely *what sum* goes away in the year, in taxes, from a farmer of 400 acres, it is, as we have seen, quite impossible to tell. Such a farmer shares in all the taxes; and, therefore, the plainest view to take of this matter is this. Before the last war (in the year 1790) prices of *farm-produce* were, and had been for years, much about what they are now. Then the whole of the taxes in Great Britain amounted to less than *thirteen* millions a-year; and they now amount to more than *fifty-three* millions a-year. So that it must be madness, downright insanity, in any one not to see at once, that every farm of 400 acres must now pay more than four times as much in taxes as it paid then; and, if farmers, upon the same rents and tithes that they paid then; if with four times as much tax, can pay the rents and tithes of 1790, what a fine time of it must they have had in 1790, and what generous people the landlords and parsons of those days must have been! But, the case is a great deal worse than this, for the farmer now pays (until he *breaks*) much *greater rents and tithes* than he paid in 1790, besides paying *more than four times* the taxes that he paid in 1790. He, therefore, unless he give way, unless he get out of the scrape some way or other, must be completely ruined; for all his capital, all his stock, must go to the taxing tribe, the landlord and the parson.

I shall be told, and so you are told, I dare say, in the "*religious tracts*" that the parsons circulate about, that a *tenth* is a *tenth* now as well as in 1790. But, I beg you to hear me upon this subject. Get half an ounce more of candle from his *Grace*, just to read, three times over, this one paragraph. A *tenth* is certainly a *tenth* now as well as in 1790; but a tenth that your husbands *pay four times as much taxes to get as they paid to get a tenth* in 1790, makes the tenth *now* a very different thing from the tenth *then*!—Now snuff the little bit of candle.

—If I have a ten-acre field of wheat, on which I have expended *no tax*, and another, in all other respects like, on which I have expended *ten pounds in tax*, does not the parson take away a *pound more* from the latter field than from the former? Yes, as clear as daylight.—And now let his Grace's bit of candle expire in the socket; for, you must not be that sensible woman that most farmers' wives are, if any parson can now persuade you, that the tenth of 1822 is the same thing as the tenth of 1790; or, if he can make you believe, that he does not now, in addition to a tenth of the *crop*, get from your husband an amount equal to that of a *tenth part of all the taxes that the farm pays*. Get the Rector or Vicar of your parish, if he should happen to live any where in your part of the country, to come and see you, and to partake of a comfortable Buckingham dish of tea; read this to him (without telling him *who wrote it*), and just watch him a bit, and hear what he says! If he look as if nothing were the matter of him; if he talk coolly; if he *reason*; listen to him with all due attention; but, if he change colour; if his lips quiver, and if he begin to rail against the writer, and to accuse him of "*sedition and blasphemy*," get rid of him as soon as you can, and make up your mind, that he is wrong and that I am right.

3. Now, then, it being manifest that ruin must finally fall on every farmer, however rich he may be, that has present taxes, rents and tithes to pay out of the prices of 1790, it is equally manifest, that the present rents ought to be *reduced to those of 1790*, and that *three-fourths of the present taxes ought to be taken off*. You will say, that your husbands have not the *power* to cause taxes to be taken off. I know that very well. And I also know, that many of them are bound by lease to pay, not only rents as high as those of 1790, but a great deal higher. How to get them out of these bonds, I know not; but, where they are *not bound*, they can, surely, get out of giving up your last gown to go to deck out the waiting gentlewomen of the landlords' and parsons' wives! For mind, this is what they are now doing. Every penny (except in a few peculiar instances) that the landlord and parson get from the farmer, comes, not out of the gains, not out of the increase, not out of the *produce*, of the farm, but out of the *capital*, or *stock*, of the farmer, who is, and who must be, every day becoming a poorer and poorer man; while the landlord and the parson, if one get his rent and the other his tithe, are gaining, as they long have been gaining, by the farmers' loss.

If, therefore, no alteration be made in the rent and tithe, it is madness for any man to remain in a farm. I know how unwilling farmers are to quit, I know how many thousands have remained till they became paupers; and I know what pains base and wicked and covetous and fraudulent men have taken to persuade them that "*things will come round again*." Alas! things will never come round again! Things can never come round again! And, every thing that I have seen, and that I yet see, convinces me, that the course of events will be this: that the main body of the farmers, actuated by the fear of being out of business on the one hand, and buoyed up by false hopes on the other hand, will continue to pay rents as long as they have a shilling left; that they will drop off into the pauper-list one by one; that their places will be supplied by a species of bailiffs; that rents will cease, by degrees, all over the country; that the landlords will become of little account; and that, at no very distant day, the land being unable to pay taxes and tithes too, these latter will be "*dealt with according to law*," as so many of the

Radical Reformers have been; and that, at last, *if no unexpected event occur*, the tax-gatherers, under some name or other, will appoint the bailiffs to the farms.

I may be deceived as to these forebodings, and I wish I may; but (and I beg you to remark and remember it) those who bid the farmers to have *hope*, bid them to hope that their *prices will rise*. This (and let your husbands note it well) is the *only* ground of hope, that these silly, or knavish, men have to rest on. They have no hope but this; and they talk of no hope but this. And, such being the case, what a shame is it, that there should be one single farmer in all England so weak, so childish, so miserably foolish as to believe them; and so scandalously unmindful of his duty to his wife and family, as to keep any farm (that he can, by any means, get rid of) at *any rent at all!* How can prices rise, when there is a law in existence that must make the circulating money *less in quantity than it now is?* Have not your husbands seen a bad crop and a wet harvest, and have they not seen their prices *continue to fall?* What will convince them then? What will open their eyes?

In 1814, just after the peace, I said, that it was impossible to pay the present taxes unless the prices were high. Mr. Huskisson, now one of the King's Ministers, said the same. He said, that, even if the landlords were to *give up all their rents*, fifty or sixty millions of taxes could not be paid without prices *twice as great* as they were in the year 1790. This gentleman, has *now* changed his tone; but he is *now* a Minister, and was *not* one in 1814! Truth does not change, however; and it is unquestionably true, that the present taxes cannot be paid by present prices, even if *all rents* be given up. That is to say, even though the landlords give up all rents and become paupers themselves, still the farmers cannot go on with the present taxes without sinking into beggary. They must have the tithes taken off as well as the rents; and, even then, though they will sink more *slowly*, they must become mere bailiffs to the tax-gatherers.

Yet, this Mr. HUSKISSON is one of those, who would persuade the half-ruined farmers that *things will mend*; that things will *come round*; that prices will rise; when it is as impossible as it is to make yesterday return. All the time, however, that the farmers can be made to believe this, they are hastening on to utter ruin. In some cases they are led along by *reduction of rent and tithe*. Those who reduce, doubtless, in some cases, *mean well*; but they are deceived themselves as much as the farmers are. They are not necessarily wise men, because they own land. They think, that it is *impossible* that things should not come round; but, they can give you no *reason* for this. Let me hope, that no farmer who reads this will be encouraged to proceed with a farm by having a *part* of his rent taken off. Take off the *whole*, and then the whole of the tithe, and he may get along for a little while; at least, he will be able to quit when he likes; and, in the meanwhile, let me beseech you to lay by *some few pieces of gold against a rainy day*; for, there is no one can tell what may happen.

But, you will ask, is there no means of giving *relief*. Yes, *taking off the taxes*, or a great part of them; not a shilling a bushel on malt, but a large part of the whole of the taxes. This would leave the farmer money to pay fair rent with, and would make his tithe much less than it is now, as I have clearly shown you above. And, if you ask why the taxes are

not taken off, you bring me to my third point, namely, that, to obtain this there must be a *Reform of the House of Commons*.

III. Lord Castlereagh said, the other day, that a *Reform of Parliament* would not raise the price of corn a farthing a bushel. And, who ever said it would? and who but very foolish or very wicked men ever wished the price of corn to be raised? But, all good men, all men who do not wish to see the farmers and tradesmen utterly ruined and the labourers starved or made paupers of, wish to see the *taxes reduced*. That is the thing that a reformed Parliament is wanted for, and that is the first thing that a reformed Parliament would do, and do *effectually and instantly*. This, and this alone, can save farmers that cling to their farms; but, unless the farmers throughout the country *manfully come forward and ask for this reform*, unless the *yeomanry* do this, reform will never be obtained in the manner that all good men wish it to be obtained.

We all know that some taxes are necessary to the support of government, and that without government, there can be no peace or safety in society; but, do you think, that we want a *more expensive* army and navy now, in time of profound peace, than we wanted *during the last peace*? What must you think, then, when you are told, that the army and navy costs more than *four times* as much now as it did during the last peace? But, what must you think when you are told, that a navy of twenty thousand seamen and marines costs nearly *three times* as much as a navy of the *same numbers* cost in the last peace?

Here are the things that ruin the farmers; here are the things that call for a Reform of Parliament, it being the opinion of every man of sense, that these things never will be altered, unless there be a House of Commons chosen by the people at large. I have before mentioned the immense sums received by the family of Grenville. Now, do you think, that, if the people at large had the choosing of those who manage the money concerns of the nation, that that family would ever have received all that money? I suppose that a farm of 400 acres pays, at least 500*l.* a-year in taxes of all sorts and in all manner of ways. So that the two uncles of this Duke of Buckingham now receive out of the taxes a sum equal to the taxes paid by fourteen 400 acre farms, on which farms about 460 people (old and young) depend in some way or other. They take as much for *doing nothing* as would support 233 labourers' families at 30 pound a-year each family! Is this what the farmers can like? And yet it was against, and is against, these things that the Radicals complained and still complain, and that they did want, and do want, to put an end

Can you see any good reason why Mr. WYNN, the cousin of this Duke of Buckingham, should have received 1200*l.* a-year for doing nothing from 1807 to 1822; merely because he had been receiving a large salary for four years before that time? And, will any one pretend to say, that the taxes were *necessary* that went to pay this man these large sums of money? As I am speaking of this Ambassador, I will speak of the whole. We had, in 1808 (I can find no account of later date) 24 Ministers at Foreign Courts; and we had 45 such Ministers *in pay* besides these; so that we had in all, 69 Ambassadors and other Ministers. The whole 45 received in the year 1808, 57,589*l.*, though performing no service at all; and some of them had been paid in this way for upwards of 40 years! A Mr. DUTENS, who had been a charge d'affaires at Turin for 13 months, from June 1761 to July 1762, had, in 1808, been receiving a pension of 300*l.* a-year during the whole of the time; that is to

say, during forty-six years; that is to say, 11,800*l.* for thirteen months' as charge d'affaires.

When we think of these things, is it any wonder that farmers are impoverished, and that the labourers become paupers? That which is taken away to keep these people and their troops of servants, cannot be kept for the feeding and clothing of you, your husbands and children, and to help keep the labourers from becoming paupers. There was a Mr. GEORGE CANNING that you may have heard of, who was sent as an Ambassador to Portugal (where there was no king or queen or sovereign) with a salary of 14,000*l.* a-year; or enough to support 466 labourers' families at 30*l.* a family. To enumerate all the instances of public money, or taxes, bestowed in this sort of way, and in pensions and sinecures, would fill twenty such pamphlets as this. The very *tax* that you would have to pay on the pamphlets would cost more than a month's tea and sugar on the scale of the Buckingham Bill of Fare. But, I cannot help mentioning Mr. *William Huskisson*, above-named, who, in 1801, obtained a pension for life of 1,200*l.* a-year, always to be paid him, *except* when he should hold an office of 2,000*l.* a-year. This affectionate husband took care of *his wife* too, Mrs. *Emily Huskisson*, who had a pension of 600*l.* a-year settled on her, to commence at her husband's death. It has pleased God to spare this loving husband to enjoy a fat place, and to tell the farmers that they want nothing but *bad crops* to *relieve* them! Mrs. *Emily Huskisson* would, I suppose, not much relish a dish of tea according to the Buckingham Bill of Fare! And, yet, it would be hard to show, that she has a better right to a good dish of tea than you have. You have already thought, perhaps, that the Grenvilles have taken care to provide for a good dish of tea; but, in an account laid before Parliament in 1808 (since which time there has *been none*), the *wife* of Lord Grenville, one of the uncles of our Duke, stands with a pension of 1500*l.* a-year settled on her, to commence at her husband's death, and to continue for her life. But in this account (which is hardly grown less bulky) there are *hundreds of ladies*, young and old, and some *little girls*, pensioned out of the taxes that we pay. But, perhaps, the most striking thing of all is, that, for many years past, for twelve years at least, 100,000*l.* a-year has been voted by our Parliament out of our taxes, to assist the "*poor clergy*" of the Church of England! So that this enormously rich Church, several scores of the clergy of which are rolling in wealth, must, besides all the tithes and glebe, have these immense sums given it out of the taxes, in order to relieve its "*poor clergy*!"

And here let me observe, that our Duke of Buckingham, when he mentioned his Bill of Fare, observed, that "he was persuaded that one "of the most effectual modes of *relieving the farmer* would be the "adoption of some measure which should restore the *poor* to their "ancient condition of *earning their own bread*, instead of *living on the "country as annuitants."* Now, what a slap on the face is here to all the above fine persons, who certainly *do "live on the country!"* Oh, my lord Duke, I'll tell you the measures to adopt, and the first is, to take off all the pensions, sinecures and grants, which now take away as much as would, if not raised in taxes, put, in great part, an end to the pauperism. He says nothing about giving such immense sums to relieve the *parsons' wives and children*, but the *wives and children of the labourers*; these are called *annuitants, living on the country!* What are all the *ladies*, old, young, and little girls, on the pension-list? Are not they

annuitants, "living on the *country*?" And *who* is "the *country*?" Those who *work* to raise the food and raiment, or those who eat and wear them in idleness?

It is the taxes, and (wherever they exist) exorbitant rents and tithes that make paupers. The farmer, pressed by the tax-gatherer (and by the landlord and the parson if rent and tithes be too high), has not a sufficiency to give in *wages*. The labourer, for this reason, is compelled to become a pauper or to *starve*, and no man will die of starvation, if he can get at food. The taxes, therefore, which take so much away from the farmer, and out of the wages of labour itself, make the paupers; and this we see clearly proved in the fact, that, now the taxes are four times as great as they were in 1790, the poor-rates are also four times as great. When a farmer now breaks (as thousands do) is *he* not made a *poor man* by the taxes? And, when he becomes a pauper, is it *his fault*, or the fault of those who have imposed such ruinous taxation? To blame the labourers is horribly unjust. Take off the taxes, and they will no longer be paupers, any more than their great grandfathers were. To *them* no part of the blame belongs. They did not lay on the misery-making taxes; nor have they had any power to cause them to be taken off. Some of them have attempted to effect this; and their reward has been dreadful abuse and more dreadful punishment. Your husbands *have had some power*; but, that power they have used to keep taxes on, and not to take them off. When the labourer receives *nine* shillings, *four* at the least are for the tax-gatherer; for nothing can he wear or swallow that is not taxed, unless he dress in fig-leaves, eat dirt, and drink water. It is *five* shillings, therefore, and not *nine*, that he receives; and yet he is now told, that he ought to *earn his bread*, and not be an "annuitant living on the *country*!" He lives on nobody; but enough *live on him*. His toil keeps enough of others in idleness; and, surely, he is to have as much food as will barely keep him alive! Long enough, and too long, have we heard farmers inveighing *against the poor*. Everlasting outcry against the poor-rates; but none against the taxes that cause the poor-rates. Bitter invectives, loud reproaches, on the defenceless and broken-hearted labourers, without whom farmers are nothing; but, nothing but civility towards the tax-gatherers and tax-eaters of all descriptions.

Upon every principle hitherto known amongst men, "the labourer is worthy of his hire," that is to say, according to the evident meaning of our Saviour, worthy of an ample sufficiency of food and raiment. The law of nature tells us, that, of the food and raiment raised from the land or caught in the chase, the *first portion* belongs to the husbandman and the hunter. Moses' law, that is the law of God, forbids to muzzle the ox while he is treading out the corn, a command which shows how careful we ought to be to be just, considerate, kind, humane, and even grateful towards all those who perform the *toils* of the community. Base is the man who can be happy, who can enjoy himself, while he has reason to suspect that he owes any part of his enjoyments to the unrequited toil of another; and, what must those be, who can wallow in wealth and luxury, procured them by the labour of others; who can see those others perishing with hunger and nakedness, and condescend even to notice them only for the purpose of covering them with insult!

The middle class of society have a wrong and blind bias whenever they lean to the higher rather than the lower. The lower are their natural allies. Without these they are nothing. If the labourer be degraded

into a slave, the farmer's turn comes next. And, if the labourers of England had not become miserable paupers, and been nick-named the "*peasantry, the population*;" if their bill of fare had not long been "*potatoes and water*, we never should have seen *two ounces of red sugar* set down as the daily treat of the farmer of four hundred acres and his wife. But (and mark it well) if two *labouring boys* are to have neither tea, sugar, nor beer of any kind, from one year's end to the other, then *two ounces of red sugar* is too great a luxury for the farmer and his wife! Let this sink deeply into your minds. The thought of seeing you brought into this state of degradation has entered one man's mind, at any rate; and the thought has, too, been *openly*, and even ostentatiously, avowed.

This never would have been the case; such a thought as this never would have entered the mind of any man in former times, before English labourers were bowed down to the earth, as they have been within the last thirty years especially. In this work of degradation—the farmers have had their part; and, the consequences are before us: an innumerable host of pampered and insolent tax-eaters, and a "*yeomanry*," each of whose families is to be regaled with two ounces of sixpenny sugar a day! While the farmers were efficient for all the purposes of taxation and of rent and tithe paying too; while the high prices and the depreciated money enabled them to wring from the labourer a sufficiency to satisfy the demands of taxation without practising much of frugality themselves; Oh! then they were the "*yeomanry*," the "*enlightened yeomanry*," the "*sound part of the country*;" but now, that the unsparring hand of taxation is grasping at their capital, and they begin to cry out in their turn; now one calls them "*populace*;" another appeals from them to "*the education of the country*," a third bids them "*put on smock frocks*," and a fourth allots to each family of "*enlightened yeomanry*" two ounces of sixpenny sugar a day! Let this be a warning to the farmers: let them see, before it be too late, that there is no safety, no chance of escape for them, but in conjunction with the mass of the people.

Nay, it is the same thing with regard to the greater part of landlords also and even of tithe-owners. Mr. WESTERN says, that the *Sheriff's officers* (much more efficient men in this way than Radicals) are going round to the farmers of Essex *as fast as they can*. The farmer's capital goes *first*; but it is only the precursor of the rent and the tithe. So that landlords and parsons, as well as farmers, have no hope but in the mass of the just and loyal people. How quickly would a reform take place if any *considerable body* of landlords and yeomen came forward in the cause! How efficient would their remonstrances be, seconded, as they *every where would be*, by the undivided voice of the mass of the people! But, it is for them now to call on the people: the people have long enough, and much too long, called on them in vain. At any rate, if the landlord, from his false pride and true baseness suffer his last acre to be taken away, do you take care that your husbands' *last shilling* be not first taken away *by the landlord*.

To you, the farmers' wives, it belongs to do much. A man is coward indeed, who is insensible to the reproach of lack of spirit, coming from a female tongue. You should consider, that even the Buckingham Bill of Fare is luxury to what awaits you and your children in the poor-house. And at what stage short of the poor-house are you to rest, unless the

hand of taxation relax its grasp? But, how much worse off than ordinary paupers will you and your family be? The recollection of past prosperity, though it were unembittered by any consciousness of cruelty or injustice towards the poor, would inflict on you sufferings that are unknown to the common pauper, who, with mind habituated to degradation and without knowing what hope or emulation means, seeks only for what is requisite to satisfy the calls of hunger. Those, who, after a long career of prosperity, have had, in days of decline and misery, to experience the effect of blandishments and caresses exchanged for neglect and scorn; those, and those only, can anticipate the sufferings that await you and your children, unless you instantly resolve to do all that in you lies to *save something from the wreck* that awaits every farmer's family not already dashed to pieces.

Fling from you with disdain the vague hope, unsupported as it is by reason or experience, that "those at the head of affairs *must know best*, and that, surely, they will not let you be reduced to beggary." If they must know best, how come you in your present state? If they must know best, why have so many thousands of farmers' families already had the beds taken from under them? If they must know best, why is it that all their plans have failed, that all their expectations have been disappointed, that all their predictions have been falsified? If they must know best, how is it that they, in one and the same breath, regret the existence of too much food and encourage projects for checking the increase of mouths? If they must know best, how is it that the calling of the farmer, heretofore steady as the sun that warms the earth and safe as the earth itself, has, under their sway, become more uncertain than the winds and more perilous than the rocks and billows? If they must know best, how is it, that they now confess, that they know not what to do, and that this greatest of all national concerns must be left to *chance*?

Away, then, with this blind reliance. Consider well your situation. Weigh carefully your dangers and your duties. Employ all your powerful influence. If the wreck must come, save, as you would save your lives, *some pieces of gold*; and, above all things, remember, at your down-laying and up-rising remember, the two ounces of sixpenny sugar!

I am,

With sincere respect,

Your friend and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

LATE BANKER COUTTS.

"If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it."—NUMBERS, ch. xxvii, v. 8—11.

"If any provide not for *his own*, and specially for those of his *own house*, he hath denied the faith, and is *worse than an infidel*."—PAUL TO TIM. ch. v. v. 8.

(*Political Register*, March, 1822.)

THE insignificance of the man, whose name stands at the head of this article would make an apology necessary for my taking up, in this way, any portion of the time of my readers, who might very reasonably say, "What is the conduct of this banker to us?" But, the public prints have, for years past, been *infested* with praises on him and on the woman who is now his widow; and, the disposition of his immense wealth has been such as to set an example of the most evil and odious tendency. Therefore, however a mere money-huckster may be beneath our notice, in that capacity, a man and a woman who have had twenty ordinary volumes of praise bestowed upon them; and an act, by which a million or more of money, got together during a marriage with one wife, has been made to pass to a second wife, to the total exclusion of the children by the first wife; these, and especially when all the circumstances are taken into view, do become worthy of public attention.

COUTTS appears to have been a Scotchman, who came to London about sixty or more years back. The means by which he became a banker; how he became to be banker to the King and Family; how he got his money together: these are matters of little interest; for we daily, under this system of frauds and loans and jobs and taxes, see beggars, and stupid beggars too, become richer than nobles, in a much shorter space than it took Coutts to get his mass of money together.

Not a great many years after his becoming a banker in London he married; and, from this marriage he had *three daughters*. He lived in a very fashionable and high style while his daughters were growing up, and they, of course, as was natural and proper, and agreeable to the education they had received, looked upon themselves as the future possessors of great wealth. The prospect of such wealth would, too, naturally have some weight in the minds of those with whom they were to become closely connected. At a pretty early age they were all married, one to the EARL of BUTE, one to the EARL of GUILDFORD, and one to Sir FRANCIS BURDETT. They all had, and have, children, both sons and daughters.

With this family of children and grandchildren, one would have thought that must have been a strange sort of father and grandfather not to be uncommonly anxious to do nothing himself that should tend to tarnish, and especially to make them *ashamed of him!* Yet, *what did this man do?* This is what we are now going to see! And this inquiry will decide the question, whether his memory ought, or ought not, to be held in abhorrence.

In 1816 the late Mrs. COUTTS, the mother of the three ladies before-mentioned, died, herself at a very advanced age, and leaving a husband *eighty-one years old.* What had such a man to do but to pass the remainder of his days amongst his children? Ought not the death of her, who had been for *half a century* his companion, to have admonished him, that the close of his own career was at hand? The event was, indeed, a natural one, but was it not calculated to turn his mind more immediately towards the means of doing all that yet lay in his power to make as sure provision as possible for the peace, honour, and happiness of his daughters and of their children? At the moment of their birth, he contracted, towards them, duties which could cease only with his life or with their lives.

Wholly insensible of these duties; dismissing all feeling for his children, and with a degree of indecency perfectly without a parallel, he married another woman before the corpse of the mother of his daughters was scarcely in the tomb; and, to those daughters, two of whom were the wives or widows of peers of the realm, he gave a late *play-actress* for mother-in-law! As to the *motives* to this act; as to whether it denoted any thing previous; as to the character of the woman thus placed in the seat of the mother of these ladies; of these I shall say nothing. I leave these to the reader's own information and judgment, and tie myself down to the simple, undeniable and notorious fact, that COUTTS did thus marry, under all these circumstances, and at the age of *four score and one.*

In a pamphlet, published just after this marriage took place, and of which pamphlet I shall have to say more by-and-by, it was asked, whether Coutts had not a *right* to do this thing; whether he had not a *right* to take this woman, whose name was *Mellon*, to wife? To which I answer, that he had *not a right* to do this.

Nobody pretends that Coutts had not a *legal* right to marry a play-actress; and, even to marry her within *ten minutes*, instead of *ten days*, after the breath was out of his former wife's body. But, there are many things that men have *law* for doing and that they are held in abhorrence for doing at the same time. A man may, quite *legally*, be guilty of most monstrous acts towards his wife and children; and so may they towards him. He may, Judge BULLER said, *legally* beat his wife with a stick as big as his thumb; and she may *legally* run him in debt, waste his substance, and, if he be a weak man, drive him to cut his throat, instead of driving him to use the stick as big as his thumb, which, *in such a case*, would be much better than throat-cutting. Children may, without any breach of the *law of the land*, be most undutiful and ungrateful and unfeeling towards their parents; and, without any breach of *that law*, parents may act a most cruel and unnatural part towards their children. The law of the land leaves many of our acts untouched; because, to meddle with them would be to bring the magistrate into our houses, kitchens and bed-rooms. But, there is another law; the law of reason

and public opinion ; the law of conscience ; the law of moral right and wrong ; that law by which men try the *characters* of each other ; by this law Coutts stands condemned ; this law declares that he had *no right* to insult the scarcely cold corpse of the mother of his children, and so cruelly to wound the feelings of those children.

Had Coutts been a man with *no children at all*, there was still, considering the length of time he had been married to his former wife ; considering that she had been the companion of his life, something unjust, and grossly unjust, towards her memory, to marry another woman on the day, or day after, her burial. Even the law of the land holds, that you may *libel the dead*, and that such libelling is criminal, because it tends to stir up ill blood, and to produce acts of unlawful violence on the part of the relatives of the libelled dead. If this be the case, what greater libel could be pronounced on the deceased Mrs. Coutts than the instant marriage of her husband with another woman ? If indeed the deceased had been a *bad wife*, a *bad mother*, a dissolute, squandering, or unfeeling creature, the case would have been different ; but, it is well known, that she was *precisely the contrary of all these* ; and *I know*, that he himself called her a "*departed angel*" in a very few days after he had given her the late play-actress for a successor. What ! Was he become a driveller then ; was he fallen into his second childhood ? O, no ! Or, if this defence be set up for *him*, what are we to say of the new wife ? Nevertheless, either he was a mere dotard, or (leaving children out of the question) he was guilty of deliberate injustice towards the memory of her, who had been the companion of his cares as well as a partaker in the fruits of them during a long life.

Had the children of Coutts been placed in such a state of life as to be unexposed and unaffected by the new marriage ; then the offence of the father would have been less. But, they were all on a station ; all exposed to the gaze of the world ; all necessarily deeply affected by such an act on the part of their father and the grandfather of their children. He had not only given his consent to their marriage with noblemen, but had, in a great measure, from the education he gave them, from his style of living, and, indeed, from his direct acts, been the cause of their marriage with those noblemen. And, after all this, had he a *right* to give them and their husbands, for a *mother-in-law*, a woman whose person, in the capacity of a play-actress, they had all paid a hundred times over to afford them amusement ? Had he a *right* to do this ? If he had, then a father's rights have no bounds but that of the mere prohibition to stick a dagger into the heart of his child.

It is not this particular case that I should think worthy of so much attention ; it is not the cruelty towards Coutts' children only ; but it is the *principle*, it is the *example*, that I have in view. If a man have a right in his second marriage, to disregard the feelings of his children, he has a right also to disregard their morals as affected by his example ; and, if this doctrine be sound, he has a *right* to marry not only a play-actress, but a *notorious prostitute* ! And, will any man say, that a father of a family, with daughters married ; will any man say, that the lowest tradesman, or even a common labourer, thus situated, would have a *right* to do this ? Nay, will any man say, that he ever heard of a tradesman or common labourer doing, or think of doing such a thing ?

It is in vain to attempt to slur over the *degradation* in this case of Coutts, by saying that one woman is as good as another ; that God

made them all ; and the like. In this case there is a broad and marked distinction. *Players* exhibit their persons for hire. They choose their way of life. It is *easier* than digging or hammering. But, it has always been held in *dishonour* ; in all times and in all countries. And, as to our country, the *law* calls an *unlicensed* player, a *rogue* and *vagabond*. So that, if Coutts' eulogists will have the *law*, let them have this along with it. There are a dozen Acts of Parliament, which say, that " every person who shall, for hire, gain, or reward, act, represent, or perform, " any tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, or entertainment of the stage, " without *license*, shall be deemed to be a *rogue and vagabond*." 28 G. II. chap. 10.

Yes, it is true enough, that *God made all the women* ; but he did not make them all *players* ; he did not make any *license* necessary to save them from the consequences of being deemed rogues and vagabonds ; he did not make it necessary that " *all women* " should have a license to protect their backs from the beadle's lash. And, therefore, this will not do. In this polite and polished age, indeed ; in this age of " *education*," the players are, by some, called " *professional gentlemen and ladies*." But, in spite of all that can be done, the degradation remains, and will always remain. When once the ruddle and plaster have been put upon the skin, nothing can rub it off. The character of player, like that of parson is indelible.

There are cases, indeed, where the *passions* plead strongly, and where there is, on this score, an apology, and even a justification. A *young* man, however high in rank, may be *in love* with a play-actress. He may be unable to resist the power of her charms. Love is a great leveller ; a perfect Radical. And, in such a case, there does not appear to be anything to be severely criticised, because (and this is a great point) the passion *may be*, and is likely enough to be *mutual*. But, has Coutts' case this apology ? Was he *young* ? Was he *in love* ? Did the *charms* of his second wife set his heart on fire, and make it blaze with such fury as not to be quenched, or checked even for ten days by the tears that he was shedding for his former wife ? The woman, might, indeed, be *in love with him*. Her passionate affection for his person might have made her in haste to obviate all possible, or at least all moral and all legal obstacles to its full gratification. But he could have been under the influence of no such impatient feelings. Therefore, if he were not a mere dotard and driveller, there can be no apology for his conduct ; and, if he were a dotard and driveller—if he were an imbecile, *who* was his adviser ? who urged him on to commit this barbarous insult on the memory of the mother of his children ? Who pushed him on to cast this slur upon, and to wound the feelings of those children ?

But, there were two particular circumstances attending this marriage, in addition to those already mentioned, which of themselves are odious enough, in all conscience. The first of the circumstances to which I here allude, is not generally known ; but it happens to be known to me ; and, as it is decisive as to the unfeelingness of Coutts, or his advisers, I will state it. The house, corner of Stratton-street and Piccadilly, which is, in fact, two houses, only there is a door which opens out of the one into the other : these houses were, as plainly and as fully as such a thing can be done by words, given by Coutts, one of them to his daughter, Lady Guildford, and the other to his daughter, Lady Burdett ; Sir Francis Burdett having long lived in this house, in which, I believe, his children had

been born. The late Mrs. Coutts, who was, as I have heard from the best authority, a very affectionate mother, frequently observed to her daughters how comfortable it would be for them to be resident so close to each other, and in a manner that they could communicate and visit without going out of doors. Now, then, let the reader, whether father, mother, son, or daughter, think of this a little; and then let it be told to that reader, as I now tell it, that Coutts, almost immediately after the breath was out of his wife's body, *really gave these two houses to his new wife!* And, what is more, almost immediately announced to Sir Francis Burdett that he had done so; and, of course, thereby gave him to understand, that if he remained in the house he must remain by consent of the successor of his wife's mother.

Upon this occasion Sir Francis did that which it was natural for him to do. He offered to *purchase* the houses at any price that might be put upon them, in order that the intention of the late Mrs. Coutts, with regard to the residence of her daughters, might be fulfilled. This was *refused!* Let the public bear that in mind. This was *refused*, positively *refused*; and if Lady Burdett, if Coutts' own daughter, ever set her foot in the house again, it was to be as tenant, or by sufferance of the new wife! Accordingly, she never did, I believe, set her foot in the house again. The house was quitted in a very short time afterwards, and Sir Francis Burdett purchased or took another town residence. This fact alone, for the correctness of which I vouch, is more than sufficient to decide the character of Coutts. When he committed this act he was still possessed of his mental faculties or he was not. If he still possessed his vigour of mind, what human heart is there to suggest an apology for him? If he had sunk already into a state of imbecility, what apology is there for the person who could have been his adviser? Had he not already done enough to tear the hearts of his daughters? Was it necessary to add to all the rest this most barbarous and most brutal act of cruelty?

The other circumstance, to which I have alluded above, is pretty generally known; namely, the publication, soon after the death of the late Mrs. Coutts, of a Pamphlet, entitled, "An Account of Mr. Coutts' first wife, BETTY STARKY, and of the present MRS. COUTTS."—This Pamphlet was published, the reader will observe, just after the second marriage of Coutts; but not until after Sir Francis Burdett had refused to live in a house by sufferance of the second wife. The Pamphlet related in substance this: that Elizabeth Starky, the daughter of a husbandman in Lancashire, was a fine young woman, healthy and handsome, and servant to Coutts' brother, and that she was married to Coutts, and became the mother, as it is well known she was, of two Peeresses and of a Baronet's Lady.

There can be no doubt at all of the *malignant motive* with which this Publication was made. It is obvious that the intention was to bring those ladies down to a level with the new wife; who is, in the same Pamphlet, highly extolled for her accomplishments and manners. What I am aiming at here is to enable the reader to judge of the source from which this Pamphlet must have come; and that he will, I think, be enabled to do by looking a little at one of the anecdotes contained in the Pamphlet. This anecdote relates, that when the late Mrs. Coutts was a servant girl, the present Lord Dundonald, who was then a schoolboy (mark the particulars) used to come to Coutts' in the holiday time, and

to frolic and gambol with Betty Starky; and then, the anecdote goes on to say, that little did she think that she was to be the mother of Peeresses; and, little did he "suppose it possible that he should ever be compelled to apply to her bounty for relief to save his progeny from actual want."

Now let the reader bear in mind that full half a century had elapsed since the late Mrs. Coutts was a servant at all; who, therefore, could have known the fact of Lord Dundonald's gambolling with Betty Starky? Who but his Lordship himself *and Coutts*? Who could have known of that unfortunate nobleman's application to the late Mrs. Coutts for bounty, to save his progeny from actual want; who but himself *and Coutts*? Let the reader judge, whether any but these two persons could have been acquainted with the facts. Let him look at the nature of the facts themselves. Let him judge *which of the two* was most likely to make the facts known; and, when he has well considered these things, let him mistake if he can, as to the *person who conveyed these anecdotes to the press*. Talk of *charity*, indeed, ten thousand charity-schools, as many alms-houses, and a million of money doled out into the hands of beggars, would not wipe off the ten millionth part of an act like this.

The daughters of Coutts, as well as every other person of sound judgment, would naturally despise an attempt like this to degrade the character of the late Mrs. Coutts. She had been a *servant*, but in the estimation of whom has that ever been regarded, not as dishonourable, but as at all lessening the honour belonging to future elevation? Besides, Coutts himself was a tradesman; a tradesman in money, to be sure, but still a tradesman; and in no way that the matter can be viewed, was the late Mrs. Coutts at all beneath him in point of rank. If, indeed, the late Mrs. Coutts had been a *play-actress*, the fact might have been something like an answer to her daughters who were supposed to complain of the second marriage; but there was no similarity in the cases. There were no children before the marriage of the late Mrs. Coutts; there was nobody to inflict pain on; the parties were about of an age; there was every reason to suppose the existence of a mutual attachment, before which a disparity in point of riches naturally vanishes. Nevertheless, the publication of these anecdotes was not the less malignant. It showed a disposition to degrade, to mortify, to sting to the quick, and, in short, to do every thing that a fiend-like mind could suggest. And, as I said before, let the reader, taking all the circumstances into view, *judge who the person was* that caused this most malignant publication to find its way through the press.

So much for Coutts' conduct with regard to his second marriage. Now let us see, how he stands with regard to the disposal of his property at his death. He has left three daughters, two of whom are widowed peeresses, each of the three has several children, and amongst the whole there are two or three grandsons of Coutts. Yet, he has left the whole of his immense property to the late play-actress who is now his widow!

This act I condemn as unnatural and unjust. Those texts of Scripture, which I have taken as mottos to this article, merely enforce what the law of nature dictates; and if that law were generally set at defiance, in the distribution of men's goods, there must be an end to civil society, which is only combination of families, framed as nearly as possible upon the principles of family connection. Nay, mankind could not exist at all even in the savage state, if Coutts' example were generally acted upon. Any argument that would justify his conduct, would justify the savage in

abandoning his children upon his choosing a second companion. It matters nothing that the children of Coutts will not suffer hunger or thirst on account of his conduct. *Want* is relative as well as most other things; and the only question here is whether he has acted by those children as it was natural for a father to act; and this question, every man will at once decide in the negative.

It is said here again, that he had a *right* to do what he has done; which question of *right* I settled before. But as to his property, it is said that he earned it; and that he had a right to do what he pleased with it. This I deny. *Legally*, to be sure, he had a right to dispose of his goods as he liked; but morally he had not. Will any one deny, that there existed, and must have existed, a tacit pledge, at the least, that his children should inherit his property? Will any one deny, that the expectations, the calculations, and that numerous positive acts of those children, must have been grounded upon a firm faith on this pledge? Two of the daughters are *widows*, each with several children, and will any one deny, that the late husbands of those widows, must not, at their death, have calculated upon their widows and their children being provided for by the father of their wives and the grandfather of their children, who was well known to possess boundless riches, who, be it observed, too, had never had anything like quarrelling or bickering with his children, who had constantly shown great fondness for them all, and who was too old, already far too old, for any human being to suppose it possible that he could ever think of a second matrimonial connection? Did not this tacit pledge clearly exist? Nay, does not every father make this pledge to his children the moment they are born? Does he not make the pledge with the mother, too, when he marries her? And if he does not, what pledge does he make, and what compensation does she receive for the surrender of her person.

It is said, that he *earned* his *fortune*. The pride of man holds this language, I allow, but it is not tolerated by reason and by justice, in this unlimitedly exclusive sense. When a young man and a young woman join together in matrimony, and a fortune as well as a family of children make up the result, I should be glad to know upon what ground it is, that the wife, if she have performed her duty faithfully, is to be regarded as having had no share in the *gaining of the fortune*. The law, indeed, gives the man a great deal of control with regard to the fortune; but even the law does not allow a man to strip his wife of all. His will cannot take from her her dower, and cannot take from her her portion of freehold property. The law; the bare law of the land, leaving honour, conscience, and common humanity out of the question; the naked law, that can only provide against flagrant villanies, will not suffer him, except he be uncommonly artful, to do such crying injustice to her who has assisted in gaining a fortune.

But, upon what ground is it that the late Mrs. Coutts is to be considered as not having been a partner in the property of her husband? If he had been unfortunate; if he had become a beggar; then, I'll warrant, she would have been admitted to a full partnership in carrying his wallet, and collecting bread and broken meat for his sustenance. He was fortunate; he grew rich; his daughters became peeresses; but, had the wife no share in all this? had her influence over him, the happiness which children gave him; the emulation with which they inspired him; had her management, her skill and conduct in her affairs; had these

nothing to do with the making of the fortune? She might have been a squanderer of his money, a tormentor of his life, a curse and a ruin to him. She was the contrary, the precise contrary of all these; and yet we are to be told, that the fortune was all his own; that no part of it belonged to her; and that he *had a right* to dispose of it in a way that would take from her children even that portion which she herself had assisted to earn.

If this doctrine were to be admitted to be good and sound, it is impossible to conceive a being more degraded than that of a wife. She is to be looked upon in a light much more disadvantageous than that of a servant. The servant has *wages*, besides board and lodging; but, if this doctrine be admitted, the wife has no claim to anything but mere covering and sustenance. There are, however, very few men that will not hold such doctrine in detestation. A sense of natural justice tells every man, that when a young woman unites herself with him, she is to be a sharer in the good as well as in the evil of their lives; that all his gains ought, in reason, to be ascribed partly to her; and that it is manifestly unjust to give away from her children that, at any rate, which forms her portion of the gains. Yet this is what Coutts has done. If he broke his pledge with regard to his own share of the fortune, he ought, at the least, to have given his wife's share to her children; he has alienated all. He has set reason, nature, and common decency at defiance; and all that we can hope to do is to destroy the effects of so evil an example, by rendering it odious in the eyes of the community.

It has surprised some persons, and me amongst the rest, that no appeal to the law has been made in this case. I suppose, however, that all the precautions had been duly taken. The law of last wills it is difficult to rely much upon; and, indeed, it has been found difficult to make efficient laws respecting them. But, without pretending to know anything about this law, and without wishing any law to be made, that should bind persons in general too tightly in the disposing of their property, I do think, that some law is necessary to prevent persons, after a *certain age*, from alienating their property from their kindred; and especially from their natural heirs. In America, they would break such a will as that of Coutts' without scruple. That is to say, an Act would be passed to do it. They are Republicans, to be sure; but they have some very just notions about the rights of *women*, as well as about the rights of men. They do not suffer a man to leave his wife, or his wife's children, penniless, if he have anything to leave. They do not suffer a second wife to come in, and sweep away, in virtue of a will, that which would naturally belong to the first wife's children. The man that means to do an act of injustice of this sort, must do it in his lifetime, and must die a beggar, as the just punishment for being an unnatural father.

However, it is very clear that some law ought to exist to prevent property from being alienated by the will of any person, if such will be made in extreme old age, whether there be proof of mental imbecility or not. If the will be made at an earlier age, it ought to stand. But if made in extreme old age, and if it be manifestly contrary to all sound principles of law, and of natural justice, it ought to be set aside, and a distribution of property take place, in the same manner as if there were no will at all.

Those that contend for, those that justify the will of Coutts, must contend that he was competent to the making of a will; that his mental faculties were yet sound and efficient; that he clearly knew what he was

doing; that he intended to do what he has done; and if he did intend to do this; if it was a deliberate act of his, where shall we find words to give an adequate description of his character; and where will he find, except amongst the hireling scribes of this town, one single soul in the whole world to attempt to defend that character? Yet, they must insist that he was competent to the making of a will; they must insist, that his mind as well as his hand was at work in the doing of this thing; they must insist that it was an act of his own unbiassed choice; or else what do they do, what sentence do they pass, with regard to every one who can be supposed to have possessed any influence over him?

In conclusion, I do not think it necessary to offer any apology to my readers for having taken up so much of their time with remarks on the conduct of an individual, now dead and never worthy of any great deal of public attention; because the remarks have a general application. Few men possess a million of money; but most husbands and fathers possess something; and it is the example of this man, and not his particular conduct as confined to his family, that makes that conduct an object of public importance. The immense wealth of Coutts is talked of everywhere; consequently the disposal of it is a subject of conversation equally extensive. If the press be totally silent, and totally silent it has hitherto been, may not the unnatural act become in some degree a precedent? All men are liable to grow old, age is always liable to frailties; and, if those who still possess vigour of mind suffer the effects of those frailties to become examples for the future, we must expect the cases to be multiplied, until to be unnatural and unjust become a characteristic of the country.

Towards this man and his widow the press of London has discovered baseness without a parallel, while, with unblushing front, it calls itself the "*guardian of public morals.*" Volume upon volume of praise, of unqualified praise, has that press bestowed upon these two persons; praise so disgusting, so nauseous, so loathsome, as to make one almost ashamed of belonging to the public amongst whom it could be tolerated. With this I bid all the parties farewell: when the press has taken a *refresher*, let it burst forth again in new peals of praise; but first let it *answer* these remarks on the conduct of the eulogised parties. Let it *rub off this*; and then proceed in its old strain, till the very dogs howl out responses.

WM. COBBETT.

TO ANY PLOUGHMAN,

ON THE RECENT REPORT OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE.

(*Political Register, April, 1822.*)

BROTHER CLODTHUMPER,

Kensington, 10th April, 1822.

I am about to address you on a subject in which you, as well as all the class of labourers, whether they work on earth or on brass or cotton, or whatever else it may be, are very deeply interested. There are on

foot many schemes to raise the price of corn; and one of them I am about to speak to you of. What are the objects of such schemes; whether such schemes ought to be thought of; and whether any such schemes can be effectual; these are matters that I shall consider by-and-by; but, first of all, I must give you the history of the origin of the schemes, and explain to you what this Agricultural Committee is.

You know but too well to what an enormous price corn and all sorts of food were raised during the war; you know that your wages did not rise with the rise in that price; you know, that in 1792, the quartern loaf (in London) was $6\frac{1}{2}d.$, and that then you got on an average 9s. a-week at the lowest; and you know very well that when the quartern loaf (in London) got up and kept up at 1s. to 2s. you did not get, as you ought to have done, 27s. a week; but were compelled to live (or rather starve) on from 10s. to 15s. a week. You saw the farmers and the landlords and the parsons prosper all this while; and well they might, for, amongst them and amongst those who were living on the taxes, there was a pretty fair division of what was withheld from you; namely, about 18s. out of every 27s. that you would have had, had it not been for a paper-money system, by the means of which prices were raised, while the nominal value of the money caused your wages to continue so much lower than they ought to have been. The prosperity was a thing continually boasted of; but you were not prosperous! You did not taste of this "prosperity." You were suffering; and the consequence of which suffering was, that a large part of the working people became paupers. It was a strange sight to behold a Government boasting of the prosperity of a country, and the number of paupers increasing all the while! I used to tell the Government this. I told it of it almost weekly for a great many years; but, our Government is as strange a thing itself as there is to be found on the face of the earth.

This prosperity is a thing, however, that we ought clearly to understand; because we shall presently have to speak of the "distress," which has been the cause of that Report on which I am about to address myself to you. If all the straw and hay and turnips and oats produced upon a farm were, when turned into dung, to be laid upon one of the fields out of the twenty, while the rest were ploughed and mowed and fed constantly, without ever being dunged at all, that one field would look very gay; it would be very prosperous; but would it be a prosperous farm? If one of the members of a family take not only his own income but two-thirds of that of ten brothers and sisters, he will make a fine figure; he will shine; he will be prosperous; but will this be a prosperous family? And would it not merit the epithet prosperous much more, if every member of the family kept his or her own income or earnings? No doubt the one would make a fine show; and as he would be the only one of the family that would be seen, the family of Chopstick would be thought prosperous, though nine-tenths of them might be paupers.

Thus was it with this nation, nine-tenths of whom were beggared by the very means that enabled the other tenth to make a grand and brilliant show. This prosperity was not, however, to go on without end. The paper-money, not payable in gold, was the cause of it. This it was that puffed up prices without puffing up your wages; and this it was, which, in this manner, took from the labouring classes, actually pinched from their backs and bellies and fires and beds, all the means of carrying on the wars and of enriching farmers and landlords and parsons besides. The immense sums thus pinched from the millions, and put into the

hands of the *thousands*, made a *grand show*; and this show was called *prosperity*. This prosperity has now changed places with, or, at least, is supplanted by "*distress*." The farmers and landlords and parsons are now in *distress*. Curious enough this, too, that as soon as any of you get a little meat to eat; as soon as you begin to *live* a little; as soon as the Government has to announce (which it does) that the *poor-rates are decreasing*; it has to confess, though (it says) with great pain, that the farmers and landlords and parsons are in *distress*! Strange thing, my brother ploughmen, that their prosperity should have increased as poor-rates increased, and now decline as poor-rates decline!

That man must be an idiot, or a landlord, who wants anything more to convince him, that the boasted prosperity was *false*; that it was merely the effect of a *transfer* of the wages and goods of the *millions* into the hands of the *thousands*; that, in short, all the fine show that has been made, has been merely the result of deductions from the wages of labour; and that not a single pennyworth has, *upon the whole*, been added to the valuable things, or property, of the nation.

"Well," say you, as every man of plain sense will, at first thought, naturally say; "Well, but here is no cause of *distress*, Mr. Cobbett. "The farmers, landlords and parsons will indeed, *cease to deduct from our wages*; but, they will *still have their own*. We shall get the "wages that we got in 1792, and they will get the prices and rents and "tithes that they got then. We shall want no more poor-rates than we "wanted in 1792: so that, we have only to forgive the past, and, please "God, Mr. Cobbett, we shall all do very well again; and Old England "will once more be the best country in the world."

COBBETT. Ah! Master Clodthumper! But, it is very natural, that you should see the thing in this light. This is a curious sort of a THING this thing of ours: it puzzles wiser men than you and I are.

CLODTHUMPER. But, surely, I must be right in this. Prices, as I can well remember; I mean prices of corn, are the same as they were in 1792; and, all there is to do is to give us the same wages as in 1792; and then are we not all right again in a short time?

COBBETT. Why now, do you get what you got in 1792?

CLODTHUMPER. Yes, I get more.

COBBETT. And are you *as well off* as you were in 1792?

CLODTHUMPER. No: but, then, *all prices are not yet come down*. There is my *salt* which is about *four times* as dear as in 1792; and my *shoes and breeches and leggings and hedging-gloves*; and the *malt* is so dear that I cannot get any yet; and there are my tobacco and sugar and tea, all three times as dear. But, they will all come down, will they not?

COBBETT. I do not know that.

CLODTHUMPER. O! If they do not come down, and a great many other things, I cannot live upon the wages of 1792; or, if I am compelled to take the wages of 1792, I must *still have part of my weekly pay from the overseer*.

COBBETT. Thus, then, it depends, it seems, upon these same prices of other things *besides corn*. And, do you not find, now, that *bread* and even *flour*, are much *dearer* than in 1792, though corn is *no dearer* than in 1792?

CLODTHUMPER. Yes, I do; and that is a cursed shame. But, Mr. Cobbett, you know that millers and bakers are *great rogues*!

COBBETT. They must, then, be *fools* also; for, do you see many of

them that get *rich*? Come, I see you puzzle yourself about this matter; and, if you will listen to me for a few minutes, I will explain to you how it is, that with the prices of 1792, you and the farmer and the landlord and the parson may all be in a state of distress *now*, though, in 1792, you were in no *distress at all*. You are not so well off as you were in 1792; the farmer is getting poorer and poorer; the landlord gets little, and will shortly get no rent; the parson sees his tithes in danger; and yet prices of farm produce are much about what they were in 1792. Will you listen to me while I explain to you the reason of this?

CLODTHUMPER. To be sure I will.

COBBETT. You have said, that your salt, tea, sugar, tobacco, leather, soap, malt, and you might have added a great many other things, are *dearer* than they were in 1792. Now, all that the farmer and his family consume in this way is dearer also. All his implements are dearer. All that his tradesmen consume is dearer. So that the farmer has not so much left at the end of the year as he used to have. He pinches you as hard as he can; but if he do not give you enough to keep you in wages, he must give it you in poor-rates. He pinches himself and the tradesman as hard as he can too; but, still he has to pay them a great deal more than in 1792. Several farmers were, last year, asked by the Agricultural Committee, whether the *smiths* and *wheelwrights* and *collar-makers* had not reduced their prices. The answer was, *very little*; not in *proportion* to the fall in the price of corn, nor anything like it. And, why? Because these people found that salt, soap, candles, tobacco, leather, tea, sugar, malt, and other things, *did not fall at all*, though corn did. Nay, they found that even *flour* did not fall to the price of 1792, nor anything like it! And why not? Because the miller and millwright and all the miller's tradesmen found that their salt, malt, and other things, *did not fall at all*, though corn and cattle had fallen so much!

Now, then, why do not these, and numerous other things, fall as the corn and cattle fall? This is the point. They cannot fall, because there is a *tax* on them; and that *tax does not fall at all*. The barley is fallen to 2s. 6d. a bushel; but, there was, till the other day, 3s. 6d. a bushel tax on the malt; and there is now 2s. 6d. tax on the bushel of malt; which, together with Excise-expenses and risks, makes up about three-fifths of the whole cost of the malt. Then the salt is, in fact, *all tax*, except about a *shilling a bushel*; and, it is now *twenty shillings* a bushel, and was in the year 1792 only about five shillings a bushel. In short, the farmer has now to pay, through the various channels, about *four times* as much in taxes as he had to pay in 1792; and, if his *prices be the same* that they were in 1792, it is clear, that he must pay rent out of *something else than his produce*; for, if he can *now* pay rent out of his produce, the farmer of 1792 must have been getting rich as a Jew; and we all know that he was not.

The fact is, that great numbers of the farmers grew rich *during high prices*; that is to say, as I have shown before, by deducting from the wages of labour and by making the labourers paupers. But, these riches soon melt away; and, as a great part of them are already melted, the farmers cannot, in numerous cases, pay any rents at all. This is a pretty smart pull up for the landlord. He, therefore, now feels what is called "*distress*." You felt it before; but you went quietly to the *poor-house*; and, if the landlord would go *quietly*, we should hear of no such *schemes* as I am about to address you on; but, the landlord will not go quietly

to the poor-house : he makes a "*clamour*;" calls aloud for a "*remedy*;" and the *Report*, about which I am going to write to you, contains one of the many *remedies* that have been proposed for purposes of giving him *relief*.

It is curious enough to observe, that when the farmer paid high rent very punctually, and when the deduction from your wages was reducing you to misery the most deplorable, the landlords never thought of any schemes to afford *relief* to you ! This is very well worth carrying along in your mind. You know very well, that, since 1792, three-fourths of you have actually *become paupers*; and yet, the nation was said to be, all the while, *increasing in prosperity* ! But now, the moment the landlords begin to feel, though the *millions* are better off, those landlords set up the cry of "*national distress*!" This is well worthy of being borne in mind ; though the case is full, from one end to the other, of curious matter.

However, let us now proceed towards the *remedy* contained in the *Report*, first describing a little this thing called the *Agricultural Report*. You should know, then, that a great number of farmers and landlords have sent petitions to the House of Commons, complaining of their *distress*, and praying for *relief*. The House has, in consequence of these prayers, picked out a portion of the wisest of its Members, and called them a Committee, and ordered them to inquire into these complaints, and to *report* to the House the result of their inquiries ; that is to say, to lay before it a paper, containing the opinions of these picked Members as to the nature and extent of the evil, and as to the *remedy*, if any, which they think ought to be applied. This paper is called the *Report*, and the Committee, in this *Report*, have suggested certain *remedies*, of which I propose to speak to you pretty fully.

You will, doubtless, conclude, at once, that the tendency of the *remedy* will have a *correspondence* with the cause of the *distress*. Having seen so clearly, that the farmer is disabled to pay rent by the taxes ; having seen that, with prices of 1792 and with taxes four times as great as those of 1792, it is impossible for him to pay the rent of 1792 ; having, in your own case, experienced, that, with *corn* at the price of 1792, you would actually starve to death with the wages of 1792, if unaided by poor-rates ; having seen, in short, that it is the *taxes* that disable the farmer to pay his rent, and that is now *taking down* the landlords into a state that their honours and lordships are pleased to call "*distress*;" having seen this, you will, I dare say, have already concluded, that the Committee, in a case so very plain, have, at once, *recommended the reducing of taxes to the standard of 1792*.

Alas ! Brother Clodthumper, little do you know of the wisdom of the nation in its "*collective*" state ! O, no ! Not a word about reducing taxes : not so much as a single word, or the ten-millionth part of a single hint, as to any such matter. Quite enough, however, about another mode of giving *relief* ; namely, by *raising the price of corn* ! Now, here we have another curious thing. During the twenty years, or thereabouts, that you were suffering from high prices and low wages ; during the time that you were in a state of half starvation from that cause, we never heard of any schemes for *raising your wages by law* ! We heard of schemes, and we saw the laws passed, to prevent you from *combining*, to *punish* you for combining, to raise, or even to *keep up*, your wages ; we saw laws to *compel* you to make disclosures as to combinations of this

sort in which you yourself might have been implicated ; but, during the whole of the twenty years, while your wages were kept down in comparison with the prices of provisions, we never heard of such a thing as any one's thinking, or dreaming, of *a law to raise the price of your labour* ! This is something quite *neat* : it has in it no sort of mixture.

But, in the total absence of all thoughts of this kind, there were thoughts enough of another kind respecting you. Pinched so hard by high prices of food and by low wages, you necessarily became what they still called *paupers*, though the character of pauper was merely one in which you received a part of your wages. Hence arose numerous schemes for *docking* you in this quarter ; and amongst other schemers, one Parson MALTHUS came forth with a proposition to *check the breeding of labourers* ! He did not propose a law to *raise the price of labour*. That was not amongst his remedies. Your labour had fallen in price through the means of a base paper-money. No proposition to get rid of this base money. No proposition to raise the price of your commodity, your labour ; but, now that the landlords complain of distress, there are propositions enough to *raise the price of the produce of the land* !

Keeping this in our minds, let us approach the scheme for *raising the price of corn*. And here, let me beseech you to bear in mind, that this same Parliament has passed laws ; or, at least, keeps in force laws, to *prevent corn from rising in price* ! " Good God ! " you exclaim ; " can this be true ? " Indeed it is. There are laws in full force, that make it *impossible*, that the Winchester bushel of wheat should, on an average of seasons, fetch more than about four or five shillings English money ; and, in my opinion, it is by no means improbable, that the price may, on an average, come down below four shillings. This will depend, in some measure, on what foreign nations shall do as to their money-affairs ; but, according to present appearances, it is possible, and even probable, that the price may come down to *three shillings*. I have seen no statement ; I have heard no argument, to show why it may not, while I can see many reasons on the other side. However, the laws now in force absolutely forbid the expectation, in the mind of any sane person, of a higher price, on an average of seasons, than the *present price*. And yet, the scheme of the Committee is to *raise the price by another law* ! I beg you to bear this in mind, and not to disbelieve it, or to doubt of it, because it appears to you, and to common sense, so utterly strange and monstrous ; for, you will observe, that what, as applied to other times and other persons, would appear absolutely against nature, is natural enough, and, at any rate, strictly true, when applied to these times and these persons.

The scheme for raising the price of corn is as follows. The Committee assume that there is " *a glut* " of the market. That *over-quantity of corn* is the cause of the distress. *Why* they assume this, they do not say ; but they assume it ; and, having assumed it, they proceed as follows to state their *remedy for the glut* ; though I must here, again, before I quote the Report, state, that there is no reason given by the Committee, and that there is no reason existing, *why* corn should be at a higher price now than it was in the year 1792 ; and, as to a glut, as to over-production, how monstrous is the idea, when it is notorious that the last crop was *smaller* than the crop before the last, and when it is equally notorious that the price has become much lower *since* that smaller crop was gathered. In the teeth, however, of these notorious facts, this Com-

mittee propose a remedy for a glut. Having observed, that to export must be impossible, they proceed thus :—

“ Two other modes have therefore been under the consideration of your Committee ; by the first of which it was proposed, that *one million of Exchequer Bills* should be applied to *purchasing*, through the agency of Government, and laying up *in store*, a certain portion of wheat grown in the United Kingdom ; and by the second, that *facility and encouragement* should be offered to individuals to *deposit a part of their stock in warehouses*, so that they might not be forced to come into the market simultaneously, and under the disadvantage of excessive competition, but might be enabled to *wait until the supply*, having approached nearer to the wants of the consumers, might afford, if not a remunerating, at least a price somewhat *less ruinous for their produce*.—With regard to the first of these proposals, the general objections against making the public, through the Executive Government, a dealer and speculator in corn, the suspicions to which it might give rise, and the uneasiness in the public feeling, which it might eventually excite, the danger of its being drawn into precedent, the claims which it might be supposed to give to other important articles of domestic produce, whenever they might be exposed to similar depression, and the universal rule of allowing all articles, as much as possible, to find their own natural level, by leaving the supply to adjust itself to the demand, discourage your Committee from recommending it, even under this extraordinary emergency, and with all the guards and qualifications of a temporary expedient. But with regard to the second, although much less efficacious in its operation, the objection of Government becoming a purchaser *does not apply*, as individuals would in this case act for themselves, and according to their own discretion, the Government interfering no otherwise than by *making advances upon the commodity deposited*, which would be repaid, with a *low rate of interest*, as soon as the article should be brought to market.—For effecting this object, two different modes have been suggested ; by one of which it was proposed, that when the weekly average price is under 58s. (the import scale remaining as at present) wheat should be stored, subject to a monthly allowance of 6d. per quarter, *until the average price should reach 65s.*—The whole quantity not to exceed 600,000 quarters, and the time for which the allowance should be payable not to exceed *twelve or eighteen months*.—Not more than a certain number of quarters, nor less than another specified number of quarters, to be stored on the part of *any individual or firm*.—The owner of the corn, so deposited, to be at liberty to withdraw it at any time, waving his claim to allowance, or refunding it.—The other proposition was, That for the purpose of relieving the glut which at present presses upon the grain-market, the Government, whenever the average price of wheat shall be under 60s. should *grant advances of money* upon such corn of the growth of the United Kingdom, as should be deposited in fit and proper warehouses upon the River Thames, and in the ports to be hereafter specified to an extent not exceeding *two-thirds of the market-value* of such corn ; the quality of the corn and the fitness of the warehouses, to be *approved of by officers to be appointed by the Government*.—The loan to be at the rate of *three per cent.* and the period of deposit not to exceed twelve months.—The corn to be withdrawn at the will of the depositor, upon payment of the interest, *warehouse-rent and other charges*.—The sum of *one million so applied*, would probably be fully adequate to give a *temporary check* to the excess which is continually poured into the already overstocked market.—If the House should be inclined to agree with your Committee in countenancing the latter of these propositions, it is evident that it ought to lead to *some immediate proceeding* and although no very great effect can be contemplated from adopting it, its operation, as far as it may extend, can hardly fail to afford *some temporary relief*.”

This, as was before observed, is a scheme for *raising the price of corn*. I shall say nothing about the morality, the humanity, or the justice, of the scheme. I shall consider it as a scheme to answer a *certain end* ; and inquire, whether it be calculated to answer that end. The end is, *to enable farmers to pay rents*. The present price is called “*ruinous*,” and the scheme is intended to obtain for the farmer a price “*somewhat*

less ruinous." I should like to know upon what ground it is assumed, that the present is *too low* a price. As compared with *rents, tithes and taxes*, the price may be *too low*; but, as compared with labour, with wearing apparel, and with other commodities, exclusive of tax, it is *not too low*. The price is now as high as the manufacturer and labourer and artisan can afford to pay. This is what the Committee appear never to have thought of. They have only looked at the defalcations in the *rent-roll*, not recollecting, that it is in consequence of the prices, which produce those defalcations, and *only* in consequence of those prices, that the manufacturers, and hundreds of thousands not coming strictly under that denomination, are enabled to exist. The Committee forget, that, if food were now, with gold in circulation, at a price to enable the farmers to pay the same nominal sums out of the produce that they paid some years back, *starvation or convulsion* must be the instant consequence. The Committee seem to have nothing but rents to compare prices with. Let them compare the price of corn with the price of labour, or the price of any *untaxed* thing, if they can find such a thing. Let them compare the price of corn with the price of *raw cotton*; or, indeed, let them compare prices of food here with those of food in *France*; and, then, I fancy they will find them *high enough*; and that, if they be *ruinously low*, it is only in comparison with *rents, tithes and taxes*.

But, let us look at the scheme a little in detail, and, first, at the first *mode*. A man is to bring a parcel of wheat and it is to be put into a store, provided by the Ministry or persons appointed by them; it is to be locked up; the market-price must be under 5*8s.* a quarter when it is put in, and it may, at the pleasure of the owner, remain for twelve or eighteen months. He is to receive an advance upon it from the Government, to the amount of 6*d.* per quarter a month. When he takes out his corn he is to repay the advances that he may have received on it. Thus, then, if I have a lot of corn I may pawn it, and get an advance upon it, and thus keep it back from market for eighteen months. The pawning of corn, and for a Government to be pawnbroker, are things wholly new; but, who did not expect to see even stranger things than this before the breaking up of this monster-creating system!

It does not seem to have occurred to the Committee, that a man might pawn corn not worth more, perhaps, than 30*s.* a quarter (and a great deal is not worth that sum), and, by keeping it in pawn eighteen months, clear twenty per cent. by the pawning. He might take his wheat out of pawn at the end of eighteen months; and then *put it in again*, unless the law were repealed. From the quantity required to obtain a pawn, it is clear that the great *corn-dealers* would have the whole of the thing in their own hands; and it would be hard, indeed, if they could not keep the profits to themselves. What is intended is a benefit to the landlords; use of the public money to them for nothing. A gift, a grant, a present to them; but, if it go through the hands of *corn-dealers* (who are in great part *Quakers*), the landlords must, after all, scramble hard, fight tooth and nail, to get even a taste of the precious donation.

The other of this pair of schemes is a pawn for a sum to be received *at once* from the Government to the amount of *two-thirds* of the market worth of the corn, and this worth is to be settled by officers appointed by the Government! Gracious God! Here will be pretty goings on! I is useless to attempt to describe the effect of such a scheme; but, it mus

be precisely what every one like its inventor must want. The *Government* appoint the persons to *value* the corn and *apportion the pawn on it!* Well, after that, is it of any use to offer a comment upon this scheme? It is a deep scheme, indeed; and such an one as we have so often seen from the man to whom this scheme is ascribed. O! there is nothing like your "*independent country-gentleman*" for the most precious of schemes!

As to the terms of *taking corn out* of warehouse under a law like this, the Parliament need not, I think, trouble themselves about *that!* To *keep* it out will be the difficulty; for, I'll engage it will come tumbling in, at the *valuation* of the "*officers appointed by the Government!*" There can be no obligation to take it out. The nation may *keep the pledge*; and a famous pledge it will be. The pawners will be all "*loyal!*" men, I dare say; for, radicals and jacobins will never have the impudence to face "*officers appointed by the Government!*" If this scheme go into effect, a *prettier* thing never was played off: no, not even during the disputes about the *Union with Ireland*. I think it is likely to be the last grand trick from the budget of the system. There will be enough and enough to get a little *slice of the million!*

The Committee, in their eagerness to check the glut, seem to have overlooked the possibility, not to say probability, of corn being *cheaper* at the end of twelve or eighteen months than it is now! If the next harvest should be a fine one, wheat may be four shillings a bushel, though the 600,000 be locked up. Besides, will it not be *known to be locked up?* Aye, and known, too, that it must come out again into the market. In fact, unless *destroyed*, it must come out *first or last*. In the course of two years it must make its appearance in the market. And, as it must come first or last, must not its effect, first or last, be the same upon prices? *There it is*, ready to come out, and nothing but destruction can prevent it from producing its full effect. *To a people* it may sometimes be of use, in countries of great casualty, for the Government to hold corn in pawn, or to purchase it up; but to *the growers* of corn, and especially in a country like this, it is impossible that such a measure can be productive of good. It is mere delusion; and delusion, too, capable of imposing upon none but very weak persons.

Three per cent. interest is to be paid on the pawn. Now, what is this; what can it be called but a loan of a million at three per cent. to corn-dealers, in order to induce them to buy up corn, that the price may be raised and that the farmers may be induced to try another year and give up more of their capitals in rent to the landlords? What can it be called but this? The farmers are ready to *start*; and this may retain them, till their last shilling be gone! It is impossible, that any rational man can entertain the hope of the measure producing the smallest ultimate benefit to *the farmer*. It may induce him to keep on a little longer; and that little longer must be his ruin. If, indeed, Peel's Bill were to be repealed in 18 months' time; or if it could be reasonably expected, that any thing to lower the value of the currency would take place, there might be something to say for such a measure; but, the *contrary* of this must be expected. The value of the currency has not yet reached its height; and, if a man have debt to pay with the amount of corn, the sooner he pays it the better.

To what a disgraceful state is the system arrived, when such schemes can be entertained! What must the landlords think of themselves,

when they contemplate this as a means of affording them *relief*! But, to this and to much worse, much more low and ridiculous, shall we see the thing fall. The scheme of advancing *four millions* is abandoned; but, to something like that we shall return, *unless taxes be reduced*. Farmers will quit in spite of all that can be done; or they will be ruined. Landlords will be unable to continue the cultivation of the land themselves. Yet the land *must be cultivated* and the people fed. The Government must see to this. It must *lay hold* as owner or trustee. In what *way*, under what *name*, or *colour*, no one can tell; but, if the present taxes be *enforced*, this, or something very much like it, must be, and will be, the result. How long the thing may stop at that stage no man can say; but, that that will not be the *last stage* we may be perfectly satisfied. We are now, at this moment, in a *revolution* of property, quietly going on. A *more radical* revolution than that of France; and this is seen clearly by all, except those who are most deeply interested in the consequences of the revolution.

The remainder of the Report, as it does not propose any thing *now to be done* in the way of affording what the Committee call relief, is not a thing to occupy much of our time; but, there are certain parts of it not altogether unworthy of notice. It is proposed to allow those who hold *foreign corn* to take it out of warehouse and to *grind it*. For *what*? To be sold and eaten here to be sure; for, as for doing this "for the purpose of *exportation*," where is the spot of earth in this whole world, to which it could be sent at any thing like so cheap a rate as the people there can get flour manufactured elsewhere? Did it ever yet happen, that wheat was imported and manufactured here, and exported in flour, the trade of the world being *free* at the same time? Never. Why, then, are we to believe that this is the intention now? There can be no doubt at all, that the foreign corn-holders would like this; for they know very well the impossibility to prevent them from selling the flour in this country, if they be once permitted to grind the wheat here. And what is to become of the *offal*? Is that to be *exported* too? Or is it to be flung into the rivers and ditches and ponds?

This whole quantity of foreign corn, however, about which the Committee make such a to-do, and, in their circulating-library style, talk of its "*hanging over* the market, ready to *pour in* at once; of its being made "*to feed* the market rather than *inundate* it;" the whole quantity, thus made to *hang* and to *pour*, to *feed* and to *inundate*; the whole quantity thus spoken of in language like that of a girl in her teens writing a letter to her dearest friend at another boarding-school; the whole quantity that hangs like a craggy rock and pours like a stream in one sentence, and that feeds like your plough-boy with the hay under his arm, and comes rolling over like a flood, in another sentence; this whole quantity, which you, brother Clodthumper, would have said, ought to be made to *feed* rather than *cram* the market; this whole quantity, about which there is such a terrible piece of work, is only about enough for *thirteen days' consumption*! This is a pretty cause to produce such important and lasting effects.

The Committee, no less than three times, make use of these words, or words to this effect:—"that foreign corn is *raised at less expense than in this country*." Do you know, brother Clodthumper, what the Committee may mean by this? I do not, I confess. If a farmer pay his man a penny a-day in France, and if a penny will buy as much food in

France as half-a-crown will in England, the corn is raised, as far as labour goes, as *cheap* in England as in France, though the English farmer pay half-a-crown a-day to his labourer. The Committee view the thing in the wrong light; or rather, they *blink* the main thing altogether. Corn is every where raised at the same *positive expense*, with the difference in soil and climate. It is the relative expense; and that depends upon the taxation altogether. I should like to know, however, what are the notions of the writer of this Report upon this subject; who the writer is, I cannot tell; but *his* notions upon a matter like this, must, I am sure, be something *very entertaining*.

In one part of the Report, the growers of British corn are encouraged to rely on an *interested combination* of the importers of foreign corn in their favour. The Report observes that the interest of these proprietors of foreign corn, will, by letting them sell in our market when wheat gets up to seventy shillings a quarter, "be brought strictly into unison with " the interest of the British corn-grower, and into *direct hostility* to that " of all other importers of foreign corn; so that every endeavour will be " resorted to, on their part, to *advance* the price to seventy shillings, " that they may *liberate* their own stock, but to keep it below eighty shillings, that they may exclude all foreign *competitors*." There only wanted the word *enemies* instead of *competitors* to make this a perfectly military sentence from the beginning to the end. I should tell you, brother Clodthumper, that this is House of Commons' writing. It is like no other writing in this world. None that ever was and none that ever will be.

But, as to the matter, it is curious enough, that, while we have, in this part of the Report, such a clever contrivance for squeezing advantage out of the greediness and villany of combined corn-dealers, we have, directly afterwards, a contrivance equally clever, for the purpose "of *preventing the effects of combination*." There occur only two clear sentences between the hopes held out as likely to arise from a combination of corn-dealers for raising and depressing prices, and the advantages likely to be derived from "preventing the effects of combination and speculation" in those very corn-dealers!

There is one passage more in the Report which I think it necessary to notice. The words are these: "Nor must it be lost sight of, that *owing to " the great alteration in our currency*, eighty shillings may and do now " represent a different and *considerably higher value*, than in 1815, as " *measured by the price of all articles of consumption*." This is a very curious admission. It has been contended by this description of politicians, and by the Ministry especially, that the currency has been raised in value only in the proportion of *four and a half per cent*. But here we have a *great alteration*; here we have a *considerably higher value*; and here we have, *slipped out*, as it were by mere accident, what no one has ever seen before except in my Register, namely, that we are to measure the value of the currency, not by the price of gold, but by the "*price of all articles of consumption*." This has slipped out for the first time, in this place; and if the Report had contained nothing but this one sentence, it would have been good for something, and bad for nothing.

Few as the words are here, they are of great importance. The Committee was selected by the Ministers, and this one sentence of the Report totally removes the foundation upon which they erected the Bill of Mr. Peel. This has been the great question at issue between the Ministry,

the Parliament, the Scotch reviewers, and all the Scotch writers and all the English writers that write about such matters, on the one side, and *me*, your brother clodthumper, on the other side. They have always contended; this host of dunderheads (I do not mean to include the Parliament, when I talk of dunderheads), this whole host have contended, that the price of gold, as compared with that of paper-money, was the measure or standard of value; that it was by that that we were to know in what degree our currency had risen in value; that it was by that that we were to know the extent of the alteration in the currency. I contended that that was no standard at all; that it could be no standard; that it really had nothing to do with the matter into which we were inquiring; and that the true measure was, the general average price of articles of consumption, and that, if we had a mind to select any one of which, the best was, the average price of the bushel of wheat.

Now, whether the Committee have deliberately, or accidentally, recognised this doctrine of mine as the true doctrine, I cannot say; but, certain it is, that they have here recognised that doctrine most fully; and they have made the recognition, too, in the most ample manner; because they have introduced it as forming part of the basis of a proposed law; and of a law, too, affecting very important interests. Whether they perceive it or not, I am not certain; but here is the axe laid to the very root of the very best argument brought forward by the Prime Minister, and by his colleague in the other House, in order to prove that the taxes were not the cause of the distress. Their argument was this. In 1813 agriculture was in a state of prosperity. The value of money at that time was a fourth lower than it now is. Since that time a fourth part of the nominal amount of the taxes has been taken off. The taxes, therefore, are now, *no heavier* than they were in that *time of prosperity*; and, *therefore*, it cannot be the taxes that now cause the *distress*!

This is conclusive; this is wholly unanswerable, if you admit that the money is now *only a fourth* higher in value than it was in 1813. This has been admitted by every one but myself; and this has been the strong ground of the Ministers, and the Scotch reviewers. Place them upon this ground, and they will beat you for ever upon the question of taxes. However, in this Report, they seem to have abandoned the ground themselves; for, as I observed before, here they have recognised my doctrine; and I only wish I could hope that the rest of the Report would warrant the opinion that this recognition is the forerunner of the return of long absent common sense.

When, however, I look at this Report as a whole; when I consider it as something intended to point out a remedy for those evils which press upon the country; when I consider it as a thing intended to stem the torrent of that revolution in property which is taking place; and especially when I see it containing not one single word upon the subject of those taxes which are sternly, though quietly, ejecting the farmer, disinheriting the landlord, and sending the labourer prowling about for food; when I view it in this light; when I find in it for this mass of evils, nothing but a poor miserable scheme for taking corn into pawn; when I see this, I should be weak indeed to place even the smallest degree of reliance upon anything to be done by an assembly in which such a Report could be received without every mark of contempt; and that it will be received with any mark of contempt at all, is a great deal more than I expect from that assembly.

I have now done with this Report ; but there are some matters very closely connected with it, to which I have now to call your attention ; and, if you do attend to what I am going to say, you will understand much more about the cause of the *distress*, as it is called, than this Committee appear to understand.

In London, at this time, the quartern loaf, weighing four pounds and five ounces, is sold for 9½d. At Paris, the police has just ordered the price of bread of four pounds to be sold for as much French money as makes 5d. of English money. The French pound, is, I believe, two ounces heavier than ours. Thus, then, the bread in London, is nearly as dear again as the bread at Paris ; and all the world knows that the French bread is the finest of the two. How comes this difference ? The wheat in France is no very great deal cheaper than it is in England at this moment ; but, the taxes paid by the miller, by the baker, and by all the people that they employ, makes such an addition to the price of the bread in England, that the people in London are compelled to pay so much more for it per pound than they pay at Paris. Here we have the true reason, why people go to spend their English money in France. There are said to be nearly two hundred thousand English persons living in France. Take these at twenty pounds a year a-piece ; and here are two millions of money a-year, spent in France, which, were it not for our enormous taxes ; would be spent in England. So that one evil creates another ; and the evils at last combine and form a burden that is intolerable. A great part of the English persons in France, live upon the taxes raised in England. Perhaps one-fourth part of them ; so that here is money, actually taken away from the landlords, farmers, and tradesmen and labourers and artisans in England, and carried and given to the subjects of our old enemies the Bourbons, to make their people well off and themselves powerful.

But, now let me beg your attention to a comparison, as to the price of bread, at two different periods, in this our own country ; and what I am going to say now, I beg you will never forget ; but that you will read it over and over again, till you remember every word of it as well as you remember the Belief or the Lord's Prayer. I will put it in a separate paragraph, in order that you may, if necessary, cut it out of my little book and stick it up over your mantelpiece.

The two periods to which I have alluded are 1792 and 1822. Now mind, the average price of wheat in 1792 was 42s. 4d. the quarter. And the price of the quartern loaf in London was then 6½d. Now mind again, the average price of wheat in this year, 1822, is 45s. 11d. a quarter ; and the price of the quartern loaf in London is 9½d. Thus, you see, that, though there is very little difference in the price of the *wheat* in the two years, there is almost *one-third* difference in the price of the bread ! This seems a wonderful thing. And how is it to be accounted for ? Do bakers grow rich ? Are they not, on the contrary, the poorest of all tradesmen ? No ; but, when you consider that the corn-dealer, the miller, the flour-merchant, the lightermen, the carters, the bakers, and all the people that all of them have to employ, pay *four times* as much in taxes, as they paid in the year 1792, your wonder ceases that the quartern loaf costs nearly a third more than it cost in the year 1792, though the sum of money which the farmer gets for his quarter of wheat is but very little more now than it was then.

In perfect accordance with this, is the result of the inquiries of a gen-

tleman in Suffolk, a Mr. ROUSE, who has lately published an *Essay*, in which he has shown, that farmers were formerly allowed, as their share of a quarter of wheat, the price of ninety-six quartern loaves. The quarter of wheat was allowed to make one hundred and four quartern loaves. The price of eight loaves, together with the offal, was allowed to miller and baker for their expenses and profit. Now, ninety-six quartern loaves, at 9½d. each, amount to 76s. Therefore, according to the old mode of reckoning, the farmer ought to get 76s. at this time for his quarter of wheat; and he does get only 45s. 11d. People cry out; and a very ignorant writer in the *County Herald*, says that the farmer gets now only about fifty-five quartern loaves, "leaving the value of fifty-four to the rapacity of traders and corn-dealers." What rapacity? What vain and silly abuse is this? Corn-dealers and traders, if they profited so very largely from their business, would soon have plenty of others to share in it. O! no; this is miserable nonsense. It is all the taxes and all the rates that the traders and millers and bakers, and all the persons before mentioned, have to pay; it is these that make the eaters of bread pay more to the manufacturers of it, and that cause the farmer to receive less in proportion.

I have now, I think, made this so clear, that it is impossible for any person, of common understanding, not to comprehend the cause of all those distresses which are harassing the country. Turn the matter which way you will; look at it in whatever direction; and the taxes still stare you in the face as the great and all-pervading cause of the distress. It appears to me the strangest thing in the world, that there should be any longer a dispute upon the subject. I believe the conviction to be very general, that the taxes must be speedily greatly reduced, or that a convulsive revolution will be the consequence. This is my own firm persuasion. It remains with the landlords, and with them wholly and solely, to adopt the measures necessary to produce such reduction: if they fail to adopt those measures, I have nothing within my power left, but to offer my best wishes for such final settlement as shall secure the happiness of the nation; and particularly that of those labouring classes, amongst whom I was born and bred, and to make common cause with whom, has always been, and always will be, the pride and the boast of,

Your friend,

WM. COBBETT.

TO MR. WESTERN,

ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF A REPEAL OF PEEL'S BILL.

(Political Register, April, 1822.)

"This Bill (Mr. Peel's) was grounded on *concurrent Reports* of both Houses; it was passed by *unanimous votes* of both Houses; it was, at the close of the Session, a subject of high eulogium in the Speaker's Speech to the Regent, and in the Regent's Speech to the two Houses: now, then, I, William Cobbett, assert, that to carry this Bill into effect is *impossible*; and I say, that, if this Bill be carried into full effect, I will give Castlereagh leave to lay me on a *Gridiron* and broil me alive, while Sidmouth may stir the coals, and Canning stand by and laugh at my groans."—*Taken from Cobbett's Register, written at North Hempstead, Long Island, on the 24th of September, 1819, and published in England in November, 1819.*

Kensington, 16th April, 1822.

SIR,

You have given notice, that, if no other Member undertake the task, you will move for a "*re-consideration of Peel's Bill.*" By re-consideration you must mean *repeal*; and, indeed, this you state to be your object.

Therefore, notwithstanding far-famed *Six Acts*, I will take the liberty to address to you a few remarks upon the probable *consequences* of repealing that famous Bill. The reasons against the repeal are many and weighty; but, I must confess, there are also many and weighty reasons for the repeal, and especially that the repeal would *put off the evil hour*, which is a host of reasons all in one with those whose very minds are fashioned to a system of *shifts* and *expedients*.

I am peculiarly well qualified to judge with impartiality in this case; because I feel no bias, no interest, on the one side or on the other. In most other cases I have my *wishes*; here I have none; no wish at all. If it were left to me, I being in my present situation of a *hater of the Borough system*; if it were left to me to say, whether the Bill should remain, or be repealed, I should certainly decide by toss of a halfpenny. The decision might depend on the humour in which I happened to be; whether disposed or indisposed for *fun*. Knowing that the *end* will be the same, I might, if in a humour for *larking*, say, "Come, then, repeal the Bill, and let us have *the Feast of the Gridiron.*" And, ridiculous as this is, ridiculously out of all reason as it is, this Feast of the Gridiron is certainly one of the reasons, if not the sole reason, for the hitherto non-repeal of this truly terrible Bill.

The motto to the present Letter and the culinary implement placed above it; the sight, the bare sight of these, is enough to turn any one of you; any man of the Collective, sick; sick to the very heart. And, I leave you to guess, if you can, at the fuss, the noise, the piece of work, the

bragging, the frolic and the laughing, that will take place if you succeed in your motion! And yet (for the reasons by-and-by to be stated) I do believe, that, sooner or later, the Bill will be repealed.

That it would have been repealed last year, if I had remained in America, I am morally certain, and so are the public. I foresaw that, and, for that reason, hastened home. If I had *held my tongue* last year, the Bill would, every one thinks, have been repealed. The shame attending the repeal of the Bill; the shame at being proved to have been so grossly ignorant as to a matter of such vast importance; this shame is a *great deal*; but, what is of infinitely greater importance, the Bill cannot be repealed, or modified, without the whole nation, and, indeed, the whole world, seeing, that I possessed more understanding than Ministers and Parliament all put together! This is the devil: this is the real obstacle: this is the terrific object. Some persons would say, that *history will record* this; but, I will not leave it to history. I will not leave the thing to a pensioned historian. I will *record it myself*: that is the safe way; and will endeavour not to leave all the fruits to be gathered by *posterity*, for whom I have as great a regard as other people; but with whom, by their leave, I wish that we of the present day should *share*.

That it is to the Bill and to the other measures for cash-payments that you, the landlords, owe all your distress and danger, is now no longer denied; or, at least, the denial is so very feeble, is made in so *faint* a manner, that it can no longer be considered as a denial, but merely as something put forward to save the parties from the excruciating torment of acknowledging that they were wrong, and this the whole Collective body is the more willing to admit of, as it serves to prevent an open confession that *Cobbett was right*, which is always a *capital matter*. This denial will not be made at all much longer, for a proof of which we may appeal to the last *Agricultural Report*, where the doctrine of Ricardo is completely, though incidentally, and, as it were by mere accident, *disavowed*. The error is *now seen*. It is now plain to you all. But, how are you to look ME in the face, and now repeal this Bill? I want to know that. The nation has its eyes on the *Parliament* and on *me* too. This is one of the advantages derived from *persecution*. It is well-known, not only in this kingdom, but in *America and France*; all well-informed men know well how I stand with regard to this thing. My opinions with regard to this paper-system have been too striking in themselves, and have been stated and maintained with too much force and perseverance, not to have become well known. They have related to measures of tremendous importance, and have constantly run paralleled with and opposed to the opinions of those who adopted those measures. The measures affect *all nations* in some degree or other, and, whatever the Collective may think of it, however it may hurt the pride of the haughty, insolent, and greedy race of *squeakers*, the name of *Cobbett* is, whenever the English paper-fabric is talked of at Paris or at Washington, much oftener in men's mouths than the names of *Castlereagh* and *Liverpool*. It is not in England only, I assure you, that the *Feast of the Gridiron* is looked forward to with great expectation.

One of the *consequences*, and that not the least important, of repealing the Bill, would be to *give me such a predominance in point of influence* over men's minds that no man ever before possessed, or ever thought of possessing; and this must, in the end, if I lived and continued to be as

industrious as I am now, lead to other inevitable consequences hostile to the paper and borough and Six-Act system. I defy any man to prevent the existence of this influence; for, though I should not deserve it more than I deserve it *now*, seeing that my claim to superior knowledge and foresight stands clearly established by events; yet, there are multitudes of men, who are to be convinced only by a *literal* fulfilment of every part of a prediction. However, when that comes, as it will come, either by a repeal of the Bill, or by a *bursting* of the whole thing to pieces, the *influence* will come. In the latter case it will be a *little longer* before its arrival; and as this will be one of the reasons, and, I believe, the chief reason, for *not repealing the Bill*, I will here show how *the Collective and I should stand before the world*, in case the Bill were now to be repealed.

It was in the year 1810, that the propriety of passing such a Bill began to be agitated; and I will now give a brief sketch of the conduct of the Collective Wisdom on one side, and of mine on the other side, *with regard to this measure*. The late Mr. PERRY used to call the Parliament, "*The Collective Wisdom of the Nation*." An appellation that I like exceedingly, only it is a little too long. I like it much better than *Ministry*, for that body is nothing of itself. I like it better than *Parliament*, for that may mean to leave out the Ministers. I like it better than *Government*, for that sometimes means one thing, and sometimes another. At Westminster there are met all the whole body that manage our affairs; and this Mr. PERRY, with great propriety, called "*The Collective Wisdom of the Nation*;" an appellation, which, having so high an authority in point of taste, I have long adopted, though, to save time and paper, I sometimes abridge it to *Collective Wisdom*, and, when hard pushed for time, to *Collective*; but in no case without carrying along in my mind all the respect naturally inspired by the appellation at full length.

Very well, then, we are now going to see how the Collective Wisdom and I shall *stand before the world if this Bill should be repealed*; and, in order to do that, we must see what the conduct of each of us has been since the propriety of passing such a Bill was first agitated, which was in the year 1810.

In the year just mentioned there was formed one of those detached bodies of the Collective Wisdom, called *Committees*; and this particular detachment was called the *Bullion Committee*. The projector and chairman of this Committee was a lawyer and Edinburgh reviewer of the name of *Horner*, who has died since, and over whom a funeral oration, or rather orations, came forth from *both sides*, so rare were his merits as a *statesman*, and so great was the *loss* which the Collective sustained in his death. This Bullion Committee sat a long while, and, at last, brought forth a *very large book*, which they called a *Report and Evidence*. This Report, made in 1810, recommended that a law should be passed during the next Session, to *cause cash payments to take place in 1813*. The Ministers contended, that the nation was *able* to return to cash-payments at any time; but, that, *during war*, it would not be *wise* to do it; and, as a majority of the Collective were on the side of the Ministers (as, indeed, they usually are), it was resolved *not to pass such Bill*; merely, on account of the inconvenience that it might occasion during war; and not on account of any injury that it could inflict on tenants, landlords, mortgagers, or debtors of any description.

So that, here were the Bullion-Committee and its partisans for a *law*

to return to cash-payments in 1813; and the opponents of this Committee were for putting it off *till the peace*, asserting, at the same time, that the nation *could* return to cash-payments at any time without any injury as to its internal affairs. These projectings and debates were going on in the years 1810 and 1811, at which time the THING had me in Newgate for two years, with a thousand pounds fine and seven years recognizances, for having expressed my indignation at reading of the flogging of English local-militia-men at the town of Ely in England, under a guard of German bayonets. This did not make me *love* the THING much, as you may easily guess. But, the THING was then very strong and very furious. I was naturally anxious to find out whether there were any hope that the THING would, at any future time, be likely to be more tolerable to live under. This *bullion* affair attracted my attention; and, I found, that both parties were *ignorant of the subject*, and that, if they pursued the path they appeared to be in, they would, at last, bring the thing to a state that might give even *me* a chance of *redress*. It was, however, useless for me, as to my own views, to see this ignorance of the parties, unless I made others *see that I saw it*. To do *this*, therefore, and to do it effectually, I set about it in earnest, during *the third month* of my imprisonment, and ended my task in a little better than a-year. I was paying *twelve guineas a-week* for the indulgence of not being *shut up with felons*! I kept my temper; and I wrote *Paper against Gold*, which has been sticking to the THING, clinging to it like a leech, through all the boundings and startings and caperings and mad pranks that it has been playing, and which hangs on to it still, and will hang on to it till it groans out its last!

In that work I *denied that the nation could return to cash-payments without ruin*. I denied that the nation could ever pay the interest of the Debt in full, *in cash*. I not only insisted, but I *proved*, that an attempt to do this, would produce a *convulsive revolution*. And, there we stood *for that time*, the whole of the *Collective Wisdom* on one side, and I on the other side.

From 1814, when the *peace* came, to 1817, I was, almost weekly, calling upon the Ministers to pay in cash agreeably to their promise; but, telling them, at the same time, that they never could do it *without reducing the interest of the Debt*. In this latter year the THING grew so very angry and violent, that I was compelled to draw off to a distance from it. It still retained all its "*vigour*," which is a terrible quality in the Thing. I had been out of its reach only about a year, before there was a talk on foot again about *cash-payments*; and the *Collective Wisdom* seemed (in May 1818) to be *resolved* to pass, during the next session of Parliament, some *law* or other to *compel* payments in cash, at some time or other. The knowledge of this resolution reached me in Long Island in July; and, on the 11th of that month, in 1818, I wrote the *LETTER* to TIERNEY, foretelling the consequences of passing such a Bill. I had two objects in view in the writing of this letter: first, to show that I had more understanding than the *Collective Wisdom*, and to have the *proof* of this at hand when the event should arise: and, second, *to cause*, or to help to cause, *such a Bill to be passed*; being well satisfied, that my being strenuously and vehemently opposed to *any* measure, was a great stroke in favour of such measure being adopted! *

* We take the following from a "Letter to the President and Members of the Chelmsford Agricultural Society," dated 15th May, 1835, and written by Mr.

What weight, if any, this latter consideration had, I know not; but, adopted such a measure was in 1819, and that, too, to my inexpressible joy; because I knew, that it would bring the THING completely to its bearings, and make it not only *safe*, but *pleasant*, living in England. I knew, that *my time* was at hand. The moment I saw *Peel's Bill* I was regardless of every other measure. I did not care a straw about the passing of Six-Acts, about *Edwards* and *Monument*, and, as to myself, the rest of the things that took place. I knew, that, this Bill being passed, the main chance was secured, and that we had but a short time to endure the old sort of thing. Above all things, I thought of the harvest of *fair and honest fame that I myself should have to reap*. I had waited with a great deal of patience for the coming up and the growing of the seed that I had sowed; I had endured all the hard seasons with a great deal of fortitude, and without any whining or grumbling; and I had a right to anticipate the harvest with feelings of delight, and especially as such harvest must be inseparable from the restoration of my country to happiness and freedom.

Now, there are persons enough who have their eyes upon this approaching harvest, and would go much more than half way to the devil, in order to prevent my reaping it. To some persons this may appear unaccountable. "What," it may be asked, "need *Lords* and other men of "rank and in power care about it being said that they were wrong, and "that *Cobbett* was right; that he had more knowledge of such matters "than all the *Collective* put together?" O, yes! They have need to care about this. They cannot slur this over. *Cobbett* holds a pen. *Cobbett's* memory is good; his industry great; and his perseverance not to be wearied. They will not get out of this scrape so easily. In short, they know well, that, if they repeal this Bill, he will never cease till he has exposed their ignorance and showed his superiority over them, in

WESTERN, the gentleman to whom this paper was addressed, and now Lord Western (1837).—ED.

"The *Lords LIVERPOOL* and *CASTLEREAGH*, in the distress of 1822, distinctly declared their intention of *raising the price of corn, &c.* by a *forced increase* of the circulating medium (Bank of England paper). Now upon what principle it can be justifiable to alter the standard of value by an increased circulation of Bank-notes, and wrong to do it by *changing the standard from gold to silver*, for instance,—is to me perfectly incomprehensible. To alter the metallic standard in any way is, they say, a robbery, and I know not what. To alter the value of every man's property, by increasing the amount of the Bank-notes in circulation, is highly praiseworthy. In 1822, corn was as low as at present, and all the products of agriculture and the wages of labour as much or more depressed. Wheat had sunk to 5s. the bushel. *Mr. COBBETT* foretold, as early as 1818, certainly more distinctly than any body else at that time, that a gold standard at 3l. 17s. 10½d. would inevitably reduce the price of wheat to 4s. 6d. or 5s. the bushel on the average, and other commodities in a similar ratio; nor would it have risen upon an average since 1819, but for the different means that were found to prevent the full operation of that measure. Our statesmen were as little informed as babies of that which *Mr. COBBETT* understood so well, or otherwise fancied they could counteract the effects which that adjustment of the *metallic* standard would induce. * * * Every expansion or contraction of issues by the Bank is a tampering, because the value of the currency is on each occasion varied. Now as to *robbery*, when creditors cry out robbery, it puts me in mind of the thief who turned upon the man he was robbing, and charged him with theft. Never was a people so robbed as the people of this country have been by the operation of *Peel's Bill*: the plunder has been continued from the time of its passing to this hour, and is in full activity now."

such a way, and through such channels, that there will hardly be a single soul, even amongst the least informed classes, that will remain ignorant of any part of the matter.

The Parliamentary *debate-publishing* is a great instrument in favour of the Collective. It gives them an importance that they would not otherwise have. It has long been a most powerful mode of using the press, and, in many cases, to a most pernicious purpose. But, in the present case, this debate-publishing has been singularly useful. It has given us upon record the words of all the wise men, at the time of passing Peel's Bill. Some of these I must notice now, in order to give the Collective a foretaste of that which is to come by-and-by. To put down all the praises that were bestowed upon this measure; to make a regular arrangement of all the wise sayings would fill a volume; yet, I shall certainly attempt this, and do it, too, before the thing be over. At present, let me observe that Lord Grenville bestowed on it the highest eulogiums that it seemed possible for him to discover; called it the salvation of the country; said that the Bill which suspended cash-payments was the most disastrous measure that ever was adopted in the country; declared that so injurious was it that he had no hesitation to say that, rather than suffer another such a measure to be enacted, he would run the risk of even the conquest of the country by an enemy. He concluded his speech by expressing his regret that cash-payments were not to be *sooner* resumed; but he said that the measure would be productive of *incalculable advantages*, and "he most *heartily* declared that he gave it his *entire, unlimited*, and most *unqualified approbation*." This was pretty well, but even this was nothing to what his speech contained in some parts. He boasted of the great knowledge of the men who had recommended this measure. It was a plan, he said, "recommended by men of science, by men who had made these matters the object of *great study and deep research*. If that object proceeded from them, he for one should receive it with all the deference which it gratified him on every occasion to pay to talent and to learning. His own experience enabled him to say, that *greater lights* on this important subject had not been derived from those who had practised, than from those who had written upon it. It was a plan of one now existing in Europe, whose *name*, of all others, would be *most likely to recommend any question of political economy*. It was recommended by men who, to *profound* and intimate acquaintance with the theory of the subject, united the most *extensive practical experience*. Men, indeed, without science, experience or information in the details of this extensive matter, and only such, considered and treated this plan as *whimsical and impracticable*. But let it be remembered who those were who supported it, men of *unexceptionable CHARACTER for knowledge, practice and sagacity*."

Well said! Auditor! This plan; this famous thing springing from "*men of science*;" this plan, the result of "*great study*" and "*deep research*;" this measure, the "*fruit of great lights, profound and intimate acquaintance with the subject*;" this plan, the fruit of knowledge, practice and sagacity; this famous plan, was that very Peel's Bill, which you now are about to propose to be repealed!

Lord Liverpool went on in much about the same strain. Less lofty in his language, to be sure; but full of his praises of the scheme, and his exultation generally, upon this occasion, was perfectly childish. In the House of Commons both sides agreed as to this great measure; though

I must do Mr. MARRYATT the justice to say, that he did object to the measure as one which would produce ruinous effects, though when it came to voting he did not disturb that sweet harmony which at last produced this blessed Bill. As to Mr. PEEL himself, the praises of the Bill were natural to him. Sir JOHN SEBRIGHT said, "if ever there was a moment of Mr. PEEL's life, in which he was most unquestionably and most eminently entitled to the *gratitude of his country* it was the present moment." Mr. PASCOE GRENFELL, "speaking as a practical man of business," praised the Bill. Mr. PEEL himself, spoke of the Bill as a thing which conducted us in "*safety and triumph* to the destined shore of success. He confessed that he had changed his opinions upon the subject of paper-money; and that he hoped that the avowal of the change, would not expose him to the charge of *inconsistency*; but would be regarded as a proof of his *sincerity*." Ah! happy Mr. PEEL! Your changes of opinion are to be proofs of your sincerity, though relating to matters of theory; but my changes of opinion, are to be regarded as proofs of my insincerity, though relating to the characters of men, whom I regarded as honest till I found them to be knaves!

But, to proceed with our Members of the Collective, Mr. Tierney was very neat indeed upon the occasion. "He could assure the Right Honourable Gentleman, Mr. Peel, that, if a compliment from so humble an individual as himself could give him any gratification, he would gladly offer it; but, in truth, he was afraid to do so, lest he should be thought to compliment himself, the Bill being founded upon principles which he had been advocating for a long series of years." This gentleman was quite affecting in one part of his speech. "He returned Mr. PEEL his sincere thanks for this great service to his country, and above all, he returned him his thanks for the just compliment which he had paid to the memory of a dear lamented friend, and he should have received still higher gratification from the events of the present evening, had that beloved friend (Mr. Horner) been alive to witness the glorious establishment of those principles, which he had been the first to propose to the attention of Parliament. The eloquence and ingenuity with which his dear departed friend had explained and defended his principles had always attracted the admiration of the House; but to hear an acknowledgment of their truth was reserved for a later period!"

Was there ever humbug equal to this! What principles were these? What was it after all that this Horner proposed or said? Why, he said that the paper was depreciated, which I had proved seven years before, and he proposed that the Bank should be compelled to pay in specie according to law, as it had done for a hundred years before the stoppage. What the devil, then, was all this *eloquence* and *ingenuity* required for? However, bear in mind, Mr. Western, that this dead Scotch lawyer reviewer was to be immortalized because he had held the principles upon which Peel's Bill was founded; that Bill which you say has been the ruin of the country, and which, therefore, you want to have repealed.

Mr. TIERNEY said "that no man was more anxious than he to see cash payments restored; that the sooner the ancient standard of value was restored the better; that there was no security for the empire but in a recurrence to the ancient standard; that no man's property could be safe without the restoration of that wholesome standard; and, in short,

“ that the only objection he could have to the Bill was that it did not “ cause the cash to come quick enough !”

Mr. RICARDO said “ the proposed mode of resuming cash-payments appeared to him the *easiest thing that could be imagined.*” He afterwards said, that “ we had nearly got home, and he hoped the Right Hon. Gentleman would lend them his assistance to let them reach it in safety. “ He would venture to state, that, in a very few weeks, all alarm would “ be forgotten, and at the end of the year we should be all *surprised* to “ reflect that any alarm had ever prevailed at a prospect of a *variation of three per cent.* in the value of the circulating medium.” This gentleman observed that the House had withdrawn its confidence from the Bank Directors, “ on account of their *ignorance of political economy!*” And then this Honourable Member sat down, “ amidst loud and general cheering from all sides of the House !”

Loud and general cheering for the father of that project which is now sought to be got rid of! Mr. FRANKLAND LEWIS said he hoped, “ that “ henceforth the question would be *set at rest*, and that the general affairs of the nation would be restored, not merely to order, but to prosperity.” What a remarkably profound gentleman! Is it any wonder that we are as we are, when this gentleman passes for a great statesman? After Mr. FRANKLAND LEWIS, came Mr. ABERCROMBIE, the House not having been willing to listen to Mr. PETER MOORE. Mr. ABERCROMBIE said, “ that the measure was as necessary to the political interest as to the “ moral character of the country; and though a great deal had been said “ about the injury the Bank might or might not sustain, very little had “ been urged in favour of the great mass of the people, who had been “ suffering under many difficulties and privations, while the *Directors and Proprietors were heaping up wealth!*” This one passage is enough to mark the character of a whole assembly. This one passage, heard without shouts of laughter, is quite enough to tell us what we have to expect from that quarter. I remember reading this passage in Long Island and talking about it to one of my neighbours. We observed that this speaker had got the bull by the tail in place of by the horns. He asked me who he was and what he was. I told him he was a lawyer, and the rest of what he is; and then my neighbour ceased to wonder. This gentleman was extremely anxious that the Bill should pass without a division!

An equally wise man followed him, no other than Lord CASTLEREAGH himself. This great political philosopher, amongst innumerable other good things, said, “ he would *venture to predict*, that if the House “ acted upon the basis laid down in the Report with the *wisdom and energy belonging to the British Parliament*, capital and industry would “ resume their stations, and would operate with success in a new and untried direction.”

In conclusion of the debate Mr. PEEL observed, “ that we were now, at “ the end of twenty-two years’ departure from it, about to reach the goal “ of a *sound metallic currency*, from which we had been so long absent, “ that some apprehensions appeared to exist that we never should return “ to it again; *fortunately*, however, those apprehensions were now no “ more !”

The House being about to divide upon the question on the call of Mr. CRIPPS, Mr. CANNING “ implored his honourable friend not to divide the

House." At last Mr. CRIPPS consented, and Mr. CANNING concluded with these words, "it is the *unanimous* determination of Parliament that "the country shall return to the ancient standard of value in the establishment of a metallic currency." LOUD AND UNIVERSAL CHEERS!

Thus, Sir, I have taken a little sketch of the history of the passing of the Bill. When the Session of Parliament ended, the Speaker congratulated the Regent, *now King*, on the completion of this great work; and the Regent praised the zeal and wisdom of the Parliament. But all was not yet done. The THING had driven me away; but the THING had not put my eyes out or cut off my fingers. There was my decision, therefore, to come yet. I had to write to the Regent on the subject; and, amongst other things, I told him what you will find in the motto to this paper. From that time to this, therefore, there has been a looking forward to the issue of this sort of struggle for reputation, between me and the Collective Wisdom of the nation. There are thirteen months yet to come before the Bill can go into full effect. It is not yet cash-payments, nor anything like cash-payments. The Bank paper is a legal tender all over the kingdom. The people in Scotland cannot get gold in exchange for the bankers' notes, even by paying a discount. In no other part of the country is gold to be got except in London. And yet, such havoc has already been produced; so far have my opinions been verified as to the effect of these measures, that you are about to move for a *re-consideration of them*.

The very notice of your motion is enough for me. The making of the motion, though you were not to divide the House upon it, would bring thousands to range themselves as my disciples. What, then, would be the consequence of an actual repealing of the Bill? That modest man, Lord Castlereagh, during his invectives against the Reformers in 1817, and when he was calling upon the Collective Wisdom to pass the Bill that empowered Sidmouth to send whom he pleased to jail, said that the people were instigated to acts of sedition "by ambitious men, who wanted to get into office *without having any fair pretensions to office*." The public had no doubt, that, in this species of loose and vulgar accusation, he alluded particularly *to me*. Now, Sir, I have but a rough sort of life to lead, at some times. I have been, during the last twenty-two years, some time in Newgate, some time at sea; some times in the Rules of the King's Bench; and have been for a considerable part of the whole of the time under the fangs of lawyers of some sort or other. But I most solemnly declare, that I never have been in any situation in my life that I would have exchanged for that of a Minister compelled to have incessant intercourse with boroughmongers, loan-jobbers, stock-jobbers and Jews. I never have seen that moment when I would have exchanged situations with any man calling himself one of the English ministry. If ever I were to have power, it must be wholly uncramped by stock-jobbers or seat-gentlemen; and my wonder constantly has been, that any man with the bare means of living in comfort without the salary, would subject himself to the toil and torment and degradation and odium belonging to almost any of the offices that I know any thing about. The *money*! Can it be an object worth any sacrifice at all, does any one imagine, with a man like me? And, as to the *honour*! Is there a man in England that believes, that I would give the parings of my nails

to have bestowed on me anything that can be given to Sir Benjamin Bloomfield!

What a low what a vulgar idea was this, then! How little did this man know, and how little does he know, and, indeed, how little can he know, of the feelings and the motives belonging to talent! But, after all, suppose I had entertained the wishes that he ascribed to me, it seems now to appear that those wishes, that those *pretensions*, as he called them, would not have been so very preposterous! If I had been a Minister; if I could have submitted to an intercourse with loan-jobbers and borough-mongers; if I had been in the place of the Prime Minister, you are certain, I suppose, that this destructive Bill of Peel would never have been passed. That I should no more have thought of than of jumping into a well. You are *certain* of this. So that here would have been some good, at any rate. Nay, was there any one of the million and a half of Reformers, who, if he had been a Minister, would have projected or agreed to such a bill. Their petition showed that they had no such stupid ideas. They prayed for Reform of Parliament, for reduction of taxes, salaries, sinecures, pensions, grants, and interest of Debt; and these are the things, and the very things that you are now seeking to obtain.

I can assure LORD CASTLEREAGH, that, though he thinks *I have no fair pretensions to office*, there are hundreds and thousands of persons, and sensible persons, too, in this kingdom, *who think I have*. But not one man in the kingdom can say that he ever could discover in me; and those who know me know well that it was by no means difficult to discover all that I think; no man can say that he ever discovered in me a desire to derive emolument from anything but my earnings; and as to posts and honours, it is impossible to know me for a week without knowing that I hold them in aversion. Nevertheless, I do think, that this thing will never be *settled without my having a hand in it in some shape or other*. I am too much of a *mark* before the public for anything very material belonging to me to escape notice. A long continuation of these labours of mine; the deep impression which my writings have had on so great a number of persons, and of the most thinking persons, too, as well as the most zealous; the great number of persons who are, strictly speaking, my disciples, who think as I think, and who have followed me *all through* what the stupid hirelings of London call my "*ter-giversations*;" these circumstances, together with the wonder (not to say admiration) excited by my industry and perseverance; these things have made it so, that the public have their eye constantly upon me, and upon the conductors of the system; and no small part of the public attention and anxiety is directed to this one point: "Is Cobbett right or is he wrong?" This being the case, even the agitation of the question, whether Peel's Bill shall be repealed or not is matter of dreadful importance to the Ministry and the borough system. The public bear in mind all the prophecies from Long Island. Your notice of a motion tends greatly to confirm the prophecies; and if the motion were to be carried, can you conceive any bounds to the influence which I should therefrom derive; would not my word in future as to all such matters be a law with the people? Would they ever doubt of that word again? And, if I had ridden the system with long spurs thus far, what, after such an event, could reason expect to be the length of those spurs? I am a *match* for the system now; a dead *match* for it; and if Peel's Bill were to be repealed, what chance would remain for this deplorable system?

This, Sir, would be *one of the consequences* of the repeal of Peel's Bill. There are others, and of great importance, too; such, for instance, as the paper's becoming assignats; for, if this Bill were now to be repealed, in any part of it, in such a way, at any rate, as to prevent the abolition of legal tender, after the first of May 1823; if this were to be the case, do you think, that any man in his senses would regard such repeal in any other light than that of a *declaration of National Bankruptcy*? This is the light, to be sure, in which it would be regarded. No man would believe, that the Bank ever could pay again, if it stopped paying now. Every man would, for once, believe Mr. VANSITTART, who said, last winter (I mean last session of Parliament), that "unless we returned to cash payments now, *we never could.*" I agree with him perfectly, unless the *interest of the Debt be reduced*. And I add, that we cannot return to cash payments now without a reduction of that interest.

I am totally regardless of what is called injury to the credit of the country; and, therefore, whether foreigners would take their money out of the funds or not, in consequence of a repeal of Peel's Bill, is, in my opinion, a matter of no importance. But, a *new violation of contracts* is a matter of great importance; and this would be produced from one end of the kingdom to the other. It would produce a robbery of all yearly servants; it would again unsettle all wages; it would be a robbery most flagrant of all merchants and manufacturers who have given credit, and would give to the Americans alone from ten to fifteen millions of money at the expense of the King's subjects. The immense evil; the everlasting mill-stone would then take a roll backward, crushing thousands and hundreds of thousands that have escaped it in its forward direction.

Prices would rise; "times would be better," as the saying is; the farmer, who has survived the storm thus far, would keep his capital, and the landlord would get some rent; but what would become of the labourer and the manufacturer again, and especially of the latter? The prosperity which the Ministers now pretend to be enjoyed by the manufacturers, is merely an absence of bankruptcy in the masters and of starvation in the workmen. This is what they are pleased to term prosperity; but even this, they enjoy only in consequence of those low prices of food which are the ruin of the farmer and the landlord. Therefore, if the repeal of Peel's Bill raise the prices of produce, and, thereby, relieve one class of men, it must inevitably spread ruin over another class of men. It is the interest of the Debt, and the expense of the establishments, which demand such enormous taxation; these are the causes of the evil; these must produce distress somewhere; they must lead to ruin, misery, starvation and convulsion in some quarter or other; the load may be shifted from one set of shoulders to another; but, somewhere it must rest, and there it will produce all its natural consequences.

It is a repeal of taxes, therefore, that is wanted, and not a repeal of Peel's Bill, which can only, at best, make a new distribution of the load, and stave off the convulsion for awhile. In the end, my prophecies must be fulfilled. There must be a repeal of the Bill or a reduction of the Debt. I wish the prophecies to be fulfilled; but I would rather it should be by a reduction of the interest of the Debt than by a repeal of the Bill; notwithstanding the latter would be more striking and would make my triumph more obvious and more simple in its cause. My choice, however, will have little to do with the matter; and, strong as the reasons

are against the repeal of Peel's Bill, I am by no means certain that it will not be repealed. It would certainly give *instant* relief to the farmer and landlord; and, though it would operate to the injury of merchants, manufacturers, servants and labourers, the effect would not be so instant here as it would be on the other side.

The great objection which the landlords have to the reduction of taxes and the interest of the Debt, arises from the fears which they have of *reform* entering at the breach that would take place between the land and the funds. The *establishments* cost much; but the landlords, by one means or another; by sons, by relations, by something or another, participate pretty largely in what goes to maintain the establishments. If my son be a placeman or a pensioner, or an officer of some sort or other, I lick myself whole for what I lose in paying to the establishments. Besides, I am always in hopes of getting, by hook or by crook, something in that quarter. All that goes to the establishments is so much to be divided, generally speaking, amongst those who have what is called interest, all of us well knowing what that interest means, and how it is to be acquired and maintained. But, amongst the fundholders, interest will do nothing, especially now that *loans* are out of fashion.

It is the fundholders, therefore, whose grasp the landlords wish to narrow; and this they cannot do without one of two things: a reform of the Parliament, or a repeal of Peel's Bill. To reform the Parliament is the devil! It is nonsense to think that it will be done in consequence of any motion like that which is proposed to be made; or, that it ever will take place but in a case of the last extremity. To reduce the interest of the Debt without this Reform is absolutely impossible, unless the throwing of the country into utter confusion be resolved upon at the same time. But, to repeal Peel's Bill is a thing that would create no commotion certainly; but, on the contrary, would give great satisfaction, at first, to perhaps, a large majority of the nation. It would *make money* plenty, a thing always agreeable to persons who have dealings going on. It would cause more employment to take place; and it certainly would afford facility in the raising of the revenue. The losers would not feel the loss immediately, except the fundholders; and they are a set of persons whose clamours are of very little consequence. Besides, they would be very apt to be content. They would get the same number of pounds; and those apprehensions which they now have, would disappear for awhile, at any rate.

Thus would the Debt be reduced in fact, though not in name; and in addition to these considerations, there would be the relief of the Ministry from the everlasting torments that they have now to endure. If they were men of irritable nerves, they must, one would think, absolutely go mad. I would not have been in Lord CASTLEREAGH's place in that Agricultural Committee for a mountain of gold. Only think of the torment of being called upon for *high prices* by men that have passed a law to make low prices! It is a great compliment to the Ministers; not to their sensibility, I mean, but to their powers of face, that they are able to talk to such people without either laughing or swearing. The devil, they say, ought to have his due; and it is but bare justice to these Ministers to say that they were *forced*, nay bullied, and frightened into the passing of Peel's Bill; and I have always admired the address of *Canning* in getting the House to an unanimous vote upon the subject. I am not certain, by any means, that he foresaw the result; but if he did, it was

as clever a stroke of policy as any of which I have a recollection. It was like the soldiers and sailors signing a round-robin. It was the cry of *one and all*. It was the old scheme of time out of mind of preventing the pot from be-calling the kettle in terms not fit to be used in these times of universal delicacy. It would not have done to *divide*. There would have been a motion upon record. There would have been the *names of a minority*. The Ministers clearly did not want the thing; but if they had it, they contrived it very well to get the whole into the mess.

Yet, and which really is not fair play, they have now to bear all the blame in substance, though not in form. They are called upon to relieve the distress, when they are no more answerable for it than any of the rest of the passers of this Bill. They are not told, indeed, in so many words, that the Bill ought not to have been passed, but their assailants act towards them as if this were their subject of complaint. So that, their situation is to be envied by nobody, not absolutely in a dungeon or going to trial for libel. It is impossible for them to do that which is demanded of them, unless they repeal this Bill. Reduce the interest of the Debt they dare not, without a reform of the Parliament. Reform the Parliament they cannot without the consent, and even without the first movement, of those that want the high prices. Reduce the other expenses of the State they cannot, and carry on the Government according to the present system. To repeal Peel's Bill, therefore, is the only thing that they have in their power in order to alleviate the distress of the farmers and the landlords. Dreadful, indeed, would be the shame, everlasting would be the disgrace of this; but, it would be an *expedient*; and really, all things considered, I should not wonder, if, tormented half out of their senses as they are, they were to give their consent to this, even with the condition attached of their coming to Kensington and acting, in their proper persons, in the *farce that is to be performed at the Feast of the Gridiron*.

A few weeks, Sir, will inform us whether I am to have this very great pleasure or not. If you carry your point, preparations for the feast will instantly be made. It will be in the season of green geese, not less than five hundred of which will be broiled whole for the occasion. The entertainments will be such as I trust will reflect no disgrace upon our taste at this end of the town; no house will be able to contain us; and upon looking into Six-Acts, which are great friends of good cheer, I see that we must meet in "*no field or place*" without *bona-fide* eating and drinking! Eat and drink we will, therefore; and, Sir, I trust that you will honour us with your presence upon the occasion, to render which agreeable at the time and memorable afterwards, nothing shall be wanting that is within the power of

Sir, your most obedient
And most humble servant,
WM. COBBETT.

A SECOND LETTER TO MR. WESTERN,

ON HIS

INTENDED MOTION FOR A REPEAL OF PEEL'S BILL.

 (Political Register, April, 1822.)

"However, TIME now stands, the *Palm* in one hand, and the *Fool's-Cup* in the other; the Nation are looking on, and will be speedily called upon to make the award."—REGISTER, 5th September, 1819.

Kensington, 24th April, 1822.

SIR,

It was my intention to address, this week, a Letter to the *English Protestants* on the subject of the treatment of the *Irish Catholics*; and, indeed, I was actually doing it, when, through the means of some friend, I received a copy of your *Second Address to the Landowners*, just published by Mr. Ridgway in Piccadilly. I have, therefore, changed my subject; for, though that of *Irish Tithes* (which is the real matter in dispute) is of great importance; and *must* come to issue at no distant day, it is second to your subject, which is the master of the whole. It is, in fact, that on which all measures of reform or relief of whatever kind have a complete dependence.

This new pamphlet of your production contains an express declaration of your intention to move for a *repeal*, or, at least, a *re-consideration*, of the Bill of Peel; and, as I now find, that you have a *measure* in your eye for *settling things*, without any mention, or any apparent thought, of a *Reform of Parliament*, I shall notice a little this proposed measure of yours, first examining those parts of your pamphlet which precede the mention of it.

And here let me, at once, charge you with *plagiarism* the most gross. You think it just and right to give *Locke's name* with *Locke's words*. Why not *mine*? Both factions I find alike in this respect. You are, as the country people in Essex say, "all tarred with the same stick!" You seem to forget, that it is not *pride*, but *meanness*, that can induce men to be guilty of literary theft. Curious, too, that you should all be so forward to quote old *Jenkinson*, *Hume*, *Smith*, and *Locke*. Those, who were all *placemen*, or *pensioners*, or both, you seem to think it an honour to have read, though famously blunderheaded they are in many things. However, I shall not *reason* with you: I shall inflict punishment on you: I shall *post you up*, and leave you to be laughed at. I will bring your haughty stomachs down before I have done with you. I will make your aristocratic insolence bend before the superior mind of the "Lower Orders." I am the only man that ever really *tackled* you. Thousands of men of greater talent than myself have felt your injustice, have hated and despised, but have, at last, become *underlings* to you. They have wanted the *toiling* disposition, the *perseverance*, and, above all things, the *self-denial*, necessary to enable them to tackle you and stick to you to the end. I

want none of these. I shall not, therefore, become your underling; but shall pull you well down before this thing be over. As to what any of you say *in-doors*, you are protected by an Act of your own to *banish* those who shall say that which has a *tendency* to bring you into *contempt*. This protection does not follow you into the *bookseller's shop*. When you are weak enough to expose yourselves there, we are permitted to laugh at you. You have not even yet taken so much care of your literary reputations as you have of your *game*. You cannot transport us for being found, after sun-set, "lurking" round book-shops in pursuit of your pamphlets.

You begin your pamphlet, this new Address to the Landowners, by a re-statement of the extent of the distress; and, having done this, you proceed thus: "I observed, that such a case *never before occurred in the history of any civilized country*. I called upon *Ministers* to tell me if such a calamity had ever visited the *cultivators of the soil in any age or nation*. No *revolution*, no *civil war* ever made such havoc in the *pro-perty of that class of the people*, as has already taken place. It is the *class* which even an *invading enemy* pays the *greatest respect* to, on account of the superior importance of their occupation to society; I asked how this could happen in a moment of *profound peace*, after a *period* too of seven years of undisturbed tranquillity, when if nations can ever expect to be prosperous and happy, they have a right so to *indulge their hopes*."

The bad grammar is *your own*, Sir; all the rest is mine, as every reader of the Register well knows. The *tenth* Letter to the Landlords; the rustic harangue at Lynn; and several other articles contain this precise mode of stating the case. But, as to your *call upon the Ministers*; pray, Sir, what *right* have you to call upon them in this style? We are clearly to infer from this passage, that you *blame them* for the calamities that you have described; that you blame them for this revolution in property; for this havoc amongst that class of men, whose affairs have never until now been regarded as other than solid as the earth they cultivate. And, what right, I ask, have you to impute this blame to the *Ministers*? You have yourself been in Parliament as long as I can remember anything about politics. And, did you ever attempt to prevent the measures that you say have been the cause of this havoc? However, let us, before we go further, hear you as to this cause.

"The causes of this phenomenon appear to me daily more distinct and evident; so indeed they do to every body who devotes any serious unbiassed attention to the subject. IT INDISPUTABLY HAS ARISEN ALTOGETHER FROM THE OPERATION OF THE ACT OF 1819; BY WHICH OUR ENORMOUS BURDENS ARE LEVIED, AND ALL PECUNIARY ENGAGEMENTS CHARGED IN THE OLD STANDARDS OF VALUE PRIOR TO 1797, INSTEAD OF THAT IN WHICH THEY WERE IMPOSED AND CONTRACTED. It is clear, by what is passing under our eyes, that such a change must be attended with fatal consequences; that the industry of the country cannot sustain it; that the relative situations of individuals and classes will be entirely altered, and that the progress of that alteration will create a convulsion that will be dangerous to all."

Well, then, Peel's Bill, according to you, is the cause of the mischief. This is true, if you include the *previously-adopted measures* for a return to cash-payments. For want of your doing this, you expose yourself to the shots of the Oracles and Edinburgh reviewers, and even that old ass, the *Times* newspaper has his kick at you, and pretty fairly too. For he says, there was agricultural distress in 1814, 1815, 1816 and 1817. Peel's

Bill was not passed, then ; and, *therefore*, Peel's Bill cannot have been the only cause of the distress now. This is a fair enough hit on the part of this old Jackass, who only copies, indeed, word for word, from the Oracle's article in the *Chronicle* ; but, no matter for that, he hits you ; and it is better to parry his blows ; which is done at once by including in the causes the steps taken by the Bank in 1814, 1815 and 1816.

However, did you ever, in the proper time and place, complain of these causes ? Did you ever so much as point them out ? Did you ever even allude to them, though in the most distant degree ? Never. Yet you had a seat in Parliament all the time ! If, then, *you* could see none of these causes, what right have you to blame the Ministers ? Are you, who have been, all the while, a member of Parliament, as well as any one of them, and who have had neither loan-jobbers nor boroughmongers to bother you ; are you now to say to them : " I could not see these causes, but *you* ought to have seen them ? " They ought, indeed, to have seen them ; but, it was as much your duty as theirs to see them ; and if you felt your *incapacity* to penetrate into such causes, you should have told your constituents that you were *unfit to represent them*. I, William Cobbett, have, indeed, a right to blame the Ministers ; for I saw, from the first, and pointed out, these causes of mischief, and even in 1816, *depicted the consequences* in the loss of Sir Giles Jolterhead's estate. But, I have a right to blame *you* as well as the Ministers ; and blame you I must ; or else I act a very partial or base part.

Nay, Sir, I contend, that you are more to blame than the Ministers. You have, though the public may seem to have forgotten it, been a *great actor in the thing* ; a great mischief-doer, whatever your intentions may have been ; and I understand this fine THING a great deal too well to be humbugged by the mere name of "*country gentlemen*," amongst those who take which title we see some of the most mean and despicable wretches in the kingdom. "*Glory*" has a class whom he calls "*the gentlemen of England*." Whether these be *the same* as "*the country gentlemen*," I know not ; but, this I know, that the far greater part of all those whom I have had pointed out to me as "*country gentlemen*," are, on an average, whether in point of honour or of intellect, far beneath the average of any common soldiers or sailors that I ever saw. A set of greedy, proud, mean, and servile wretches : "*meanness that soars, and pride that licks the dust*." They are always grubbing about after post and pensions for their families. They are tyrants in their villages, and slaves, even the slaves of slaves, three or four deep, when they get within the air of Court.

I do not, however, class *you*, Sir, with this swarm of base reptiles ; but I wish to be clearly understood as bearing you not an atom of respect on account of your being what is called "*a country gentleman*." I come back from this digression to repeat, that you have been a *great actor*, and a *great mischief-doer*, as to the matter before us ; and, if I allow, as I do, that you did the mischief *without intending it*, I go quite as far on the good-natured side as any one would go, who had been pillaged without acknowledgment, as I have been by you.

When great calamities take place, a wise man will look back to the *cause*, and, he will inquire into the cause of that cause, if he can. Now, it is very certain, that the cash-payment measures are the immediate cause of the present revolution in property ; but, it is also certain, that the *Ministers* are not to be blamed for the cash-payment measures. I am

not to be carried away by any cry of *Whig* or *Tory*: that is all a scandalous humbug. I am sitting here, at this table, in judgment on you all. And, let poor Old Nick have his due, and Castlereagh and Jenky also: and I must say, that, from first to last, *the devil a halfpenny did they ever wish to pay in gold*, or in *metal* of any sort or size; an assertion which I am ready to maintain against any "country gentleman" that ever swaggered over poacher or cringed before a Secretary of the Treasury.

This is a great matter, mind, Sir. This is no trifling part of the history of this agricultural distress. The Ministers were the authors neither of *Corn-bill* nor *Cash-bill*; and, it really is a little hard, that they should bear the *whole* of the blame! "What! Are they good men, then, and wise Ministers, and worthy of support?" O! that is *quite another thing*! But, we are not to confound in this way. Because they authorised Sidmouth's circular of 1817 and his letter to the Manchester sabrefellows of 1819, it does not follow, that they would have *paid in cash*! And this is the matter which we have now before us.

Be it remembered, then, that so far from discovering any *eagerness* to get into cash-payments, they used every artifice in their power to *keep out of them*. In 1814, they ought to have paid in cash; but, the *American war* served them as a pretext for delay. When that war was over, they found out another reason for putting off the evil day. And thus they kept on from 1814 to 1819. All this while, they were *baited* by your side of the House to come to cash-payments. You will say, perhaps, that *I baited them too*! That is true enough; but, mark; I always accompanied *my* call for cash-payments with a call for a reduction of army, navy, salaries, sinecures, pensions, grants, and *interest of debt*, which *your side of the House never did*, the reasons for which are plain enough, when we consider that there are as many pensions and sinecures on one side as on the other!

Thus, though they did not actually come to cash-payments, they endeavoured to get *prepared* for it; and to get prepared, paper must be *drawn in*. The drawing in of paper must lower prices. It did lower prices. This produced *distress*. And then came the *Corn-Bill project*. You, Sir, were at the *head* of this project. The Ministers rejected it the first year; but, the second they were *compelled* to yield. I say *compelled*; for they yielded avowedly against their own opinions and wishes.

Now, Sir, look into the Register of 1814 and 1815; and there you will find *me* remonstrating with *you* and *Mr. Coke*; endeavouring to convince you, that your *Corn-Bill will do you no good*; praying you to think nothing about the importations of corn, but to think constantly about the *drawing-in of the paper*; beseeching you to look at the Old Lady's tricks; and, in short, explaining to you all the causes of the low prices, as clearly as ever one of Mr. Brougham's grannies explained the alphabet to a child.

The *Corn-Bill* was passed, however, and, as I had foretold, it did no good to the farmer. Then came 1816, when you appeared again with a *Seed-Bill*. Now, this was doing infinite *mischief*. It was laying the *foundation* of Webb Hall's crack-brain delusions. You cannot be easily excused for this, Sir. It was a perseverance, an obstinate perseverance in error; and in *mischievous* error too. On the 10th of February, in that year, before you brought forward your motion on the "*distresses of the country*," I again *remonstrated* with you on the subject, in words,

which justice to myself, and to my *disciples* also, calls upon me to insert here. They have for years, *had battles to fight for me*. They have endured loads of obloquy on my account. Justice to them as well as to myself, therefore, demands that I *prove*, that, if my advice had been followed, the present calamities never would have been witnessed. Justice to those also who subscribed towards the Coventry-contest, demands that I prove, when the occasion so fully warrants it, that, if I had been in Parliament, right notions would have prevailed years and years ago, and that the Bill of Peel would never have been passed, without such *accompanying measures* as would have prevented the present destructive consequences. "As to the intended *discussion* on the *distressed state of the country*, it is impossible for me to know *what* it will produce; but, there can certainly be no benefit attending a mere *display* of those distresses. They are known and felt in every family, which does not live upon the taxes. It cannot, therefore, be of any use to paint them in speeches in Parliament. And give me leave to say, that I do not believe, that such discussions can lead to any practical result of any real utility, unless there be some measure proposed for taking off at least twenty millions of the taxes now paid. Mr. COKE, on the first day of the session, complained, that the farmers had *no market* for their grain. This was a mistake to be sure: for they can always sell it for *something*. They have always a *market*; but, it is *high price* that they want; and I defy any human power to give them this, without augmenting the quantity of the paper-money. When the low price was imputed to the importations from abroad, the remedy was easy, supposing the importations to have been the real cause and the only cause. The remedy was applied, but it was soon found to be useless, because the far greater part of the cause of low price did not consist in the importations. The cause that *now* operates is a very different one indeed. It is general and powerful, and must be durable, unless removed by new issues of paper. It is strange that Mr. COKE should not see this cause; and if he does see it, that he should content himself with merely talking of the *evil*. If Mr. WESTERN does not do more than this, he may as well do nothing at all; for, as to a mere display of the distresses of the country, it will be perfectly useless. Great, however, are the *expectations* from the result of that day's proceedings. The farmers think that *zummut* is yet to be *done* for them, and so do the shopkeepers. I should not like to have excited such expectations, unless I were resolved to lay all *bare*, and to propose, in the most distinct terms, a return, through thick and thin, to the expenses of 1792, when wheat was nearly as it is at this hour, and, perhaps, as it ever will be again. Mr. WESTERN may be assured, that *nibbling* will do no good. It must be a *bite*, and a bite, too, that will make the teeth meet, and even to take out the piece. It must be, not the snap of a well-bred spaniel, but the unrelenting grip of a bull-dog. This is too harsh, you will say. Well, then, the thing may as well remain as it is; for we are past all help from barking and snapping."

Now, Sir, can you read this passage, and reflect on the time and circumstances, and then look at the plagiarism in your present pamphlet, without feeling shame, and being anxious to beg my pardon? O, yes; that you can; and be just as full of pride and conceit as ever! The *public*, however, is sitting in judgment on us. "TIME has the *Palm* in one hand, and the *Foot's Cap* in the other;" and the award is now just about

to be made. Get Peel's Bill repealed, and the *decision* is instantly made!

In spite of my remonstrances you persevered, and, early in March 1816, brought forward your *resolutions*. Such a string of nothings never before appeared upon paper. Not a word about the *effects of the currency*. That was to be beaten into the heads of none of you; though you have now found out that the currency is *every thing*. I shall presently show you how clearly I proved this to you *then*; but, first of all, let me repeat my question: With what justice can you now *blame the Ministers*; you, who saw the distress in 1814, 1815, and 1816, and who dealt largely in *remedies*, too; but, who never said *one single word* about this all important thing, the currency? You were for laws to *raise*, or *keep up*, the *price of produce*. And, if you despised all the advice offered to you upon the subject, with what reason do you throw blame upon the Ministers, because they did not listen to that advice? They adopted, not their own measures, but *yours*. They passed all the Bills that you asked to have passed, and, I beg to know, then, upon what ground you impute the fatal consequences to them?

Now, Sir, in order to show, that you had no excuse for your conduct in 1816, which was merely the forerunner of the ruinous delusions of *Webb Hall*; in order to show, that the effects of the diminution of the quantity of the currency ought to have been as clear to you in 1816 as they are in 1822. Read the following from the Register of 9th of March of the former year; and then make an apology for yourself if you can: "This military and naval establishment, together with the interest of the Debt and the Sinking Fund, which latter is full as necessary as the interest of the Debt itself; all these require, and will require for ever, sixty millions of pounds a year, at the very least. To pay this sixty millions of pounds a-year, while an immense navy commanded all the advantages of all the trade in the world; and while this island appeared to be the only safe place in Europe for the depositing of money and of riches of all sorts; and especially while there was afloat a paper currency so abundant as to be within the reach of every one; to pay this sixty millions a-year during this state of things was no great difficulty; but from the moment that peace was made with America, followed as it immediately was by peace with France, and preceded as it had been the year before by peace on the Continent of Europe; from that moment the navy, which had before swept the seas of all their riches, became ineffectual; foreigners, who now saw the Continent a safe place to return to, took their money out of the country of the Income-tax, and retired home, leaving us to pay the Income-tax ourselves. Numerous English families flocked to the Continent, leaving their share of the poor-rates to be paid by those who remained behind. But, the great thing of all, was, the absolute necessity which now arose of diminishing the quantity of paper-money in circulation. Unless this was done, the Bank paper must have continued at a discount of from thirty to forty per cent., and the exchange against us with foreign countries must have been in the same proportion. Therefore, the quantity of paper was diminished; by what means, at what time, and in what manner, I have described to you before, in the second Number of this present volume, in my Letter to your Secretary of the Treasury, where I have told you the whole story about the operations of the Treasury, and of the Governors and Directors of the Bank of England. I have frequently

“ before shown, that this diminution of the quantity of paper, necessarily produced that confusion in the affairs of all men in trade, which confusion has been followed by the distresses spoken of before. For instance, the bank-note, the pound-note is, to-day, worth thirteen shillings in silver. I borrow a pound of my neighbour. Next week this same pound-note is worth twenty shillings in silver. My neighbour calls upon me to pay him the pound. Consequently I pay him a thing that is worth seven shillings more than that which I borrowed. Farmers who took their land, put it into high condition and stocked it well with cattle and implements, while wheat was fifteen shillings a bushel, have now, all at once, sunk half the principal money that they laid out. If they borrowed money upon mortgage for the sake of effecting these purposes, or for the sake of purchasing land, they have now, in fact, to pay nearly double what they paid before, as the interest of the money so borrowed. There are thousands of men who bought land, paying half the purchase-money down, and leaving the other half as mortgage upon the land. The half which they paid down, they have lost, the land being, at this time, worth no more than what it is mortgaged for. All the tradesmen and manufacturers, and merchants, who have been trading upon borrowed money, must be very lucky indeed if they escape ruin. Seeing that they have to pay in a currency of higher real value than the currency was in which they borrowed. Accompanying this has come an abatement in prices, which, of course, renders it impossible for the people to continue to pay sixty millions of taxes in a year. You have seen enough of the paltry remedies proposed by others, who either want the sense, or want the courage, to propose to the country that which alone can afford it a chance of surmounting its difficulties without first being plunged into uproar and confusion. Men are *shy* upon this score. They fear to give offence. Every one has his circle of friends. Those who are able to write, or to speak in public, have generally some interest or other to restrain them. Many are afraid of mere popular clamour. For my part, I am restrained by none of these considerations; and shall, therefore, speak out as freely as if I were sitting by my fire-side.”

And, is it *after this* that you can publish a sort of *discovery*, that the augmentation of the value of the currency is the cause of the distress? Can you, recollecting this, as you must recollect it, publish to the world an extract from *Locke*, pretending that it is from *him* that you have got your light upon the subject? Yes; that you can; and expose yourself to the contempt of every candid and just man in the kingdom rather than do justice to me.

But, again, *why blame the Ministers?* They were not bound to understand this matter better than you. In this same Register (six years ago, mind) you were told, that, after ruin had “ done its worst for the farmers, the estates of the landlords would be transferred.” Six years ago you were told this, and, indeed, had been told it several years before even that. What apology was there, then, for you at that time; or, what apology is there for you, at this time, in not quoting my words with my name, instead of pretending that you have been enlightened by *Locke*, whose doctrine is general, and does not directly point at our case? How *industrious* a reader you have been! How *deep* in your researches! What a pity, since *Locke* has enlightened you, that you did not read *Locke* before you were so eager for Corn-Bills]

However, leaving now these former periods, what a pity you did not read *Locke* before Peel's Bill was passed! You ascribe *all* the mischief to this Bill. That is manifestly wrong, because the mischief began as soon as the Bank began to draw in the paper, which was in 1814, five years before Peel's Bill was passed. But, at any rate, if Peel's Bill be so mischievous a measure, why did you not *oppose* Peel's Bill? And, if you did not see any reason for *opposing* it, is it *just* in you now to blame the Ministers for the mischief it has done, and is doing? Have you, a Member for a county, and about thirty years a Member of the House of Wisdom, any right to assume, that you are to be exempted from all share of the blame due to a measure, which, at the very least, you suffered to pass without a single breath of opposition? Without even a suggestion as to any fatal, or even disagreeable, consequence?

Here, too, you as well as all the other opponents of the Ministers were not without advice, very *impressively given*, long beforehand too, and accompanied with *reasons* most elaborately stated. In November 1817, I (being then in Long Island) wrote a *Petition* to the House of Commons, stating the *causes of the distress*, and praying for the *suitable remedy*; namely, a *reduction of interest of Debt, of salaries, pensions, sinecures, and public pay* of all sorts. This was the *too long* petition, which Lord FOLKESTONE did not present; which I wished to have on the *Journals of the House*, that it might afterwards be quoted to my honour; and which I will not suppose that Lord Folkestone refused to present from any mean or bad motive. In July 1818, I sent you over the *Letter to Tierney*; and, when *Peel's Bill had been passed*, I sent you over a letter to the Regent, from which I have taken the motto to this present Letter to you.

These *three papers* will live, and long live, in proof of my superiority over you all: they will live to your shame and to my honour. Here was the *warning* of the danger: here was the *remedy*: here is the *prophecy* as to the consequences of *despising* the warning, or *rejecting* the remedy. These three papers I have just republished in one pamphlet, *price six-pence*! Six Acts have not been able to effect their object; but, God knows my mind and heart, and I have taken, and always shall take, the *will for the deed*; and shall always feel and act accordingly. I remember what was said by *Mackintosh, Scarlett, and Brougham*, during the discussions on those Acts, and I am not fool enough not to have perceived the influence that set their tongues in motion. I remember that the man was put in gaol for ten weeks, who went round an English town to announce that *I had arrived in good health*. The immediate actors in these scenes never attracted much of my attention. I looked back, and looked back, to the first movers; and I thank God for what *I now behold*, and for what I shall and must behold.

So much for the *past*. But, you have a *remedy*; and, now let us look at that. First, however, as I have said so much about your being *enlightened*, all of a sudden, by *Locke*, let us see what it is that *Locke* says; and, it will be curious enough, if we should find, that the passage quoted is not only *inapplicable* to our case, but *false in its doctrine*, into the bargain. The words are these:

"The exigencies and uses of money *not lessening* with its quantity, and it being in the same proportion to be employed and distributed still, in all the parts of its circulation; so much as its *quantity is lessened*, so much must the share of every one that has a right to this money, *be the less*; whether he be landholder for his goods, or labourer for his hire, or merchant for his brokerage.

"If one-third of the money employed in trade, were locked up, or gone out of England, must not the landholders necessarily receive one-third less for their goods, and consequently rents fall? A less quantity of money by one-third being to be distributed amongst an equal number of receivers? Indeed people not perceiving the money to be gone, are apt to be jealous one of another; and each suspecting another's inequality of gain, to rob him of his share; every one will be employing his skill and power, the best he can, to retrieve it again, and to bring money into his pocket, in the same plenty as formerly. But this is but scrambling amongst ourselves, and helps no more against our wants than the pulling of a short coverlet will, amongst children that lie together, preserve them all from the cold; some will starve, unless the father of the family provides better, and enlarges the scanty covering. This pulling and contest is usually between the landed man and the merchant; for the labourer's share, being seldom more than a bare subsistence, never allows that body of men time or opportunity to raise their thoughts above that, or struggle with the richer for theirs (as one common interest), unless when some common and great distress, uniting them in one universal ferment, makes them forget respect, and emboldens them to carve to their wants with armed force, and then sometimes they break in upon the rich, and sweep all like a deluge."

This passage, which you call "*almost miraculous*," is, in fact, a very poor, common-place thing, and the figure, in the middle of it, perfectly absurd. The notion, that prices will fall one-third by the removal out of the country of one-third of the money, is false. Locke had not had, like you, the advantage of getting the Letter to Tierney for two-pence, and, therefore, he might be excused. In that Letter it is shown, that the taking away of a third of the money, will make prices fall much more than a third. It is a false notion, too, that there will be any "*scrambling*" on account of a diminution of the quantity of money in a country. It is false to suppose, that a small quantity is not as good as a large quantity, as is here supposed; except as applied to cases of debts and contracts and taxes and pay out of public money, the rate of which is already fixed; and to these Locke makes no allusion. What are the labourers to be in a ferment for on account of the quantity of money in the country; unless there be certain fixed taxes or payments out of the public stock to produce oppression? So that this "*almost miraculous*" passage, which, in the first place, has not the most distant application to our case, is, in itself, if not a tissue of errors, at least a very bald and inadequate explanation of the thing intended to be explained.

We now come to your remedy, which is described in these words: "I have pledged myself to bring before the House, in some form or other, a consideration of the effects of that Act, and perhaps shall move a repeal of it, with the view subsequently and gradually to adjust the standard of value in proportion to the rate of prices, and the value of money since the year 1797; and according to which, public and private debts, taxes, monied engagements and contracts have been made and imposed; and for the purpose of regulating the same according to the medium price of corn and other essential articles, as well as labour during that period. I am perfectly aware of the extreme delicacy and difficulty of such adjustment: it will require time and most mature deliberation. The Act of 1797 has thrown us into a situation, from which, to extricate ourselves, must be a work of infinite difficulty; no path presents itself which is not strewed with thorns; but that we have chosen, leads to inevitable destruction, and we must reconsider and retrace our steps."

In so important a matter, you ought to have been very precise and

clear in your definition. I do not know what you mean by "adjusting the standard of value in proportion to the rate of prices and the value of money since the year 1797." However, what I suppose you to mean is this: To reduce the intrinsic value of the coin, so as to make a bushel of wheat sell for as much nominally as it did between 1797 and 1814. There is nothing new here. It is Mr. JAMES' ("Lord Little-Shilling's") project. It is what Mr. THOMAS ATTWOOD has contended for, with as much ability as can be employed upon such a subject.

To make the reduction sufficient, the gold sovereign must pass for three pounds, which would be a pretty decent pull upon creditors and receivers. It would be perfectly just as far as relates to all payments out of the public money. But, would it be just towards yearly servants, the whole of whom would be actually defrauded of two-thirds of a part, at least, of their year's wages? Then, pray consider private creditors, amongst whom are all tradesmen, the whole of whom, such as hutchers, bakers, upholsterers, and all common tradesmen who have yearly, or long, bills on their customers, must be ruined. Wholesale tradesmen, the whole of whose capital is frequently in book-debts, must also be ruined. Merchants and manufacturers, having debts due to them abroad must also be ruined. Annuity contracts of recent date; owners of house and land recently let; recent mortgagees; all these would be grievously injured. The labourers would also be injured greatly; for it would take time to get their wages up again.

Have you looked well at the agitation, which the very mention of a design to clip the shilling, or to reduce its size, would create? Do you imagine that any paper would pass after such a measure? Have you an idea of the confusion and uproar that an attempt of the kind would create? Have you thought of the manner in which the soldiers would relish such a measure; or, would you make an exception in their favour?

You say very fairly, "that no path presents itself which is not strewed with thorns;" but, I can assure you, that this is the most thorny of all. There is a great deal better way than this of getting out of the difficulty; and one that I believe from my soul the Ministers would have come to before now, if they had been let alone; if those bothering metaphysicians from the North had not pestered them with their "bullion-question." Paper-money is only paper-money, call it what you will. Repeal Peel's Bill; issue liberally; the more you speed the better; make a "Bank Restriction" as before; but, make no legal tender except at the Bank; and, the whole thing will be settled to universal satisfaction in about four months! This would, indeed, put an end to the Borough-system; but, if you see any harm in that, I must confess that I do not.

This is, I am confident, the only way of saving any of the estates, unless by reduction of interest of Debt together with concomitant measures, by a Reformed Parliament; and, if I were to say, that I expect to see such reform, but in the last extremity, I should be a great deceiver. The plan for this adjustment, which I drew up in Long Island, and which would long ago have been before the country, if I had been returned for Coventry, is, I am pretty sure, the plan that will be adopted at last; that is to say, if any settlement at all be to take place without a convulsion. But, time passes. Every month renders a just and quiet settlement more difficult; and I do not wish to disguise, that I begin to think that it will not take place. There is great ground of confidence

in the general information, in the good sense, in the justice, the moderation and humanity of the people. But, who is to answer for what a sudden burst may produce ?

What you may mean, Sir, by our present path "leading to inevitable destruction," I do not know. Destruction of *what* ? All that I can see a *destruction* of is, the property which the *present owners* have in land. This will assuredly take place, if the present thing go on in its present way ; and this is not clear *now* ; but has been clear for years, and many years too. How this comes not to have been seen, when Peel's Bill was passed is strange enough ; or, at least, it would be, if we were speaking of any *other assembly* on the face of the earth. It was so *evident* that that Bill must be ruinous to the land, in the end. You are a *deep* reader, Sir. You love *deep* things. Besides, it is *deepness* to name *Locke*. That is such a deep sound. *Mr. Waithman's* portrait, in a shop, on Ludgate-hill, represents him as having in his hand, "*Locke on the Human Understanding*." That is so *deep* ! But, Sir, if I could but inveigle you to read the last of the *Two-penny Trashes* above-mentioned. The Letter to the Regent on the "*wild and visionary projects of the Boroughmongers* !" If I could but prevail on you to do this, and that, too, before you make your motion, how happy should I be ! It will teach you more useful matter than *Locke* ever taught any body, and will give you two penny-worth of laughter into the bargain. I have not seen that Number of the Register, that I know of, since I wrote it, till this very day, when I sent it to the press. The moment I clapped my eyes on it I fell a laughing. An association of ideas brought me back to the paper-ten where I wrote it, and to all the fun that I enjoyed at the time. But, when I come now to read it over soberly, I am surprised at the correctness of all the views there taken of the subject. It was then *prophecy* : it is a record of *facts*. All is verified to the letter. There was the Speaker (the Number related to the close of the Session of 1819) *congratulating* the Regent, that he had a House of Commons *wise enough* to pass Peel's Bill ! There was the Regent expressing, in the name and behalf of His Royal Father, *his satisfaction* that he had a House of Commons *so wise* as to discover the *safe and easy* means of returning to the ancient standard of value ! And there was I, sitting in my shirt and trousers, writing a *prophecy* upon the consequences of this measure of consummate wisdom ! I am sure I never *read* what I wrote before it came off to England, and I do not recollect ever having seen it, in England, till this very morning. There were several Numbers, written in Long Island, after I got the news of the passing of Peel's Bill. I wished to republish *one* of them just now. I had frequently thought of the one that began with a commentary on the Speaker's *congratulatory speech* ; and, this morning I looked it out. I say all this in order to tempt you to read it, Sir, before you make your motion.

Before I conclude this very long Letter, let me notice the doctrine, which the *Oracle*, in conjunction with *Malthus* they say, has cooked up for the *comfort of the landlords*. I have not, perhaps, a very clear conception of it, and I have not yet seen the pamphlet, or review, that contains it ; but, from what I can gather, it is this : that, *if all foreign produce be kept out of the country, the land must yield the means of paying rent*. This is, in fact, the doctrine of the Treasury pamphlet, published in January, and ascribed to Mr. COURTENAY. I took the part of Mr. Courtenay's pamphlet in my rustic harangue at Chichester, to

which I beg leave to refer you. But, as this really seems to be the *last hope* of the Boroughmongers, I will here make a few observations on it.

The argument is this: "An article of such indispensable necessity as human food must continue to be raised: no article will continue to be raised, or made, for any length of time, unless it fetch a price sufficient to pay the cost of production: human food does not *now* fetch a price sufficient to pay the cost of production *including rent*; therefore, the price of human food *must rise*, and must, in general, yield *enough* to pay rent, unless food be permitted to come from abroad."

I do not know, that this is *precisely* what they say; but, it is this in substance. Now, Sir, all the premises may be true; but, the conclusion is, I am convinced, false. To be sure human food will be raised, because, do what you will, hunger will, in case of necessity, take possession of the land. It is also true, that it will not be raised, for any length of time, without yielding enough of something or another to pay the cost of production; for, if, in some cases, it yields nothing beyond the food of him who tills the land, his labour is the cost and the *only* cost in certain cases. So far all is right. But, as to rent being part of the cost, that may or may not be. This argument *assumes*, that rent is *necessary to production*; it assumes that human food *cannot come without rent*; it may as well assume that human food *cannot come without tithes*.

When we set about to raise wheat, for instance, we want the seed and the various kinds of labour from the seed-time to the winnowing. These are *necessary*. Without these the wheat *cannot come*. But, it will come without rent. Rent is what is left after the producing costs are paid. If there be nothing left, after those costs are paid, there is no rent; but this circumstance will not tend at all to put a stop to production.

But, the price will be, and must be, they say, sufficient to pay rent; for men *will have* rent for their land. If it be a *will have*, indeed; then they *may have* what rent they *choose*, and the prices *must rise accordingly*. O, no! The positive price of the produce does not depend solely on the cost of raising it nor upon the quantity raised in proportion to the usual demand. It depends, too, as all other prices do, on the *quantity of money circulating in the country*. And, if to labour and seed, there be added another cost, called *tax*, which, no more than rent, is *necessary to production*, this tax may take away that which would otherwise be rent.

Suppose the farms of a country to be all of one size and quality; and suppose each to yield a rent of a hundred pounds a-year, leaving the farmer a bare existence, and nothing more. Then suppose the Government to lay on a tax of a hundred a-year on each farm, payable by the farmer prior to rent. Must he not *cease to pay rent*? Could he *raise his price*? How could he raise his price, unless he could put more money into circulation in the country? Divest the thing of money altogether. Suppose him to have every year 100 bushels of corn to give to the landlord. If the Government came and took that, could he create another hundred bushels to give to the landlord?

But, landlords may choose, it is said, whether they will let their farms without getting rent. Yes, but they may *not choose* as to paying *land-tax*, and *poor-rates* too, if they keep the farms in hand; and, if the farmer can pay them no rent, how are they to make it? They may let the land *lie fallow*. Yes, but they must, then, keep the labourers from some *other*

source; and what source, I wonder, can that be? The fact is, that when we come, thus, to analyse the thing, we find, that, though we talk of *landowner*, and though he talks of *his property*, he is, after all, only *part proprietor*; and that, in short, neither parchments nor prescription, can take from the whole of the people of a country the *right to live upon the produce of the land*.

The question of *rent* or *no rent*, lies, properly speaking, in our present case, not between the *landlord and tenant*, but between the *landlord and the Government*. The Government takes away as much as it likes. It takes, we will suppose, as much as it can. It *must* leave those who till the land sufficient to eat and to screen their carcasses from the inclemency of the weather, or they could not work, and would rebel. It *must* leave enough in the hands of the farmer to keep up his stock or he could not carry on production. But, there is *no must* in the case of *rent*. Production may go on very well *without that*. If the Government *need* that, whether to keep down Radicals or re-exalt the Bourbons, it can take it, without any hinderance to production; and, so "loyal" a body of men as the landlords of England, would hardly wish to keep what was needed for such purposes!

It appears to me, then, Sir, that this last hope of the boroughmongers completely fails them; and, that the idea of some *overruling necessity* to bring them rents is as gross an absurdity as ever found its way into the head of Oracle. The general positive price of the produce will depend upon the quantity of money in circulation. The quantity, or amount of the tax, will, or will not, take all away, except the *necessary producing costs*. If the tax leave nothing but the necessary producing costs, there can be no rent; if it leave any thing more, that more will go to the landlord. In the necessary producing costs is included the *interest of the farmer's stock*; for, unless he have this he will *withdraw his capital from the land*. The landlord, you observe, cannot *withdraw*. His share comes, if at all, out of the earth itself and is inseparable from it. The parson will have his portion; for he comes and takes it away *out of the field*. The burden goes rolling back, till, at last, it settles on the shoulders of the landlord. It may happen, that the Government, after leaving what it *must leave* with the husbandman and labourer, without leaving any thing for rent, will still *not have enough*. In that case, it *must take the parson's share*! Nor should I be at all surprised to see this beginning in a short time. Perhaps the first step in this way may be to make the parson *divide* with the landlord! Give them the tithe between them, while the fundholder and soldier and placeman and pensioner take the rents!

However, the thing will assume so many and such strange shapes before it come to the close, that it would be presumptuous in any one but an *Oracle* to attempt to foretel particulars; and, therefore, Sir, I now take my leave of the subject for the present, by wishing you a *full house* and plenty of actors on both sides.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, BART.,

ON

THE INJUSTICE, ON THE PART OF LANDLORDS, IN HOLDING
TENANTS TO THEIR LEASES UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUM-
STANCES.

(*Political Register*, May, 1822.)

Worth, Sussex, 22 May, 1822.

SIR,

The subject above-stated is one of great importance; many families are deeply interested in it; you are one of the parties, and, in treating of it, I address myself to you, because you are not only one of the great landlords of the country, but have much to do with the matter in a point of view which is somewhat peculiar, and which will be mentioned before I come to the close of this Letter.

It is, as I have frequently had to observe, very well worthy of great attention, that the landlords never discovered any uneasiness on account of the sufferings of the country, till they began to suffer themselves. For about twenty years they saw the miseries of the labouring classes increase in an enormous degree. They saw the persons destitute of a sufficiency of food and raiment increase in number four fold. What were the thoughts which this heart-rending circumstance awakened in their minds? What thoughts *ought* it to have awakened? Why, certainly, very anxious thoughts about means to put a stop to the increase of degradation. Thoughts about the *causes* which had produced the increase. But, the thoughts that were awakened were such only as tended to schemes for *punishing* the unfortunate parties; for preventing them from obtaining, out of the products of their labour, even enough to sustain life. It was, at the end of three hundred years, discovered, that the law which provided for the feeding of those, who were unable to obtain food, had been *misinterpreted*. Select vestries were enacted, in order to place the power of giving relief solely in the hands of the rich. The inhuman project of *Malthus*, that project, insulting to human nature itself, was cherished by the landlords (including parsons) all over the kingdom. I never knew, and I never heard of, a landlord that did not approve of that abominable project. The name of *pauper* was given to every one, who, cut off in his wages, was compelled to obtain an addition to his food in the shape of relief. The labourers were called lazy, drunken and profligate, and shoals of fanatics, or impostors, were encouraged

to beset them in order to keep them quiet in a state of half-starvation.

Nothing can overset the plain fact, that, during about twenty-five years the labouring classes were *suffering great and increasing misery*. This is *proved* by the increase of the pauper-list. This is undeniable. And yet, the word "*distress*" was never heard from the landlords, during the whole of that long period! Two hundred or three hundred small farm-houses were stripped of their goods and stock; half a million of happy people were thus made paupers; all sorts of schemes were resorted to for keeping the toiling race alive for the purpose of toil; Scotch herrings, Cornish pilchards, old bones stewed, soup-shops; but, never a word about "*national distress*," any more than if earwigs or cock-roaches had been the sufferers. That base and abominable scheme for feeding the labourers with *potatoes* was resorted to. "*A potatoe-ground*" was allotted to the "*peasant*" in a country of "*roast beef*," where the rascally root of slavery had, in this way, never been known before, and where, until now, nobody had ever had the insolence to use the word "*peasantry*" as applied to any portion of our people; this word meaning, not merely "*country-people*," but a *distinct caste*, hereditarily of character inferior to the owners of the soil. All this was going on for twenty-five years; and not a word did we hear from the landlords about "*Agricultural Distress*," though amongst those who really carried on the agriculture, the misery was so great and so steadily increasing.

Nay, when any part of the people, goaded by their sufferings, attempted, no matter by what means, gentle or violent, to obtain *relief*, they were accused of the most wicked motives; their *distress* was *denied*; they were charged with making it a *false* pretence for their "*seditious*" conduct; and, invariably, when any change in the conduct of the Government and Parliament was prayed for, those who put up the prayer were told to look at "*the prosperity of the country*."

All this is well worthy of being remembered now that these same landlords have begun to talk of "*distress*." They manage the thing pretty artfully, however; for, they have not, as yet, talked much of *their own* distress. They always talk of the *tenants*. It is the *farmers* that they affect to feel for. They keep *themselves* out of sight. But he must be a shallow man, indeed, who does not perceive, that it is for themselves, and for themselves only, that they care. Some of them have *lowered their rents*; but, in what degree? And, is it not manifest, that *no degree* will be sufficient to save the tenant? Is it not manifest, that, even if he pay no rent at all, the tenant, in nineteen cases out of twenty, must be ruined, if compelled to make good any contract entered into only a year ago; or even now, if he contract to pay any rent at all?

The proposition that I am about to maintain, is this: *that it is unjust in any landlord to hold a tenant, under present circumstances, to any contract for payment of rent of land*. I am speaking of *farming-land* of course. I do not put any limit to the duration of the lease; for, though the lease may have been taken only yesterday, it is impossible, that any man can have taken a farm with the intention to *lose* by it. Every tenant in the kingdom, without a single exception, ought to be released by the Court of Chancery from the obligations of his lease. No tenant can *possibly* have seen, or thought of, what he was really doing when he contracted to pay rent for the use of a farm in this kingdom at this time; and, as the casualty which has arisen *could not possibly* be in his con-

temptation when he made the contract, the contract is not binding in *conscience*, and ought not to be binding in *law*.

It was not only the passing of *Peel's Bill* that caused this casualty. The cause has been at work from 1814 to the present day. All that time the landlords have been gaining enormously, at the expense of the tenants. For, though leases may, for the greater part, have expired since that time; the tenant has constantly been losing. No abatement of rent has been able to compensate for the fall of price, which, with the exception of a part of 1817 and 1818, has been regular and constant. Tenants at *will* even have had, in most cases, no means of saving themselves. Ignorant of these causes that were at work, they have been the dupes of the landlords. Everything (with the trifling exception of my efforts) that they have heard and read has had a direct tendency, and, in general, was intended, to *delude* and to *plunder* them.

This has been a glorious season for the landlords. These latter (now that they begin to see their *own* danger) frequently talk of the *gains* of the fundholder, the pensioner, the placeman, and the like. But, have these gained, since 1814, in a greater proportion than the *landlord*? If the fundholder, for instance, has received two or three bushels of wheat for one, has not the landlord received in precisely the same proportion? The landlords are *now*, indeed, crying out; but, is it not because they see that they have nearly exhausted the means out of which these their unjust gains have come? They are now talking of having an interest in *common* with their tenants. They are now talking of *standing or falling* with them. They did not talk thus only eight months ago; and, let them say what they will, this new language of theirs is merely intended to lead the tenants along till they have gotten from them the very last shilling that they possess. The way to stand or fall with the tenants is to demand *no rent* from them. Otherwise it is standing on the part of the landlord and falling on the part of the tenant. And, it is my business now to show, that it is *unjust*, on the part of the landlords, to attempt to hold the tenants to their leases; that these latter ought to be released by law or equity; and, if not so relieved, they are left by honour and conscience at full liberty to relieve, or protect, themselves, in the best way that they can discover.

In my Register of April 6, I related the case of a tenant, who, unable to obtain an abatement of rent from his landlord, had sold *off his stock*, and quitted the farm *and the country*. In a subsequent Register, I related the case of Mr. Thomas Smith, who had done the same thing, without asking an abatement of rent, merely upon finding, that the landlord was not disposed to release him from his engagements altogether. I justified Mr. SMITH; and, upon this ground; that if anything arose, no matter what, which *could not have been in the contemplation of the parties*, at the time of making the contract, and if this thing, no matter what it might be, prevented either of the parties fulfilling the contract, *without great and manifest injury to himself*; then the contract was void in conscience; it became no longer a contract; for it became a thing which the parties never intended it to be.

Having stated this pretty clearly, and having thereby brought upon me the attack of the NORFOLK NUMPSKULL, who represented me as a man *having no regard to the rights of property*, I am not a little pleased at being able to produce *authorities*, legal as well as moral, in support of my doctrine: a doctrine, however, with regard to the soundness of which

I never yet heard an attempt at an argument, except on the part of *Skylock* himself, and on that of *one other person*, to whom I shall, by-and-by, more particularly allude.

The *authorities* to which I have alluded, I find cited in a pamphlet, just published, with the following title: "A Letter to the Right Honourable the Earl of Eldon, on the present State of the Agricultural *Lessees*," and *their Right to Relief from the Payment of Rent*; by a BARRISTER." The title of this pamphlet speaks its object. It professes to prove, and does clearly prove, that the Lord Chancellor ought to give the lessees relief; and the author, though he goes more learnedly to work, rests his opinion upon precisely the *same principle* as that on which I defended the conduct of Mr. Thomas Smith.

This writer considers a lease, or contract between landlord and tenant, as imparting to the tenant three things: the *occupation*; the *use*; and the *profit*; and he contends, that, if the farmer of the present day have, by the means of an *extraordinary casualty*, been deprived of either of these, he is, on relinquishing the farm, entitled to be relieved from the payment of the rent accrued during the time of such privation. By an *extraordinary casualty* is meant, something that scarcely ever happens, and such as cannot reasonably be supposed to have been in the contemplation of the parties at the time when the contract was made.

When the tenant is thus deprived of the occupation by the fault of the landlord, there can be no doubt of his being entitled to relief. The Barrister here quotes *Baron Gilbert* as follows:—"A rent service (he writes), is something given by way of retribution to the lessor for the land demised by him to the tenant; and consequently the lessor's title to the rent is founded upon this; that the land demised is enjoyed by the tenant during the term included in the contract: for the tenant can make no return for a thing he has not. If, therefore, the tenant be deprived of the thing letten, the obligation to pay the rent ceases; because such obligation has its force only from the consideration, which was the enjoyment of the thing demised."*

It is next shown, that it matters not, whether the tenant be deprived of the occupation by the landlord himself, or by the means of others, or by some accident, such as an *inundation of the sea*. It is sufficient that the tenant has been deprived of the occupation by means so out of all expectation as not to have been within his contemplation at the time of making the contract.

The next authorities cited are *Puffendorf* and *Lord Kames*. "It is manifest (says the former), when the thing let perishes without the lessee's fault, he is not obliged to restore it, but, from that time his rent ceases. For the title to the rent is founded upon the presumption that the thing let will continue in being during the time for which it has been let; but if the thing cease to be, the contract ceases also. And, upon this was founded the law of Sesostris the Egyptian king: That, if the violence of the river should wash away any part of the land, the tenant's rent should be proportionably abated." †

Lord Kames says, "A lease, in its very nature, supposes a subject possessed by one for the use of which he pays a yearly sum to another.

* *Gilbert's Treat. of Rents*, 145.

† *Law of Nature and Nations*; book v., chap. 6, s. 2.

"The possession and rent are mutual causes of each other, and cannot subsist separately. Land set in lease happens to be swallowed up by the sea: this puts an end to the lease."*

Thus far (omitting, however, several of the authorities cited) with regard to the *occupation*. The present farmers are not deprived of the occupation; but, the injustice of making a man pay rent for a thing when deprived of the *occupation* of that thing, will be found not to be more manifest than in the second or third case, namely, when he is deprived of the *use* of the thing, or of the *profit* of it.

I shall cite the authorities here without any remarks of my own, till I come to the close of them.

1. "In the case 'Harrison v. Lord North' reported in 1 Ch. Ca. (83), in which a house which had been let to the plaintiff had, during the lease and the civil war between Charles I. and the Parliament, been entered by a party of the army of the latter, and converted into an hospital for sick and wounded soldiers; and the lessor had sued the plaintiff, at law, for the rent accrued during the time while he was so precluded from the use and enjoyment of the house, and the plaintiff had preferred a bill to the Court of Chancery; that he might be relieved from the payment of the rent sued for; the 'Lord Chancellor' (says the reporter) 'took time to advise, but declared, if he could, he would relieve the plaintiff.'"

"A rather remarkable fact appears on the report; namely, that the King (Charles the Second) or his advisers, had thought it reasonable to remit the arrears of rent due from the lessees of crown-lands who had been embarrassed by the tumultuous proceedings of the civil war."

2. "The tone of conviction in which Chief Baron Gilbert has declared his judgment on the subject immediately under consideration, is not less unequivocal and emphatic than that in which he has spoken, it may be remembered, on the subject last treated."—"It seems extremely reasonable (he says), that if the use of the thing be entirely lost or taken away from the tenant, the rent ought to be abated or apportioned; because the title to the rent is founded upon this presumption, that the tenant enjoys the thing during the contract; and, therefore, if part of the land be surrounded or covered with the sea, this being the act of God, the tenant shall not suffer by it; because the tenant, without his default, wants the enjoyment of part of the thing, which was the consideration of his paying the rent; nor has the lessor reason to complain, because if the land had been in his own hands, he must have lost the benefit of so much as the sea had covered."†

3. "The rule of the civil law is almost a paraphrase of the whole proposition of this argument.—The covenant which obliges the farmer to pay his rent, notwithstanding accidents; does not extend to that which may happen by the hand of man, such as an open force, a war, a fire, and other accidents of the like kind, which no man could foresee. But, it is to be understood, only, of what falls out, naturally, through the injury of the weather, and which it is reasonable to expect; such as a frost, an inundation, and other cases of the like nature."‡—"If without any extraordinary accident, and only through the nature of the land itself, and of the fruits; or because of some ordinary event, there happens some loss that is not very considerable; as if the fruits are not of a good quality, or not in quantity enough; if tares growing up with the corn diminish the crop; if passengers have done any slight damage to the fruits; in these cases, and others of the like nature, the farmer cannot pretend any diminution of his rent for these kinds of small losses."§

4. "As for those things (says Puffendorf) whose produce is uncertain, as fields, orchards, vineyards, rivers for fishing, and such like; as a plentiful produce is to the benefit of the tenant, so a bad one is to his loss. Nor in strictness of justice can he desire any of the rent to be abated by reason of a poor harvest,

* Lord Kames's Principles of Equity; vol. i., 332. 3d Ed.

† Treatise of Rents, 186.

‡ Domat. Book 1. tit. 4, s. 4.

§ Domat. Book 1. tit. 1. s. 4. See also the several texts of the Civil Law to the same effect scattered through this title,

especially since the barrenness of one year is made up by the plenty of another; for a good husbandman is not used to let or rent such things for one year only; nor can that common objection take place here, that nobody ought to grow rich at another's loss: for the landlord might urge the same in a plentiful year for the raising the rent, whom in that case the tenant would have no regard to. For because the produce is more one year than another, the landlord had rather be sure of such a rent, than depend upon the uncertainty of the season; and on the other side, the tenant lays out a certainty for the hopes of an uncertain gain, for which, if it fails him, he can blame nobody but himself. However, that medium proposed in the digest may be rightly applied here. If the produce happen to perish by floods, or by birds of prey, or by the *inroads of an enemy*, or by a blight or drought, the landlord ought to make allowance, and the reason added is, lest the tenant, besides the loss of what corn he had sowed, should be forced to pay the rent of the ground too, and so bear a double misfortune. But if the corn prove bad, and nothing happen more than ordinary, the loss is then the tenant's. Where it appears that this medium consists in a division of the mischances to which the produce is liable, into ordinary and extraordinary, for if the rent were to be abated for every little loss, it would give continual occasion for impertinent law-suits.*

5. POTHIER "Traité du Contrat de Louage" contains the following passages:—
 "The hirer, lessee, or farmer, is entitled to a total remission of the rent accrued during the time while the lessor has been unable to procure for him the use or enjoyment of the thing let." †—"The reason of this principle is, that the contract of hiring resolves itself into a sort of contract of sale of the future produce, or the future use or enjoyment, of the thing let; of which the rent reserved is the price. Now, for the same reason for which the sale of the future produce is valid, and that the price does not become due until the produce arise, and create by its existence, the consideration of the contract on the part of the lessee, one ought to determine that the rent cannot have become due while the lessee has been unable to have that use and enjoyment of which the rent is the price." ‡—"If the hirer have not been totally deprived of the enjoyment of the thing hired, but, by an unexpected accident, his enjoyment have undergone a considerable alteration and diminution; he is entitled to a proportionate reduction of the rent accrued during the time while his enjoyment has undergone this diminution." §—"According to the principles proposed in the first paragraph, whilst a farmer has been deprived, by a superior force, of the power of reaping the produce of any of the years of his lease, thus: if an enemy's force have foraged all the corn growing on the land which he holds, or if all the crops, being still standing, have perished by an inundation of a river, a swarm of locusts, or by any similar casualty; in all these cases the farmer is entitled to a remission of the rent accrued during that year. And if any of these accidents have caused, not a total, but a considerable loss of the produce of his farm, he is entitled to a remission, although not of the whole of the rent accrued, yet of a part proportionate to the loss." ||—"To entitle the farmer to a remission of rent, it is necessary that the cause of the loss be a superior force which he had it not in his power by any caution to avoid. If therefore by obtaining a protection which, for money, the commander of the enemy's force would, to those who required it, have afforded, he could have avoided the forage of his crops; he is not entitled to a remission of the rent for the loss which he might have thus avoided." ¶—"It is necessary that the accident which has caused a considerable loss of the produce be an extraordinary one, and not one of those ordinary and frequent casualties to which a farmer ought to have adverted. For instance; the lessee of a vineyard is not entitled to a remission of rent for the loss which a frost, the fall of the grapes, or a hail-storm, may have caused: at least not unless the frost or hail-storm were to an extraordinary degree, and have caused a total loss of the fruit." **

I am not supposing, that these or any other authorities, will satisfy English landlords, who will, cost what it may in human happiness

* Law of N. and N.; Book 5, c. 6, s. 3.

† Part 3, Chap. 1, Art. 2, s. 2.

‡ Part 3, Chap. 1, Art. 2, s. 2.

** Part 3, Chap. 1, Art. 2, s. 3.

§ Part 3, Chap. 1, Art. 2, s. 1.

|| Part 3, Chap. 1, Art. 2, s. 3.

¶ Part 3, Chap. 1, Art. 2, s. 3.

and human life, have a *property even in wild animals*; but, I am quite sure, that here are authorities more than sufficient to satisfy all the rest of mankind. These authorities speak *directly* of the deprivation only of the *use*; but, the implied and necessary deprivation of the *profit* must be understood to be the thing for which the tenant is to receive his remedy; for the *use* is nothing without the *profit* which is the *object of the use*. A tenant may *occupy* and *use* a farm, and yet may have no *profit* from it; and, if this loss of profit, or deprivation of real utility, arise from an *extraordinary casualty*, all these authorities say, that he is to pay no rent that shall grow due during the effective continuance of that casualty.

The Barrister cites, as to the point of deprivation of profit, a decision of the Court of Session of Scotland, from Lord Kames, vol. i. p. 332. Third edit.

“A salmon fishery, from a part of one of the banks of the river Tay, had been let for five years. It is the habit of that fish to resort to and inhabit the main streams. At the time of the lease, and for three years after, the main stream of the river flowed through that part of the channel of the river which was contiguous to that part of the bank the fishery from which had been let; but at the end of that time the course of the river changed, and the main stream began, and during the two last years continued, to flow on the opposite side of the river; and the salmon ceased to resort to that part of the river in which the lessees were, under the lease, entitled to fish, and the fishery became unprofitable. The lessors sued the lessees for payment of the rent accrued during the two last years, but the Court adjudged that the *lessees were entitled to be relieved from the payment of the rent sued for.*”

Here there was *occupation* and *use*; but, there was no *profit*. The tenants were in *possession*; there was no *interruption* given to their occupation; they had the *use* of the river; they might have *continued to fish*; and, doubtless, as the barrister observes, did; but, by an extraordinary casualty, they were deprived of the *profit* of the thing rented; and, on that account, and that account only, they were to be relieved from paying rent. Very justly; for, what was the thing let? The water and the ground on which it ran; yes, but, without the *fishery*, these were nothing; and without the *fish*, there could, in fact, be no right of fishing. Thus, then, deprived of the *profit* of the thing rented, though the deep deprivation *did not* arise from the fault of the lessor, the contract became no contract at all: the parties were to stand, as nearly as possible, just as they would have stood, if the contract had never been made.

Now, Sir, let us return to my proposition; namely, *that it is unjust in any landlord to hold a tenant, under present circumstances, to any contract for payment of rent*; and let us see whether this be not completely sustained by the foregoing authorities. These authorities all concur; they all tend to one and the same conclusion; namely, that, if the tenant be deprived of the *profit* of the thing let, by an *extraordinary casualty*, he is to be freed from the payment of rent on giving up the thing let to him. All that we have to settle, then, is, whether the present circumstances of the English farmer present a casualty of that *extraordinary* nature which is required to render these authorities applicable to his case.

The general definition is, a casualty, a something happening, which could not, in the *natural course of things*, have been in the *minds of the parties when the contract was made*. As to instances, the authorities

mention part of the land washed away by the violence of a river; part of it swallowed up by the sea, or covered by the sea; the subject of the lease seized on and used by an army in a civil war; the land, or part of it, overrun by an invading army; the land taken out of the possession of the tenant; or the fruits or profits of it applied to the use of others by a superior force which he had it not in his power to resist.

Such are the instances supposed by these authorities. Such are the specimens of the casualties that are to be deemed sufficient to bring the principle of exoneration from the payment of rent into activity and to give it complete force. Let us see, then, whether any of them surpass in power of injury to the tenant that casualty which has now happened to the English farmer; and whether any of them can, in any case, be less expected to happen, or less capable of being prevented or resisted.

The casualty which oppresses the English farmer is this, an arbitrary change in the value of money, caused by means against which the farmer had no power of resistance. If it had been enacted, that he should sell that portion of produce for five which had long been accustomed to be sold for fifteen pieces of money of the same nominal value, the act of violence could not have been more arbitrary or more efficient. Can any casualty that the mind of man is capable of conceiving be more injurious to a tenant than this casualty? What can be done by the violence of winds and waves, or by the ravages of war, more than take away all the profit of the land occupied by the tenant? Nothing that the history of mankind can furnish can do more than this. The use of the thing rented is wholly taken away by such arbitrary change in the value of money; and, as to the occupation, though it exists in outward appearance and name, though it has a local being, it is totally destroyed as to all its properties, and is no more the thing contemplated in the lease, than it would be, if, by some convulsion of nature, the land were wholly covered by the sea, or, being rich and deep loam, were changed into sand fit for hour-glasses.

And, could this casualty, this arbitrary change in the value of the money, be foreseen? Could it be in the contemplation of the parties when the contract was made? Will the landlords insist that, the law having all along provided for cash-payments at some time or other, the lease was taken with a foreknowledge of what has happened; and that, therefore, this is not a casualty of the kind contemplated by the above-cited authorities? The landlords, above all men in the world, ought to avoid the use of such an argument, seeing that, if good, it is complete in bar against all their claims to a reduction of the interest of the Debt, whether by means direct or indirect. But, what truth is there in all this that has been said about the foreknowledge of the tenant? There was, indeed, always a law in existence for a return to cash-payments; and there is now always a law in existence to compel persons in certain public offices to take the Sacrament according to the rights and ceremonies of the Church of England; but has this latter law any real force? Is it ever acted upon? Is it not continually set aside, as to its effect, by other laws passed for the express purpose? There is a law for preventing the existence of large farms; but, is it ever put in force? There was a law to compel the clergy to reside; but, when attempted to be enforced, was it not quashed, and, at last, wholly gotten rid of? The cash-payment law had been, at first, passed for six weeks; then for three months; then for seven months; then for the

duration of the then war; then, when peace came, for a year; then for another year; then (war having come again) till the *next peace*; then (peace having come) for a year; then for *two years*, in order to make sure of cash; then for another year; then for *four years*, with, however, a *compulsion to pay in part*.

What tenant, what *farmer*, was to place any reliance on a return to cash-payments in consequence of laws like *these*? What ground of dependence was there? And how was a tenant to expect to see anything of the sort of that which he has seen? Besides, if you go to the *law*, you must take in acts of less authority, but of as much effect, as to the case in question, as the laws themselves. You must take into consideration the declaration of the Parliament in 1811, that the paper was not depreciated, and that a pound-note and a shilling were equal in value to a guinea in gold. You are to take also into view the *assertions of the lawmakers*; and what were those assertions? Why, that the change in the value of money would be *insignificant*; that it would not exceed *three per cent.*; that nothing of *mischief* could arise from the change; that a *healthy* currency would be a great blessing; that it would make property *safe* and assure to every man his own. Were these things to have no weight with the people? Could a tenant who read these sayings be upon his guard? Could he *foresee*, could he possibly *anticipate* what has happened, any more than the tenants of the fishery in Scotland could *anticipate* that the river would change its course?

But, besides all this, the state of life and probable state of mind of the tenant are to be taken into view. And is it not well known, is it not what must necessarily be, that the far greater part of tenants in husbandry can have had nothing but *experience* to guide them; nothing but what they had seen, heard, and felt for a series of years. They knew not the *causes* that were at work. They only knew, that prices had been such and such, and that they saw no reason that they should ever be otherwise. As it were for the express purpose of deluding them to their ruin, paper was issued, and prices puffed up in 1818, *after the first fall* had taken place, What were farmers to gather from this? What, but an opinion, that notwithstanding any laws, prices would, on an average, be sufficiently high to enable them to pay rents? Nay, after the passing of Peel's Bill, and even to this very moment, are they not told by law-makers and by Ministers, that the change in the value of the money has not been the cause of the fall of prices? Are they not, up to this very moment, assured in the most positive terms, that the depression is merely *temporary*; that it arises from *over-production*; that things will come about in such a way as to enable them to pay rent without being ruined, if they will but exercise a *little patience*? With what face, then, is any landlord to pretend that this state of things is one which the tenant might have *foreseen*? With what face is he to pretend, that the casualty is not *as extraordinary* as any one of those cited, or supposed, by the foregoing legal authorities?

The best answer that landlords could give to their oppressed tenants; the best proof that they could produce of the possibility of the present casualty being foreseen by the tenants, would be, the fact, that it was foreseen and foretold *by me*; and that, if the tenants did not read my writings, they *ought* to have read them. But, the reply, doubtless, of the tenants would be, that, compared with the whole mass of periodical publications and pamphlets, mine made not more than about a *thousandth part* in point of bulk and circulation; that almost the whole of the other

nine hundred and ninety-nine parts, have constantly conveyed opinions precisely the opposite of mine; that this great force has, too, been employed to decry my opinions; that more than one Act of Parliament have been passed to throw odium on and to narrow the circulation of my writings; and, that by both parties in Parliament, by justices of the peace, by tract societies, and by the parsons, without hardly a single exception, these writings have been held up to the farmers as "*seditions and damnable.*" The tenants may produce hundreds of instances, in which men have been turned out of rented house and land only because they read my writings; and, as the *landlords* have, at bottom, been the *cause* of all these efforts to keep the tenants in darkness, they ought not to be allowed to plead, that those tenants must have foreseen the casualty *because it was foreseen by me.* It is a notorious fact, that the landlords, in several parts of the country, are now, at this very time, doing all they can, stretching their remaining power to the utmost, to prevent the tenants from seeing any of those of my publications which have a tendency to make the tenants see their danger. The offence which I gave to the *Norfolk Numpskull* was, telling the tenants what they had to expect. Peter Moore and Edward Ellice having prevented me from circulating my warnings in one way; Six Acts having narrowed the circulation in another way; unable to *send* my opinions and warnings to the farmers, I went and *carried* them in person. As far as I could *go* and actually *see* the deluded parties, they are on their guard. I have great pleasure in being assured, that I have saved thousands of families from utter ruin. When I have received this assurance from the mouths of the parties themselves, I have sometimes asked them by what *particular writing* they were saved. Mr. Thomas Smith's son told me, that his father was *decided* by my first letter to *Mr. Peel*, published the winter before last. That letter, then, did, at least, send off one considerable family and several thousands of pounds of capital to America, for ever beyond the reach of the claws of "*Boroughmongers,*" as you used to call them, but who are now become "*the gentlemen of England.*"

Thousands have certainly been saved in this way; but, after all, how is any individual to make any thing of head against the everlasting delusions of a mass of misrepresentation and falsehood such as that which the press carries about the country, in one shape or another? Therefore, generally speaking, it was impossible for the present tenants to foresee, it is impossible for them even now to foresee, the casualty. It was a thing, so far from being *reasonably expected* by the tenants, that it could never have once entered into their minds. It was such a thing as had *never* before happened. The lawyers say, as we have seen, that a casualty that shall be deemed sufficient to set aside a contract of this nature, must be a casualty that *scarcely ever happens*; but, here we have a thing that *never happened in the world before*; and, therefore, if this casualty be not sufficient to set aside the contracts that it affects, all the decisions of all these lawyers and publicists are not worth a straw; are all false, and all of no use, though they have been guides for judges and juries for so many years.

But, besides the not being able to *foresee* the casualty, the tenant, in order to be fairly entitled to relief from payment, must show, that he has been unable to *prevent the fatal effects* of the casualty. He must show, that no *caution* on his part would have enabled him to avoid those effects; and he must also show, that he had not the power, in case of acts

of *force*, to resist the assailant. The plea of a tenant, in England, who should apply for an abatement of rent, on account of his stacks having been consumed by *lightning* would not be good; for such casualties do happen now and then; and, though they very seldom happen, they must be supposed not to be entirely out of the contemplation of the contracting parties. The plea of the tenant would also be bad, even if the casualty were an *extraordinary* one, if he did not, upon its happening, use all the *caution* in his power to prevent its effects; as in the case mentioned by M. POTHIER, if the tenant could have prevented the ravaging of his farm by a sum of money paid to the invading enemy, he is not entitled to a remission of rent for damage that *he might have avoided*. It must also appear, in order to make the tenant's claim good, that the loss, in case of force, has been occasioned by a *superior force*; a force which it is not within the compass of possibility that he should have been able successfully to *resist*; and the instances cited are the inroads and other acts of *armies*.

Now, having seen, that the present casualty is such as *never happened before*, and such as could not have been *foreseen* by, or in the *contemplation* of, the tenant, let me ask the landlords, whether it were such as for the effects of it to have been avoided by any human *caution*, or *resisted* by any force within the reach and at the disposal of the tenant?

Lawyers and publicists have supposed only such instances as arise from the extraordinary movements of nature, or from the fiercest and most irresistible of human force. It remained for the present age, and for the "envy of surrounding nations and admiration of the world," to furnish an instance produced by the *laws themselves*; by *statutes*, regularly enacted, and enforced by the authority of the whole of the Government. But, this by no means alters the nature of the case; it by no means weakens the claim of the tenant; and it by no means discards as inapplicable any one of the principles, or instances, before cited.

An instance has been cited which occurred during the *civil wars*, and M. POTHIER supposes a farm ravaged by an *enemy's army*. Now, suppose Cromwell's army, or an enemy's army, had ordered the farmers to sell their wheat at *five* instead of *fifteen* shillings a bushel, which latter had long been the average price, and had not taken possession of the land nor ravaged it. Would not the tenants, in either of these cases, have had a fair claim to an abatement of rent proportionate to the loss sustained in consequence of either of these casualties? Well, then, what difference does it, or can it, make to the tenant, whether he suffer this injury from the command of armies, or from Acts of Parliament?

To resist the tenant's claim, you must, then, show, that he had the power of *avoiding* or of *resisting*; and, we have only to look at the *source* of the casualty to be convinced, that he had no such power. He had no power to keep up the price of his crops; no power to lessen the demands of the gatherer of taxes and of rates; no power to prevent the parson, or tithe-owner, from taking away a tenth of the crop; no power to do any one thing to prevent the effects of the casualty. And, therefore, his claim to abatement is complete; and, as to the extent of the *abatement*, it can be nothing short of the whole of the rent in every case where there is *no profit* at all arising from the occupation after the rent is *excluded*. For the tenant bargains for *profit* as much as the landlord bargains for rent. If there be nothing left for profit without an abatement of rent, the rent ought to be abated; and if there be nothing left

for profit, without taking off the *whole* of the rent, the whole ought to be taken off, upon the tenant giving up the farm to the landlord; for, did it ever yet enter into the minds of any men but English landlords, that, notwithstanding any casualty, however extraordinary, however completely un contemplated by the contracting parties, the tenant is still to pay rent, agreeably to the letter of the contract, as long as he have anything to pay with, and until he and his whole family be reduced to absolute want? We have only to add to this Malthus's *refusal of parish relief*, in order to give English landlords a right, a *legal right*, to rob of the last farthing, to strip stark-naked, and to throw down on the highways to die with hunger the whole of the tenants of the country.

In case of a claim for abatement of rent, on account of an extraordinary casualty, it is no answer to the tenant, to allege, or even to prove, that *he has still some property*, that he is not absolutely a *ruined man*. The principles before cited take into view nothing of this sort. Supposing the tenant, notwithstanding his losses by the casualty, to be still a very rich man; suppose his wealth to be so great, that he would be able to continue to pay the full rent to the end of the lease, and, even after that, be a man of wealth. These are considerations that do not at all enter into the law or equity of the case, which is to be decided on according to principles belonging to itself. If, for instance, the occupation of the house of *Harrison* by the rebel troops were (as it probably was) a trifling loss when compared with his general property; or, if the loss of the tenants of the Scotch fishery were (as it probably was) only a loss of a small part of the whole of their property; if this had been the case in these instances, the decision of the courts would have been wholly unaffected by these circumstances. So that the notion, which landlords (some at least) seem to entertain, that the tenant has no fair claim to abatement as long as he has money, *no matter from what source*, to pay rent with, has no foundation in law or equity, and is, I beg leave to assure them, legitimate only as the offspring of their own greedy and merciless minds.

Nor does law, equity, or reason, warrant that other notion now so prevalent amongst landlords; namely, that the tenants are to *share* with them in bearing the loss arising from the extraordinary casualty now under our view. The authorities cited throw the whole of the loss of rent upon the landlord. It is quite sufficient for the tenant, that he lose his *time* and the *use of his capital*, without being compelled to give to the landlord a *part of the capital itself*. His loss from the absence of profits is sufficiently great. The loss has arisen from the existence of the land. If the land had not existed, the tenant could have lost nothing by it. The landlord *may be innocent* and even *unconscious* of the cause of the tenant's losing his time and the interest of his stock or capital; but, at any rate, the whole of the loss of the rent is to fall on the landlord; who, be it observed, experiences no loss, in this case, *on account of any thing done by the tenant*, or in consequence of having granted the lease; for, as observed in the above cited case, by CHIEF BARON GILBERT, "if the land had remained in his own hands he must have lost the benefit of so much as the sea had covered."

The casualty, where it is of an extraordinary nature, is to affect the landlord and not the tenant. PALEY has a passage that comes full to this point.

"It is possible," says he, "that an estate or a house may, during the term of a lease, be so increased or diminished in its value, as to become worth much more, or much less, than the rent agreed to be paid for it. In some of which cases it may be doubted, to whom, of natural right, the advantage or disadvantage belongs. The rule of justice seems to be this: If the alteration might be expected by the parties, the hirer must take the consequence; if it could not, the owner. An orchard, or a vine-yard, or a mine, or a fishery, or a decoy, may this year yield nothing, or next to nothing, yet the tenant shall pay his rent; and if they next year produce tenfold the usual profit, no more shall be demanded; because the produce is in its own nature precarious, and this variation might be expected. If an estate in the fens of Lincolnshire, or the isle of Ely, be overflowed with water so as to be incapable of occupation, the tenant, notwithstanding, is bound by his lease; because he entered into it with a knowledge and foresight of the danger. On the other hand, if by the irruption of the sea into a country where it was never known to have come before, by the change of the course of a river, the fall of a rock, the breaking out of a volcano, the bursting of a moss, *the incursions of an enemy*, or by a *mortal contagion amongst the cattle*; if by means like these an estate change, or lose its value, the loss shall fall upon the owner; that is, the tenant shall either be discharged from his agreement, or be entitled to an abatement of rent. A house in London, by the building of a bridge, the opening of a new road or street, may become of ten times its former value; and by contrary causes, may be as much reduced in value: here, also, as before, *the owner*, not the hirer, shall be affected by the alteration. The reason upon which our determination proceeds is this: that changes such as these, *being neither foreseen, nor provided for*, by the contracting parties, form no part or condition of the contract; and therefore ought to have the same effect as if no contract at all had been made (for none was made with respect to them), that is, ought to fall upon *the owner*."*

Thus, then, the weight is to fall on the landlord, and the whole of it, too. There is nothing said about a sharing of the loss between landlord and tenant; nothing about their standing or falling, sinking or swimming, together. The tenant loses enough in his *time*, and in the *interest* of his stock or capital; and, therefore, the loss of the whole of the rent is to fall on the landlord.

Clear as this matter is, however, in the eye of reason; manifestly just as it is; undeniable as it is, that it is sustained by every kind of authority to which, in such a case, men pay respect; still I am far from supposing that the whole combined will produce any effect upon the hearts of English landlords, who will, I am satisfied, go on wheedling first and distraining afterwards as long as there be a tenant with a shilling left in his pocket and fool enough to part with it. An application has been made to the Court of Chancery by a tenant for relief on the grounds aforesaid; that relief was not granted by the Lord Chancellor; no law can be expected to be passed on the subject; and, therefore, the only means of relief which the tenant has, is such as the hare has when pursued by dogs, namely, *to flee*; or to have recourse to those shifts and evasions, which, in such a case, are necessary and just; because the assailant is not to be moved by any considerations of justice or mercy, and because his power is irresistible. Lord KAMMS, as quoted by the author of the excellent pamphlet, to which I have been so much indebted, has not hesitated to pronounce such conduct in landlords "to be *hardly inferior to robbery*;" and, of course, tenants are to deal with them as with powerful robbers: that is to say, to use *all* the means in their power to save the remnant of their property from so rapacious a grasp.

* Paley's Moral Philosophy, vol. i., p. 174. 16th edition.

I have here done with the case of the tenants, and shall now beg your attention to another case, in which you and I are more immediately concerned ; namely, the case of a person, who has borrowed money on *bond*, and who, by an *extraordinary casualty*, is deprived of the means of paying the money borrowed. To be plain, I borrowed of you 2000*l.* in 1812, and 300*l.* in 1816. In 1817, the casualty arose, which I insisted, and still insist, gave me a right, agreeably to every principle of justice, to claim an exemption, and to exempt myself, if possible, from the obligations of that bond. I will say nothing here about the *circumstances under which the money was lent* ; I will say nothing about my *offer of a mode, and an effectual one, of payment, at a time when payment was within my power* ; I will say nothing of the apparently generous offers, and of most solemn promises of secrecy ; I will say nothing of these in this place, though I must another time ; but will simply state the case as between persons wholly indifferent.

The money was borrowed in the manner and at the times before described. At the time of the loan I contemplated the advantage to me of the use of the money, and you, the advantage to you of the interest to be received. You were money-lender I money-borrower. It was understood, of course, that, in order to your being repaid, the *community was to remain*. That there was to be no dissolution of that ; for, it never could be meant, that I was to run all the risks even of civil commotion or dissolution, and you, the lender, no risk at all. Your bond was a lien upon my personal and other property and earnings ; but, there was the understood condition, that the *community was to remain*, and that, as to all matters contemplated in the contract, the *laws were to remain unaltered*. At the very least, it must have been understood, that I was bound no farther than the supreme power of the State could bind me ; and, it could not bind me in opposition to its own acts.

Now, in 1817, an Act was passed for the *notorious purpose of preventing me from writing and publishing*. There are men, if they be worthy of the name, who affect to deny this ; but these are hypocrites too base and contemptible to notice in a particular manner. The fact is notorious, that the Act alluded to was passed for the purpose above alleged. Thus, then, here arose a casualty even *more extraordinary* than the cash-payment measure. It was a casualty that not only put an end to the use of the money lent by you to me, but that put an end to the sole pursuit by which I could possibly obtain the means of making repayment, and that operated, besides, as an act of confiscation and of banishment ; flight being manifestly necessary to avoid even personal destruction in addition to destruction of property.

Do you find, in any of the authorities before stated, any thing to give countenance to the monstrous notion, that, in a state of violence like this, when the community was, as to me, dissolved ; when I was deprived of all kinds of protection ; when the laws, by which alone your bond was of force and validity, were no longer in existence as to me : do you find, in any of the authorities before stated, any thing to give countenance to, or, indeed, any not to reprobate this monstrous notion ? Is the change of place of the bed of a river ; is an overflowing of the sea ; are the ravages of an enemy in war ; is the violence of civil war ; is any one of these a thing more extraordinary, or a better plea for claim of abatement or exoneration, than the Act of 1817 was to me ? Can any one of these take away the obligation of paying rent more completely than that

terrible Act took from me the obligation of fulfilling any pecuniary arrangement whatever? The farmer, by the casualties before-mentioned, is deprived of the use of the farm; and was not I deprived of the use of every thing? Was there any thing left of which I had the use?

The authorities before-mentioned have in view the subject of leases only; but, they apply with equal force to pecuniary obligations of every kind. And, though the *laws* of a country and its *courts* can hardly be supposed to contemplate casualties such as I am now speaking of, namely, such as are produced by the *rulers themselves* and in the shape of *laws*; yet, "the BARRISTER" that I have quoted (and whom I suspect to be Mr. WETHERELL) looks upon the *cause of low prices* as a casualty coming fairly under the view of the principles which he has brought forward. This cause is the measures of the rulers. The casualty, therefore, of 1817, was, to me, what this is to the present tenants, only beyond all measure more ruinous and destructive. And, if the present casualty be, then, to absolve tenants from their contracts, by what rule of law, of equity, or of reason, was I to be held to my contract by you? Were you to enjoy all the benefits of civil society, and I none of them? Were you to have your claim held good and firm, while the means of satisfying it were wrested from me by a total abrogation, as to me, of all the laws of protection?

The writers on public law, as far as they have noticed it, have fully justified that Act of the Americans by which they annulled, in fact, the claims of *British creditors*, that is to say for sums due to them by Americans at the breaking out of the revolutionary war. Their ground was this: the creditors are in a state of *safety*; they have no acts of violence committed on them; they receive protection from the very power that is tearing the debtors to pieces; their bonds and mortgages hold good, while the property and means destined to pay with are ravaged; therefore, the debtors shall be *absolved from their obligations*. Were not you, pray, in a state of *safety* while the means, and the only means, of fulfilling the obligations of the bond on my part were wrested from me? Were you and your estate exposed to the same peril and destruction that I and my property were exposed to? It signifies nothing, whether you partook, or not, in producing this peril and injury, any more than, in the case of landlord and tenant, it signifies whether the landlord have been the cause of the casualty. The British creditors said, that *they were not the cause of the ravaging of the United States*. That may or may not be, said the Americans, but, you want either the will or the power to prevent this ravaging, and, in either case, you must bear your share of the calamities produced by the acts of our common rulers. We, after all, bear the *greatest* share; necessity compels us to submit to this: but, we can never suffer you to come, after the war is over, with your *writs* and *foreclosures* to sweep away what has been left by the fire and the sword. Was not this reasonable; was not this just; was it not a decision perfectly according in principle with all the authorities cited in the former part of this Letter? And, why was I not to act upon these same principles? What was there in the letters composing my name that deprived me of a right common to the rest of mankind? Was there any debtor in America more completely ravaged and despoiled in 1776, than I was in 1817? Had he less power of avoiding the blow, or less power of resisting it than I had? How unjust, then, was this law in America;

how wicked all the principles of the authorities above stated; what a rogue must any tenant be, who pleads the present casualty, who pleads Peel's Bill, in abatement of rent; or, what a base hypocrite must he be who would allege, that, in 1817, there was not a casualty sufficient to absolve me from the obligations of my bond; and what a swarm of miscreants have been at work for you from 1818, in order to make the world believe, that I had made a *general protest against paying debts*, and had proclaimed, that to *defraud a creditor was no act of immorality!* I have always treated the aspersion with sincere contempt. I have left it to be mouthed about by the noisy and busy "Lavalettes" and by the real rogues of "Purity of Election," quite satisfied that the day would come, when I should find you yourself amongst the foremost in scoffing at a literal adherence to bonds; and in that precise state, with regard to the great bond of bonds, *the Debt*, I have now the pleasure to behold you.

But, before I enter upon this, and show how *iniquitous* it is to propose to break through the obligations to the public "*creditor*," if the cash measures be not deemed a casualty sufficient to absolve tenants from their obligations, and me from mine; before I enter upon this, let me lay before the public *that letter* of mine, written in November 1817, which has been the groundwork of the floods of calumny poured forth by your myrmidons. The *representations* of this letter only have been put forth. The letter *itself* has always, except in one single instance, been kept carefully out of sight. Its doctrines have been *talked of*, but never *stated*; and, for my own part, I have always been so well satisfied of their soundness, and my contempt for those who affected to be "*shocked*" at them has been so great, that I have never thought it worth while to state them myself. *Now*, however, it may be *useful* to do it; because we are now in a situation, in which principles of this sort must be discussed, and must be acted upon, too, or, the capital of farmers and estates of landlords must completely change hands. The Letter, as far as it related to the matter in question, was in the following words:—

"If there be any man who can pretend for one moment, that mine is an *ordinary case*; and that, not having enough to pay every body, I ought to be regarded as an *insolvent debtor*, in the *usual acceptation* of the word; and, if he do this after being apprized, that the whole force of an * * * * * was embodied into the shape of * * * * * ordinances intended for the sole purpose of taking from me the real and certain and increasing means of paying off every debt and mortgage in two years. If there be any man whose property, and whose means of *profitably employing his own industry* have remained *wholly untouched* and unaffected by these * * * * * and sudden acts of the Government, and who is yet so insensible to all feelings of humanity, as well as so willingly blind to every principle of either moral or political justice. If there be any man, who, wholly absorbed in his attachment to his own immediate interest, is ready to cast blame on a debtor, who has had his means of paying cut off by an operation as decisive as that of an earthquake, which should sink into eternal nothingness his lands, his houses and his goods. If there be any man, who, if he had been a *creditor of Job*, would have insisted that that celebrated object of a malignant devil's wrath, which had swept away his flocks, his herds, his sons and his daughters, was an *insolvent debtor* and a *bankrupt*, and ought to have been considered as such, spoken of as such, and as such proceeded against; if there be any such man as this, to whom I owe anything, to such man I first say, that I despise him from the bottom of my soul; and then I say, that if he dare meet me before the world, in open and written charge, I pledge myself to cover him with as much shame and infamy as that world can be brought to deign to bestow upon so contemptible a being. — I hold it to be perfectly just, that I should never, in any way whatever, give up one single farthing of my future earnings to the

payment of any debt in England. When the society is too weak or unwilling, to defend the property of any particular member of it; when that member is *forcibly driven from the use of his property, whether mental or of a more ordinary and vulgar species, and when there is not the will or the power, in the society, to yield him protection, he becomes clearly absolved of all his engagements of every sort to that society*; because, in every bargain of every kind, it is understood that *both the parties are to continue to enjoy the protection of the laws of property.*—But, from the great desire, which I have, not only to return to my native country, but also to prevent the * * * acts levelled against me from injuring those persons, with whom I have pecuniary engagements, and some of whom have become my creditors from feelings of friendship and a desire to serve me, *I eagerly wave all claim to this protecting principle, and I shall neglect no means within my power fully to pay and satisfy every demand, as far as that can be done consistently with that duty which calls on me to take care, that my family have the means of fairly exerting their industry, and of leading that sort of life to which they have a just claim.*"

Now, what sort of answer did you give to this? Did you *controvert* the doctrines? No: but relied, in my absence, on a pretended answer, shown at *Brookes's in the Strand*, and suffered to be copied to be taken about the country? A page or two of stuff (which I have not here), a sort of half-jest and half-earnest, about "*a new way of paying old debts*;" and (while the letter, to which you professed to be giving an answer, was kept out of sight) giving it to be understood, that that letter held the doctrine, that *no man was bound to pay, or ought to pay, any debt of any sort, if he wanted the money for other purposes!* This was the colour which your show-answer gave to my letter. An answer *not sent to me.* Not published in the newspapers. In either of these cases I should have seen it. But there the base tissue of misrepresentation was lying at *BROOKES's in the Strand*, for nearly a year, to be shown to every one that it was deemed injurious to me to show it to, and to be copied by persons going to the country, that it might also be shown in great towns; and thus get circulated all over the kingdom *without my knowing anything of the matter!*

I need not *characterize* this act of yours. *Another opportunity* of doing that will offer; for, the whole of the transactions of *you* and of *Wright* with regard to me shall be, in regular form, put into imperishable print. For the present (and not for a long while) I shall confine myself to the doctrine of my Letter of 1817. The great *handle* has been the closing part of it, where I contend for the right of retaining, out of *future earnings*, a sufficiency to make provision for my family. I am not talking of anything that I *have*, but of what I may be able to acquire. So that, if this be unsound doctrine; if this be *immoral*, what is the doctrine of the authorities above cited, which think of no such thing as touching even the *present capital of the tenant*? But, what is your *own doctrine* as to the *Debt*? You now say distinctly that the *Debt must be reduced*. That is to say, that a part of it, at least, must be *unpaid*. And, what ground do you state for this? Why, that the nation, without *ruin*, is *unable* to pay it. Pray, Sir, is it *more* unable than I was rendered by the Act of 1817? And, what is *ruin*? Why, the misery, the bodily suffering, of multitudes of persons, unjustly plunged into that suffering. Well, then, if this be a ground for the non-payment of the *public Debt*, why were I and my family to be deprived of the benefit of the same sort of ground, only much more clear and more strong, seeing that we have no decided proof, that the nation did not participate in causing the acts which produced the calamities, with which it is threatened, while it is

clear, that I did not participate in causing the calamities with which I was threatened?

You had *my bond*, and the fundholder *has yours*. When you are called upon for payment, and are reminded of the "*good faith*" due to the fundholder, you answer, that the first of *public faith*, is due to the *public itself*. This is very true; but, this was not the doctrine of your *whispering* answer to my Letter of 1817. This letter of yours I have not at hand; but, I am sure I am right in saying that it laughed at the idea of any mitigation of the bond; any right of abatement that the debtor possessed; any claim to deduction of any sort on account of the calamity, the distress of mind or the bodily suffering to which the fulfilment of the bond might expose him or his children. The mean hypocrites who have been your helpers as to this matter, and the most despicable of whom cling to you merely because you are rich; these hypocrites pretend to be shocked at the principle, that I was to retain, of my future earnings, if it pleased God to preserve my life, and to continue to me the capacity to labour; these hypocritical rogues pretended to be shocked that I should avow my determination to retain a sufficiency of those earnings to give my family a fair chance of well-being in the world. What will the hypocrites say, then, to you now? Will the rogues be shocked at your proposition to withhold from the fundholder that which is due to him, because, to pay him to the last farthing would leave you neither stick, stone, nor sod of your estate? Is it any more just that the people belonging to the Savings Banks, that the widows, the orphans innumerable, and the innumerable aged persons who have money in the Funds; is it any more just that their bond should be set aside than it was that your bond should be set aside, and that, too, in a case where you may have been a participator in the causes that have produced your inability to pay without your ruin being the consequence?

The truth is, that the interest of the Debt ought to be greatly reduced. Contracts can never be binding, except things continue, generally speaking, in the state in which they were when the contract was made. Casualties, whether proceeding from the hand of man or the hand of God; casualties of so extraordinary a nature as not, by any means, to be foreseen, or at all contemplated by the parties, must admit of, and receive, mitigation, or evils enormous, oppression and cruelty without bounds, and, in some cases, a dissolution of the Society itself must be the result. I have petitioned the Parliament against my mortgagee; though, really, without even a desire to succeed except in the way of precedent in favour of others, seeing that in that quarter I have experienced everything which the greatest consideration and kindness could suggest. The forecloser is an executor. He has no power of mitigation. The principle that I there contended for is precisely the principle contended for by the able writer to whose pamphlet I have been so much indebted; and it is the principle of my letter of 1817, for the doctrines of which letter you yourself, Sir, are now bound to contend, or else your proposition to deduct from the fundholder stands before the world as a naked unqualified instigation to the most barefaced robbery.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
WM. COBBETT.

TO MR. BROUGHAM,

ON

HIS DOCTRINE RELATIVE TO THE PRIVILEGE OF PARLIAMENT
WITH REGARD TO PUBLICATIONS RESPECTING THE REPORTS
OF THE SPEECHES MADE IN THE TWO HOUSES.

(Political Register, July, 1822)

SIR,

Kensington, 16th July, 1822.

You observed, in your speech in the House of Commons, on the 10th of this month, that it was necessary to *put down a system*, which threatened to tear up by the roots every vestige of Parliamentary privilege. I have read that speech with great attention, and have no hesitation in declaring, that, if your principles, as conveyed in that speech, were acted on, every vestige of liberty of the press, or of safety for character, would be completely at the mercy of any man who might, by no matter what means, obtain a seat in the House in which that speech was delivered.

Your doctrine is this; or, I believe it will be best first to take your words, as reported in the *Morning Chronicle*: "Whatever step should be taken he hoped would be unanimously adopted; the House was bound to do so if it were only to express its determination to *put down a system* which had been acted on in some cases, and which *threatened to tear up by the roots every vestige of Parliamentary privilege.*" (*Hear, hear.*) There was no shadow of comparison between an attack, however gross and indecent, upon that House in its corporate capacity, and an attack upon an *individual member*, singled out by a party for the performance of his public duty, that party countenanced and supported by another party whom he (the Member) felt it his duty, as it were, to put upon trial. Members of that House would be found ready to do their duty in spite of the *general attacks* which were, and which might be made, upon the House in its *collective capacity*; but if an individual were to be *singled out* by a party, with whom, in the fair discharge of his duty, he came in contact, he did not see how gentlemen could be found fearlessly to discharge their public duty, more especially the most *invidious* part of it."—In another part of the debate you made other observations: but to them I shall, perhaps, come by-and-by.

The *Morning Chronicle* has pretended, that, by attacks, allusion is here made to *challenges* to fight duels; or to attacks of a real bodily character; but these never could have been in your contemplation; or, at least, that alone could not have been in your contemplation; because, though you talk about singling out, you also talk about *gross and indecent attacks*, which epithets could not possibly apply to bodily attacks; but must necessarily refer to attacks by the pen.

Your doctrine is, then, that it is possible that there may be propriety, in attacking the House in its collective capacity; but that, it is impossible for Members to discharge their public duty, if they are to be singled out by any one with whom they may come in contact. By coming in contact, you clearly mean, speaking of the character or conduct of individuals; for, you afterwards say, that this coming in contact is the most *invidious* part of their duty. The substance of the whole then is this, that it is contrary to the privilege of Parliament, for me, for instance, to name you, for instance, at all, in print, and with disapprobation of you, let you say what you will of me in your place in Parliament; for, to name you, to say that you said this or that, to prove that what you said was erroneous or false, is to attack you. Thus you are *singled out* and *attacked*; and this you contend is a breach of the privilege of Parliament. It follows, of course, that if Knatchbull was to say in his place in Parliament that *my character as well as conduct were reprobated by all honest men*; and that I, if I made a publication, referring to this speech, and denying the truth of Knatchbull's statement respecting me, was to be deemed guilty of a breach of privilege, and was to be imprisoned in a gaol, or otherwise dealt with at the discretion of the House.

Expositions and arguments are wholly useless in a case like this. The blood that does not boil at it is base beyond expression; and, as the *New Times* observed the other day, the law may say what it will; but to this the people will never submit, until a complete despotism be proclaimed and established by force. I shall, therefore, not waste my time in reprobating this doctrine of yours; but shall endeavour to show, the very great utility, as well as the justice, of acting upon principles, the contrary of those which you have laid down.

If, in consequence of a mis-statement or wilful calumny; or, in consequence of any attack of any sort, upon me, I were to lay the blame upon the whole House, instead of laying it upon the person who had committed the offence against me; how injurious this would be to all the other Members; as well as how unjust! What a confusion would there be of right and wrong; what absurdity in my manner of acting, and how comparatively impotent any attempt that I might make to defend myself! When Mr. Scarlett called me a contemptible scribbler; when you denominated mine the worst part of the press; when Sir James Mackintosh drew that memorable contrast between me and his friend Mr. Perry, saying, that the severe laws which were proposed were fit enough in the former case but not in the latter; when Mr. Canning would drive at the whole herd rather than suffer the mischievous beast to escape him; when Mr. Wodehouse ascribed to me the desire to inflame the people and spread disaffection in Norfolk: when these things took place, what injustice should I have been guilty of, if, in my comments, I had driven at the whole House, and not singled out my man? The thing is so absurd as well as so unjust that it will bear nothing in the shape of an argument. When my able friend Mr. John Calcraft, late Clerk of the Ordnance, said, that, if he had been at the Kentish Meeting, he would have made a speech, to make me mount my horse, and ride off home as quickly as possible, was I to impute this to the whole House, and tell the whole House (as I told him), that, if they would call another meeting, I would be bound to make them mount their horses, and ride off home, and that the only question would be, whether they should ride with their faces to the heads or the tails of the horses? Was I to laugh

thus at the whole House, instead of laughing at my friend Mr. Calcraft? What an absurdity! Why, the whole House laughed as well as I; and what is more, you set them a laughing yourself, by calling my friend Mr. Calcraft, the *Great Kentish Orator*. So that, here would have been pretty confusion; the House laughing at my friend, and I laughing at the House and my friend both together, and all from the same cause.

There may be cases, indeed, where the House, by making itself a party to the attack upon the individual out of doors, justifies an application of the censure to itself. This was the case when the *witticism* respecting the *rupture of Ogden* was sported; for the reporters told us that there was a loud and *general laugh!* but this has, I must confess, been seldom the case. I am well informed, that, when Knatchbull was inveighing against my *doctrine* about the Debt, he was loudly cheered, particularly by those who sat near him; but that, when he came to those personalities, which, if uttered at all, ought to have been uttered at Maidstone to my face, the House *did not* cheer; and that even those who sat round about him, discovered evident signs of a feeling very different from that of satisfaction and approbation. Would it not have been, then, great injustice in me to fix his conduct upon the whole House; to impute to you, for instance, a share of the calumny that he was uttering? Yet, according to your doctrine, this is what I must have done, or sat in silence, while three hundred newspapers were conveying about the world the speech of a Member of Parliament, representing my character as well as conduct to be such as to be *reprobated by every honest man*.

There are other ways, too, besides that of direct attack, in which individuals, out of doors, may be *wronged* by speeches made in Parliament. Suppose a man were to foresee that St. Paul's would tumble down, if certain digging and grubbing and poking about at its base were persevered in by a parcel of mole-like people; suppose he were to foretell this; suppose the mole-like architects to go on with their grubblings; suppose the building to begin to tumble about their ears; suppose this matter to be mentioned in Parliament: suppose one of the Members to say that he had foreseen the same thing, and another of them to say that it was impossible to be foreseen by any human being! Now suppose all this, would not the man, who had really foreseen the calamity, who had foretold it repeatedly, and years and years before it had taken place; who had been laughed at for his forebodings; and who well knew that the thing had been foretold by nobody else; would not such man have a right to complain of these two Members; would he not have a right to make his representations upon the subject, even for his own sake; and would it not be his duty to do it? Without such remonstrance how would the public be to be guarded against the mole-like gentry and their abettors another time; and how is such man to remonstrate with any propriety without naming, without *singling out* (for, to single out is to name, and nothing more), how is such man to remonstrate with any effect, and in a manner to excite any interest, unless he address himself to the particular parties by whom the injustice has been done?

There are cases that do not come even so closely as this to an individual out of doors, and that yet justify him in making his commentary somewhat particular and personal. Suppose a Member to say, that nothing has been done, for any certain time past, worthy of approbation in the Parliament, except certain things that he names. Suppose those certain things that he names have really done nothing; suppose four

millions of taxes have been taken off during the Session; suppose that *two persons out of the House* have manifestly had a large share in taking off these taxes; have not those two persons a right to remonstrate with that Member? Not very harshly, to be sure; but, when my Lord Milton was, the other day, ascribing all the good deeds to you and Mr. Wyville, whose motions had produced nothing; when he was omitting all the exertions that had produced the taking off of four millions of taxes, including a very large part of that worst of all taxes, the salt-tax; when he was doing this, and saying not one single word about the great exertions of those two persons out of doors to whom I have just alluded; when he was doing all this, and taking no sort of notice of the *Farmer's Friend*, and the *Farmer's Wife's Friend*, who had split themselves up into more than *fifty thousand* pieces, and had been talking to the people in almost every parish of the kingdom at one and the same time; had not these two persons out of doors some little reason to be discontented with his Lordship, who had been silent all the Session himself, and who now broke silence for the purpose, as it were, of not doing justice to these two uncommonly active and public-spirited persons? And how, pray, were the *Farmer's Friend* and the *Farmer's Wife's Friend* to state their case to the public, to put forward their fair pretensions, and to obtain justice for themselves, without naming Lord Milton; that is to say, according to the phrase that you have chosen to use, without *singling out* that noble Lord?

You will here remark, perhaps, that merit is always modest; and that these two great enemies of taxes, ought to have left their merits to be discovered by the public. I am of a different opinion, and particularly in cases like the present. We are speaking of speeches in Parliament; and we know that they are circulated all over the world free of expense to the parties who make them. Therefore, if the speeches be such as to bring forward Adam Smith, Hume, Locke, and God knows who, while they are silent as to him who has really developed all the causes of the calamities that oppress the country; it becomes an act of *injustice* in those who make those speeches; they make use of their means of circulating speeches for an unjust purpose; and it is the duty of the party who ought to be mentioned with honour, to expose and to lash, as far as he dares, the conduct of such speech-makers. Their speeches are a tacit attack upon him; and, having no other means of redress, he has a clear right to obtain it through the press if he can, and in his endeavours to obtain it, the *singling out* mode is certainly the best, because it is the most manifestly just.

These observations are general; but now, before I come to the application of your doctrine to cases in which no particular individual is aggrieved, let me make a remark or two (for we shall get on best with plain dealing) on the game which has been going on for now about sixteen years between me and the "*education of the country*." It has been an object of considerable importance, not only with the men in power, but with those out of power, to depress, to degrade, if possible, and finally, to render of no importance, an individual of the name of William Cobbett. This is perfectly notorious to the whole country, who have observed, that, however the fashions may differ in other respects, they all agree here. This has shown itself in so many ways, and so many hundred of proofs could be cited of it; it has, besides, become so flagrant, upon so many occasions, that there is not a man in the country

that has a doubt upon the subject. The whole of the "*Education of the country*," or rather that which has the impudence to call itself such, has been, in this respect, one compact body, always moving on as if it had been an individual. The source of this lies here: "*the Education*" saw that I possessed great industry and great perseverance. It would have taken me by the hand and lifted me up by degrees, if I, like so many others, had first *prostrated myself before it*. This I was resolved not to do. "*The Education*" perceiving that I was not to be gained by blandishments, and held in subjection to its will, and having a dread of my power to do it harm, very naturally took the course of destroying, crushing, or, at the very least, keeping down. I, on my part, by no means backward in perceiving the feeling and intention of "*the Education*;" and knowing well my want of means of the sort necessary in the way of *rising*, as naturally, set myself to work to *pull down* the "*Education*." And at this game, of *pressing down* and *pulling down*, "*the Education*" and I have been for the last sixteen years. Sometimes the chances have been on my side; sometimes on that of "*the Education*," which, being a sort of corporate body, has had the chances of sickness and death on its side. Nevertheless the game seems at last to have taken a very decided turn in my favour. And this I owe to a virtue for which very few people give me credit, but in which, as far as relates to such matters, I am exceeded by no man living; and that is *patience*; a cool *waiting for events*, which enables a man to *lay the ground of his triumph long beforehand*; and upon this subject, and in the way of illustration, I will relate to you an anecdote, very well worthy of being remembered by "*the Education*," and strictly belonging to the matter before us, as well as to those great matters which now agitate the public mind.

The next day after Gibbs, Ellenborough, and their associates, had got me safe in Newgate, an American friend of mine, who had the clearest and soundest head of almost any man I ever knew in my life, and for whom I had and still have a very great personal regard, came to see me in a very miserable hole, though better than that to which I had been sentenced, and from which I finally ransomed myself at the expense, for *lodging alone*, of *twelve hundred pounds*. Being seated, one of us on each side of a little bit of a table, he said, looking up into my face, with his arms folded upon the edge of the table, "Well! they have *got you*, at last. And now *what will you do?*" After a moment or two I answered, "What do you think I ought to do?" He then gave me his opinion, and entered pretty much into a sort of plan of proceedings. I heard him out, and then, I spoke to him in much about these words: "No, *Dickins*, that will never do. This nation is drunk, it is mad as a March hare, and mad it will be till this beastly frolic (the war) is over. The only mode of proceeding to get satisfaction requires great *patience*. The nation must suffer at last, and greatly and dreadfully suffer, and in that suffering it will come to its reason, and to that justice of sentiment which are now wholly banished. I shall make no immediate impression by tracing the paper-system to its deadly root. The common people will stare at me, and the rich ruffians will sneer; but the time must come when all will listen; and my plan is to *write that now* which I can hold up to the teeth of my insolent enemies and taunt them with in the hour of their distress."—"Aye," said he, "but the *worms* may be taunting you before that time."—"No matter," said I, "for though fame, after the worms have been at work, is

“ a foolish thing, recollect that I have *no other line to pursue*. By pursuing this, I secure a *chance* of final success and satisfaction, and by “ no other can I perceive a possibility of obtaining even that chance.” I then described to him the outline of what I intended to do with regard to the paper-system; and after passing a very pleasant afternoon, during which we selected and rejected several titles, we at last fixed upon that of “ *Paper against Gold*,” which I began to write and to publish in a few weeks afterwards, and which, at the end of thirteen years, I hold up to the noses of the insolent foes who then exulted over me, and tell them, “ This is what you got by my having been sentenced to Newgate; this “ was the produce of that deed by which it was hoped and believed that “ I was *pressed down* never to be able to stir again.” I did not expect that the public would pay attention to what I wrote. I cared nothing about it. I no more looked for any effect from it within ten years than a farmer looks for the wheat harvest in March. But I was sure the time of harvest would come; I was quite sure of that; and I enjoyed by anticipation more pleasure, as far as I know, than I enjoy at this moment.

This was a new epoch in the progress of my mind. I now bent my whole force to one object, regarding every thing else as of no consequence at all. The pursuits of agriculture and gardening filled up the moments of mere leisure and relaxation. Other topics than that of paper-money came now and then to make a variety; but, this was the main thing; I never had any hope in any thing else; and nothing else was an object of my care. Whether I were rich or poor I cared not a straw. I never cared in my life how I ate, drank or slept. I had Newgate in my recollection, and the paper-money for my polar star; and between these, in spite of a great deal of pressing down, I have performed more in the pulling down way, than, I believe, was ever performed by any other man. I might forgive my foes now, though I will not be hypocrite enough to say that I do; I might forgive them, for I was even with them long enough ago; and, in a letter to *Mr. Dickens*, written about two months back, I asked him if he did not think that I had lived to receive my *satisfaction*.

This *pressing down* and *pulling down* game would be mere matter of amusement to me now; but really it becomes something of a different character when I reflect on its *consequences*. Understanding, as I do, and long having understood, as I have, all the causes which have finally produced this horrible state of things; and constantly active as I have been in displaying that knowledge before the nation, with such singular clearness and simplicity of style and manner, a considerable part of the people has always gone along with me, and I have thus *anticipated* the expression of thoughts and opinions, that might have occurred to and been entertained by others. Those opinions, always correct, received the reprobation of “ *the Education* ” only because they were *mine*. Resort was therefore had to something else; and, of course, to something erroneous. It has been impossible to adopt a wise measure without taking something recommended by me. With this everlasting pen of mine in motion to take any thing from me by *stealth* was impossible; and to take it openly was prohibited by pride, by envy, by malice, by all those detestable feelings, that disgrace the heart of man, and that cause the ruin of nations. On my part there has always existed the determination that nothing should be taken from me by *stealth*; to this I still adhere, and,

if the transgressor escape my lash he shall be more fortunate than mortal ever was before in this world.

On mere trifles the fate of countries frequently turns ; and now let me frankly tell you, that the very first thing that seriously roused my indignation, after my return to England from America the first time, was, *seeing you and Horner put into Parliament*, while, I felt, without any reasoning about the matter, that you were both together, as politicians, compared with me, what a reed is compared with an oak. I had not then even thought about Parliamentary Reform. It was a subject that had never entered my mind in a serious manner. But there must always be a something to awaken the first thought upon any subject ; and, it is by no means unfrequently the case, that that first thought arises out of some feeling or passion which sinks away during the contemplation of the subject. Certain it is, that the seeing in Parliament such a man as *Horner*, especially, did produce a great effect upon me ; and upon looking back to the Register of that date, I think I should be able to trace as regularly as possible, the degradation first, and afterwards the fall, of the Whig faction to that very act.

I have reason to congratulate myself upon what took place then. It is possible, and barely possible, that I might have prevented the present calamities, and the still greater calamities that are at hand ; but while that is only barely possible, and while it is also possible, that I might have been so committed with, as to share in the degradation of the Whig faction, it is quite certain, that nothing that parties could have done, or that kings could have done, would have placed me in the situation where I now stand. A more interesting question is *how we shall carry on our game now!* Whether "*the Education*" have any stomach left for *pressing down*, or whether it have had enough of it ; whether it have had a *belly-full*, as they say of the boxers, and be inclined to cease from endeavours which have hitherto proved so fruitless. As I observed in one of my letters to Lord Grey some time ago, malicious conduct seldom fails to meet with chastisement except it be perpetrated against the supple and cowardly. Of this I now remind "*the Education*," and inform you, in its behalf, that it shall never commit against me, any offence either express or *tacit*, without receiving a just and full measure of punishment.

Leaving you to express your astonishment at all this "*disgusting egotism*," and leaving the whole band of Edinburgh Reviewers (if their book be yet alive) to participate with you, I now proceed to the remaining part of my subject ; namely, the effect which your doctrine would have in those cases where the speech of a Member of Parliament contains nothing injurious with regard to any individual whatever. Your great objection is, to members being "*singled out*." In the first place, they are forward enough, in general, to single themselves out. They not only write out their speeches for the newspapers, but very often publish them in pamphlets ; and your prohibition would prevent an answer being given, even to these latter.

But, without going this length, what would have been the situation of the country at this moment if I, I myself I, had suffered the monstrous doctrines of Mr. Ricardo to remain unrefuted ? What would have been its situation, if the ravings of Webb Hall, at one time so popular in the House, had passed without a comment ? And do you believe that four millions of taxes have been taken off in consequence of the answers which Lord Liverpool, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Castlereagh, and Mr.

Huskisson, received in the Houses; do you believe, that these taxes have been taken off so much in consequence of the answers which these gentlemen received in Parliament, as in consequence of the answers which they received out of Parliament? If you do, I can assure you that you hold an opinion very different from that of all the rest of the country except the "Education."

Yet, how were these speeches to be answered if the makers of them were not to be *singled out*? How was Mr. Ricardo to be answered so effectually as by showing that he held a different doctrine in different speeches. Mr. Huskisson's is a case exactly in point. He now contended, that the farmers and landlords would be able, without utter ruin, to pay the present taxes, though we had come back to the prices which were in existence before the war. In 1815 he had contended, that they must have double the price that they had before the war, to enable them to pay the present taxes; and he then contended, that, without that double price, or something approaching it, the farmer could not pay the present taxes, *though he paid no rent at all*. What could be so powerful as this statement, as an answer to Mr. Huskisson. It was perfectly irresistible. It made his opposition to the reduction of taxes not worth a straw. It was one great point gained. Under such a statement he could not proceed with any face. He was compelled to yield, out of mere decency. And, will you still contend that a member is not to be *singled out*, and brought to the bar of the press; and that to put forth a statement like that here alluded to, is to "tear up by the roots every vestige of Parliamentary privilege?"

The Parliamentary Debates are, in fact, publications of the speeches. If the House will not permit any body to publish its speeches, that is another matter; but the House now permits, in short, it authorizes, its speeches to be published from one end of the kingdom to the other; and shall it refuse to permit commentary upon those speeches? Does it wish to have all the talk to itself? Wish to have the liberty of promulgating just what it pleases, and at the same time wish to have the power of punishing all the rest of the nation for making a single remark on what it says? There is a law to punish us for attempting to bring the House into contempt; but never, according to my judgment, had anything a tendency to bring it into contempt half so much as your doctrine.

In another part of the debate, the *Morning Chronicle* reports you to have said, that, "Where a *letter*, REFLECTING upon a Member of that House was published with the name and address of any individual attached to it, he thought such a case afforded strong presumption in the exercise of their *inquisitorial control*; and that they were entitled to call on such person to answer for his conduct, or, at least, to explain it."

Now, here is every description of the letter that I am now addressing to you, except that this letter may want, as I hope in God it does, the quality of "*reflecting*;" for that, it appears, is to constitute the sin. If, by reflecting, you mean casting a suspicion on the soundness of your doctrine, and leaving the natural deduction to be drawn, then this letter does reflect on you. But what writing in answer to any man; what writing which questions his facts, disproves his facts, refutes his arguments; shows him, in short, to have put forth what is not true; shows him to have been guilty of falsehood or of folly; what such writing does not reflect upon a man? It was clearly to reflect upon Mr. Ricardo, to

demonstrate the falsehood of his doctrines—doctrines, too, which had earned him the title of Oracle even from you. Was it not to reflect upon Mr. Huskisson, to show the direct contradiction between his opinions of 1815 and those of 1822; and is it not to reflect upon Mr. Peel to talk, as we all do, about the supreme follies of all the babble of his Bill and all the mischiefs it has produced, unaccompanied as it was by those measures which would have rendered it just and safe, which were recommended *by me*, in a petition (*too long* for Lord Folkstone to present to the House), and which were, and perhaps because they were recommended by me, rejected?

Your doctrine would cut both ways: take it altogether, it must soon put an end to all debate. None of us must write about anything said by any of you, though a member were to utter things too indecent to be named. In the first place you insist upon liberty of speech; next you permit the publication of the speeches, which is the same as ordering it, seeing that the thing is *sure to be done*; and if no commentary be to be made upon these speeches, there is no safety for the character of any of us; the sweeper of the streets may become even blacker than he is from your tongues, while some base and hungry ruffian, to curry favour with a cabal, may, with impunity, insult the King upon his throne, and eall him “*Nero*” with as little ceremony as Knatchbull called me a person of reprobated character.

In conclusion, Sir, let me observe, that it is best for us all *to keep our temper*. Nobody can say, that I have not kept mine for thirteen years past; and, it is now the turn of the “*Education*,” which, however, has this consolation, that its turn will not last *so long*. While it does last, pray keep yourself cool, and let us see the thing end without getting angry with one another.

I am, Sir, your most obedient and
Most humble servant,
WM. COBBETT.

TO MR. RICARDO,

ON HIS PROPOSITION FOR DIVIDING THE LAND, IN ORDER TO
PAY OFF THE NATIONAL DEBT.

(*Political Register, March, 1823.*)

“And ye shall *dispossess* the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. And you shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance amongst your families.”—NUMBERS, chap. xxxiii. v. 53.

SIR,

Kensington, March 12, 1823.

Many times as I have had to mention your name, and to expose the incorrectness of your opinions, I have never, until now, as far as I can recollect at present, addressed any publication directly to you. I do it

at this time for reasons which will suggest themselves to those who shall think it worth their while to read what I am now about to write ; and if I do it without any sort of ceremony towards you, or any of those compliments which you have been in the habit of receiving for some years past, it is because, not that I entertain any particular dislike towards you ; but because there are few things that I so much despise as that which is vulgarly called flummery.

At that new and interesting epoch of the borough and paper-system, the spring of the memorable year 1819, you made a conspicuous figure. The measure that was then adopted was not precisely the measure recommended by you : it was a modification of your measure : but the *principle* of both measures was the same : namely, that the interest of the present debt, and the expense of the present establishments, could be paid in a currency, the *basis of which should be gold* of the ancient standard ; and that this could be done without any material injury to those connected directly or indirectly with the land. That this was the principle which you maintained, it is impossible for you to deny. I know that the newspapers have made you say, that your opinion of that day was founded upon the supposition that your own measure would be adopted, and not the measure of Mr. Peel. This is not true ; for it was in supporting Mr. Peel's measure, and not your own measure, that you gave the opinion, that the dread of low prices from passing this Bill was a bugbear ; and that, in a very short time, we should be surprised that we had ever felt alarm from such an opinion. In this speech, which was made in support of Mr. Peel's Bill, on the 24th of May, 1819, you expressed an opinion that prices would not come down more than three per cent. Since the consequences of this Bill have been felt by the country, the newspapers have made you deny that you fixed the fall of prices at four and a-half per cent. In your evidence before Mr. Peel's Committee, you said that the depression might go to four or *five* or *six* per cent. You have since acknowledged that the Bill has produced a depression of *ten* per cent. But, *now*, I hear that the warlike quaker speculation has made you *recant* and deny even the four and a-half per cent. ! However, whether I shall find time to speak to you relative to this recantation, I am not certain. It being my intention at present to address you on the subject of the project for *getting rid of the Debt*.

This project was broached by you during the season of Six Acts ; that is to say, in the latter part of the year 1819. You were at the time called an *oracle* : the oracle of the Collective Wisdom. In the succeeding April, I, in a letter to Lord Liverpool,* in the Register, Volume 36, Number 6, settled that whole question ; proved as clearly as daylight, that even the taking of the whole of the real property away from the then owners, would not pay off the Debt, upon the supposition, too, that you took from the fundholders in the same proportion that you took from the landowners.

I thought, therefore, that your project for seizing the land had been given up ; but, to my great surprise, I perceived, in the report of the debate of Thursday the 6th instant, you returning, and in a very vigorous manner, to the old project. Before I proceed further, let me quote the words, as I find them in the report in the *Morning Chronicle* : " He

* See Vol. V. of *this work*, page 495.—ED.

“ had before stated that he thought a great effort should be made to get rid of the Debt, and he had mentioned a plan which he thought should be adopted. An honourable member indeed, whom he did not then see in his place (the member for Winchelsea), had opposed his plan, and said that it would throw the whole land of the country into the hands of pettyfogging attorneys. But of this he thought there was no danger. Parliament might interfere and give secure titles to the land which was disposed of without any reference to attorneys, and he believed none of the land would fall into their hands. He thought we were in a critical situation that demanded decisive measures.”

Illustrative of this, Mr. Baring observed that your plan of an equitable adjustment was, in his opinion, the plan of a man who read much, but who did not study mankind. Then follow these words:—“ I will only refer to what my honourable friend says of *Parliament giving a good title to land*. Is there any pressure of taxation, however severe, at all equal in vexation to taking away *one-half of the landed property*, in order to give a good Parliamentary title to stockholders.”

From these two extracts of speeches, we gather pretty fairly the extent as well as the nature of the plan. We see that it goes to the taking away of one-half of the houses, land, canals, mines, and all other real property; and that it contemplates the conveyance of this property from the present owners to the fundowners, and that, further, in order to prevent a large part of the property from being swallowed up by the lawyers, it contemplates a sort of *general conveyance*, to be made by Act of Parliament! I once knew a lawyer that was, during the three hundred and sixty-five days in every year, in a state of *bona fide* drunkenness eighteen hours out of every twenty-four, of every one of those days; yet, in the very drunkenest of the most drunken of his hours, he would have been stunned into sobriety at the bare sound of a proposition like this!

To reason with such a proposition is to degrade the use of those senses which God has given us. What! go and take away; go and take out of his possession the half of the lord's estate; the half of the forty-shilling freeholder's garden and house; the half of the gardener's radish beds; the half of the butcher's plot! Bedlam never sent forth any thing to be compared to this in point of wildness: and, really, I dare not assert it to be yours, and must throw myself, for the sake of security, upon the report of the newspaper from which I have literally copied it. To reason with a project like this is what no one will expect from me; but, to another use I may very properly apply it. And it serves me well, as affording, in the reception it appears to have met with, a striking contrast to that reception which was given to the more just, far more reasonable, and beyond all measure more practicable scheme of the much abused, much injured, much calumniated *Spenceans*! Their scheme was called revolutionary; and even traitorous. It was said that they compassed the death of the King, in proposing to make a division of the land. One of the grounds upon which the personal liberty of the people was taken away in the year 1817; nay, not one of the grounds, but the very ground itself, was the allegation, that the reformers wished for reform that they might effect a new distribution of the land. Upon this express ground was the personal liberty of Englishmen taken away; upon this express ground was a Bill passed, authorizing the Government to imprison whomsoever it pleased, in whatsoever jail it pleased, to keep the person so imprisoned there as long as it pleased, to refuse to con-

front such person with his accuser, to refuse him a written statement of the charge against him, and (never forget it, my countrymen!) to refuse him, while in prison, *the access of his friends and relations, and the use of pen, ink, and paper.*

It was this last provision that made me take myself off to that distance, to that beautiful island,* whence I viewed the passing of Peel's Bill. But, you will say, that you proposed to do the thing by *Act of Parliament*; that you propose to do nothing unlawful. And did the Spenceans propose their division of the land by any authority other than that of an Act of Parliament? Did they propose to do anything in a violent and unlawful manner? Not at all. The express terms of their proposition were these: "The land being the people's farm, a division of it ought to take place according to Christian principles." The difference between the plan imputed to you by the *Morning Chronicle*, and the plan imputed to the Spenceans by the Lords' Report; the difference between the Spencean plan and the plan just reported in the *Morning Chronicle* is this, that the former was really a *Christian plan*; whereas the latter is a *Jewish plan*; and would seem to have originated in an idea something like that inculcated in those words of the 4th Book of Moses, which I have taken the liberty to use as a motto to this letter.

I state most distinctly that I do not ascribe the proposition (as here stated and explained) to you. But I find it in a public newspaper. That public newspaper, if it remain uncontradicted, must necessarily tend to cause the world to believe that you stated this project; and of the project itself, I have no hesitation to say that it is fully equal to the command of Moses given to the Israelites, as to what they should do upon entering the land of Canaan. He commands them to dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and to take it to themselves. He commands them, besides, to *drive out* all the inhabitants of the land before them, and to disfigure their altars; but, as to the possession of the land, Moses's command was not more complete than the project which the *Morning Chronicle* ascribes to you; that is to say, if we take in, as we must, the explanation given by Mr. Baring.

It is said that only *half* the land is to be taken; but it would be very easy to show that the whole must be taken, long before half the Debt be paid off. The main thing now is for us to admire the change which has taken place in the *landlords*, who were all in a flame in the year 1817, because a few (not two dozen) of visionary men proposed a Christian project of equalizing landed possessions; who were all in a flame upon that occasion; and who are now cool as iron out of doors in the night. Not a word does any one appear to say about the project of taking away one-half of his estate. Great bluff-headed fellows in Norfolk and elsewhere have called it revolutionary; have called it a project of general confiscation; have called it robbery, and almost murder and treason, have given all these appellations and a great many more, to a petition† which

* Long Island.—Ed.

† The "Norfolk petition" is a document that we cannot omit in this work; for it caused more stir at the time that it was adopted, than any petition, probably, was ever known to do. The farmers were in great distress, and a Meeting of the County of Norfolk being called, Mr. COBBETT, who was made a freeholder for the purpose, went down to Norwich to propose his plan for remedying the distresses of the country. The Meeting was held in the spacious hall of St. ANDREW, in the City of Norwich; the concourse of people was enormous, and,

prayed for an application of a part of the church property and of the worth of the crown-lands towards the liquidation of the Debt; which prayed for an equitable adjustment of contracts; which prayed for a suspension of the severest of the processes against tenants and landlords for

though the influence of Mr. COKE was exerted to persuade the Meeting not to adopt Mr. COBBETT's proposition, it was carried (being twice put by the sheriff) by large majorities. The petition is as follows:

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The Petition of the Nobility, Gentry, and others, of the County of Norfolk, in County Meeting assembled, this 3d day of January, 1823,

Most humbly sheweth,

That your Petitioners have always been ready to make any sacrifices which were necessary to the defence of their country, and to the safety and dignity of their Sovereign's throne; but that they are now impelled by their well-known, indescribable and unmerited sufferings, to approach your Honourable House with an humble prayer, that you will be pleased to adopt the best means of relieving them from those sufferings.

That, in proceeding to suggest those means, which they do with the greatest respect and deference, your humble Petitioners cannot disguise from themselves, and they will not disguise from your Honourable House, that they entertain a fixed opinion, that this now unhappy country owes all its calamities to the predominance of certain particular families, who, since the passing of the Septennial Act, have, by degrees, appropriated to themselves a large part of the property and revenue of the whole nation, and who have, at last, by taxes, debts and changes in the currency, involved themselves, as well as the whole of this industrious community, in difficulties too great to be removed by the hand of Time, or by any but the most vigorous measures of legislation.

That, whether we look at the Church, the Army, the Courts of Law, the Customs, the Excise, the Colonies, or the Crown-lands, we see in each a channel of enormous emoluments to these particular families, for whose benefit and aggrandizement, more than for anything else, the whole of these sources of riches would appear to exist. And that therefore, though justice and necessity demand a reduction of the interest of the Debt, and an equitable adjustment of all other contracts, your humble Petitioners would deem such reduction an act of deep iniquity, and they deem such adjustment wholly impracticable as long as these particular families enjoy those emoluments, and as long as they retain in the Legislature that absolute sway which they have acquired through the means of the Septennial Act, in conjunction with the notorious and scandalous abuses connected with the representation.

That it is well-known to your Honourable House, that, for more than twenty years, the particular families received a large part of the above-mentioned emoluments out of the money borrowed from the fundholders; that, during that period, more than a million of money was taken out of the loans to be given to the Church; and that, in fact, no inconsiderable part of the whole of the loans went into the pockets of these families; and, therefore, your Petitioners will not suppose it possible for your Honourable House to harbour an intention to take even a single shilling from the fundholders, so long as these families shall continue to receive those emoluments.

Your Petitioners, therefore, most humbly pray, that your Honourable House will be pleased to pass an Act for causing an efficient Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament, in order that such Parliament may adopt the measures necessary to effect the following purposes:—

1. An appropriation of a part of the public property, commonly called Church property, to the liquidation of the Debt.
2. A reduction of the Standing Army, including Staff, Barracks and Colleges, to a scale of expense as low as that of the army before the last war.
3. A total Abolition of all Sinecures, Pensions, Grants and Emoluments, not merited by public services.

the short space of one year, in order to give time for the equitable adjustment of contracts : by these bluff-headed fellows this prayer has been deemed to mean robbery, confiscation, fraud, revolution and treason ; and now we hear from no part of the country, through any of the newspapers, one word of disapprobation on the part of any of these bluff-headed fellows : no ; not one word of disapprobation from any of them of a project which aims at the taking away, and absolutely conveying by Act of Parliament, one-half of every man's real estate ! Tame as capons are the bluff-headed fellows upon the hearing of this project, and seeing it circulated throughout the kingdom. I have looked well into all the country papers, and not one word, not one breath of resistance do I find from this race of bluff-headed cowards. They could meet in their barns and holes and corners to misrepresent my propositions, and to calumniate me ; but the bold proposition ; the sweeping proposition from you, makes them crouch like spaniels ; and they seem as ready to flee before it as the Canaanites were to flee before the sword of Moses the servant of the Lord.

4. A sale of the numerous public estates, commonly called Crown-lands, and an application of the money towards the liquidation of the Debt.
5. An equitable adjustment with regard to the Public Debt, and also with regard to all debts and contracts between man and man.

But, while your humble Petitioners are aware, that, to Reform the Commons' House and to effect the other purposes of justice and necessity, which they have here most respectfully pointed out, may require a lapse of months, they know, that your Honourable House have the power, and they will not believe that you want the will, to afford them immediate protection against further ruin. They, therefore, seeing the pressing nature of their case ; seeing the abject misery that awaits them, pray, that your Honourable House will be pleased,

1. To suspend, by law, for one year, all distraints for rent, and to cause distraints to be set aside where they have been begun.
2. To suspend all process for tithes, for the same period.
3. To suspend, for the same period, all processes arising out of mortgage, bond, annuity, or other contract affecting house or land.
4. To repeal the whole of the tax on Malt, Hops, Leather, Soap and Candles.

These measures, so analogous to others, taken by your Honourable House under circumstances far less imperious ; these measures, so easily adopted ; so free from the possibility of inflicting wrong ; and at the same time, so necessary to relieve your Petitioners from the daily alarm in which they live ; so necessary to afford them a hope of escaping from the pains and disgrace of the lowest pauperism and beggary : to believe that these measures, measures of bare protection from further wrong and ruin ; to believe that these will be refused to your suffering Petitioners, would be to suppose the existence of that callousness of heart which your Petitioners are far indeed from imputing to your Honourable House.

Having thus, with the most profound respect, submitted to your Honourable House those which they deem the best means for relieving their distresses, your humble Petitioners, though they are satisfied that evils so unusual and of such uncommon magnitude require remedies of a nature extensive and extraordinary, beg leave to assure your Honourable House, that they venerate the Constitution of their fathers ; that they seek for no change in the form of the Government ; that they know how many ages of happiness and of glory their country enjoyed under a Government of King, Lords, and Commons ; that they fervently hope that this Constitution may descend to their children : but that they are fully convinced, that, unless the present evils be speedily arrested and effectually cured, a convulsion must come, in which the whole of this ancient and venerable fabric will be crumbled into dust.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

I beseech every man who may read this to be perfectly convinced that I feel no pity for these bluff-headed fellows. From me they deserve none; and certainly none do they deserve from the Reformers of 1817. I speak of the project merely as a project, prodigious in itself; and worthy of the astonishment of mankind. But, if I were disposed to reason with the owners of those mansions and estates, which are thus proposed to be divided and to be conveyed by Act of Parliament: if I were disposed to reason with them, might I not ask them for what purpose they were so eager to support the war against jacobins and to give their approbation to measures against radicals; "Look at France!" say those, who would frighten us from seeking reform. Well! look at France, say I, and see if you can discover, in the history of her long and terrible revolution; see if you can discover in the history of that revolution, a change of property, a hundredth part equal in degree to the one expressed in this proposition. The property of the church was seized upon and sold. The property of the crown was seized upon and sold. The property of certain persons charged with crimes against the nation was seized upon and sold. Great outcry was made about national faith. Outcry as great as that now made in England. But, in the maddest days of the mad Convention, was there ever a man found to propose, seriously to propose, the taking away of one-half of every man's estate, and conveying those halves to the fundholders by one general act of the Convention!

Talk of revolution, indeed! There is now a revolution going on quietly in England; a revolution of property that would, if left alone (and it probably will be left alone), be quite complete. The poor devils of owners might not indeed be *driven out* of England, as the people of Canaan are to be driven out of their country; but, it is manifest, that even if the present revolution go on, it will drive them all out of their estates; and if the project which the *Chronicle* imputes to you, were to be put in execution, the revolution would be completed at once. The *tameness*, therefore, with which this project is read about, is the thing to fix our attention. It shows that the parties, that the Canaanites are *subdued*; it shows that they are conquered; it shows that they want the courage to resist; and, let them remember that, when they fall, they will fall the victims of their own baseness.

There we will leave them; but, Sir, may I be permitted to ask what it is that has happened of late, to induce you to observe, that we are now "*in a critical situation*," demanding such extraordinary measures? The Norfolk petition says, that we are now in a state that demands unusual and very vigorous measures. This was natural enough, as coming from me; but may I not be permitted to express my surprise, that you, who, in 1819, could see nothing so easy as the carrying into effect of the Bill of Mr. Peel, and who was then so well satisfied that we should soon be astonished that we ever felt alarm; may I not express my surprise that you, who, last year, on the 19th day of February, expressed your conviction, "*that the country was in a flourishing condition*?" may I not be permitted to express my surprise, that you now look upon the country as being in a critical state; and may I not be rather more than surprised at hearing you tell Mr. Baring, that, if no means be found to pay off the Debt, we are *sleeping on a volcano*? This is a strange change of tone. It shows, at any rate, that our situation is such, as not to be very clearly understood, even by those who are everlastingly talking about it; and this change of tone ought to admonish people to be more cautious in the

putting forth of projects which have never received the stamp of experience in any country in the world. Numerous are the instances which history affords of nations, as well as individuals, recovering themselves by paying a less nominal sum or less real sum than they owed; but never did nation before attempt its restoration to prosperity by paying a larger sum, real or nominal, than was due from it. To pay off a depreciated paper in gold, at par, is what no nation ever before attempted; and it is what can never be done; that is to say never can be attempted, without creating a revolution of property to some extent; and it is what can never be pushed through; and cannot be pushed on to any great extent, without producing a convulsive revolution.

Here I should put an end to my letter; but a paragraph, in the *Morning Chronicle* of the other day, taken from a paper called the *Scotsman*, and treating of the recent rise in prices, induces me to make some remarks upon that subject; first introducing the paragraph to which I have alluded.

"We know not what the declaimers against Mr. PEEL'S Bill are to say to the present rise of prices—COBBETT has of late become remarkably silent on the subject. He and his disciples at the agricultural meetings affirmed that if this Bill was to be supported, prices would fall still lower; that their rise was altogether out of the question; and that the farmers would continue to send corn to market which did not pay the expense of cultivation, until they were irretrievably ruined! To argue with persons capable of holding such opinions would be much worse than idle. But now that prices are on the increase we should not be surprised were COBBETT to turn round and contend that he only opposed PEEL'S Bill because of its tendency to raise prices. His followers will doubtless continue to lend a willing ear to his statements; and as his consistency and science are quite on a level, the change is far from improbable."*

It is strange with what instinctive adroitness drowning men catch at straws. I hear that the Boroughmongers are surprisingly gay since the rise in the price of wheat took place. They are no conjurers; nor is this writer in the *Scotsman*. And the writer in the *Scotsman* is, besides, not a very strict adherer to truth, else he would not have said that I had been remarkably silent upon the rise of prices; he would not have said that I affirmed that prices would fall still lower, let what circumstances would take place; he would not have said that I asserted, that a rise of price was altogether out of the question. He would have said none of these things: he would have said, that my opinion was this; that, the effect of seasons being allowed to have their weight, prices could not rise, beyond that effect: he would have said that I always spoke with reservation as to seasons; and as to circumstances of war. He chooses to misrepresent here; and that shows his consciousness of being weak.

* By referring to our note to page 52 of this volume, the reader will see clearly what was the cause of "the present rise of prices;" that it was that very issue of paper-money which caused the panic of 1825. Neither Mr. COBBETT nor the *Scotsman* could know what was causing the rise at that time; but we all know it now, having the frank evidence of Mr. WARD, the Bank director, to refer to, in which it is plainly shown that the rise was caused by issues of Bank-notes, put out at the desire of Lord LIVERPOOL and Mr. HUSKISSON, expressly to raise the price of corn. The fact is worth remembering, because what was done in 1822, and confessed in 1832, may be done again and again. We now know that Ministers do order issues of paper-money for the purpose of raising prices.—Ed.

How could I say that prices would never take a partial rise, when, during the first two weeks of the harvest of 1821, I had seen old wheat rise from six to ten shillings a bushel; that is to say, two-and-thirty shillings a quarter? How could I say that there never could be a partial rise, when, in the first week of last harvest, I saw new wheat sold for more than ten shillings a bushel, which, only six days before, would not sell for five shillings and sixpence; and, when, in three weeks afterwards, I saw the very same wheat come down again to five shillings and sixpence? How could I say, or any disciple of mine say, what is here imputed to us, when we have seen, from last November to the beginning of February, good malting-barley sell for as much money as the average of wheat in the same market? Did not we know that Mr. Peel's Bill had nothing at all to do with these particular circumstances of rise. In the two former cases the effect was produced by *the clouds*; and in the latter case, by *the sun*, which so completely burned up the barley upon the light lands, that many thousand acres were never mowed at all, but were suffered to stand to be eaten by cattle, trampled about and ploughed in.

As to the present rise, it has principally been owing to the confident expectation which was entertained from the first week in February to about the tenth of March, that this country would be engaged in war. Upon that speculation, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of pounds have been laid out in wheat; not to be sold again immediately, but to be kept for some time. Farmers have been expecting war, as well as corn-dealers. They have therefore been keeping back, both corn and cattle. Those who have bought cattle to fat, keep them instead of bringing them to market.

This is the principle cause. Whether it be the only cause we shall soon see. This cause *may* have been aided by the two following circumstances: first, the harvest last year, was one clear month earlier, upon an average, throughout the country, than it generally is. This caused the late crop to have thirteen months to serve, instead of twelve, a circumstance which the amount of stock in hand may now cause to begin to be discovered. The last crop, most excellent in quality, but not great in quantity, has received little aid from the crop of the year before, which was so bad in quality as to cause it to be applied to the feeding of cattle, the moment the new crop came to hand. These causes may have produced part of the recent rise; but my opinion is, that it has been almost entirely owing to speculations founded on an expectation of war. That expectation, even if well-founded, ought in reason to have caused no such rise; but, who are the corn-dealers and farmers of the present day? Those very men, who, from habit, contracted the belief that war makes corn dear and that peace makes it cheap. A little time will dissipate all these errors; and will cause more correct notions to prevail.

Let me, before I conclude, make a remark on one more passage in this curious paragraph. The writer says that I contend that farmers will send corn to market, which does not pay the expense of cultivation, and that they will continue to do this till they are irretrievably ruined. This he treats as so very idle as to be unworthy of being met by argument; and I should not meet him, were this not your favourite doctrine; that is to say, were you not everlastingly asserting that farmers will not continue to produce corn, unless they get by it.

Now, Sir, I have never said that for a long series of years; upon a

long average of years and of seasons, when there has been time for experience to give men right notions as well as to get out of their farms; I have never said that during such a series of years farming would be carried on by anybody unless it yielded a proper profit. But this I have said, that the farmers are now losing their capital; that they are losing by the corn that they raise; that if I am a farmer, bound by lease, or even a farmer from year to year, I must cultivate my land; that my loss is no reason for my discontinuing to cultivate; because I must *lose more* by cultivating than by not cultivating; that I may lose the amount of the rent by cultivating; that if I cultivate not, I must lose the amount of rent, rates, and the worth of my own and my family's labour. Is not this case plain; and when we consider the habit of high prices; the never-ceasing hope, that they will return; the indescribable difficulties and insurmountable reluctance that must be overcome before a farm can be quitted; when we consider all the numerous and powerful attachments that bind the far greater part of farmers to their farms; when we consider these things, are we to believe, upon the bare assertion of a Scotsman, who appears to have been engrafted upon a Jew, that an English farmer will not continue to send corn to market for two, three, four, five, or seven years, which corn does not pay the expense of cultivation?

The error here arises from the unaccountable pertinacity, discovered by this school of philosophers, in looking upon farmers like dealers, or traders. If a green-grocer at Kensington buy cabbages at Covent-garden this morning for two-pence a piece, and is obliged to sell them for three-halfpence a-piece, to a certainty he will not give two-pence a-piece to-morrow morning for the same sort of cabbages. If a grocer be obliged to retail a lot of tea at a loss, he will give a lower price another time or discontinue to sell tea. Thus it is in trade: but, how different with the farmer! The seed which is to yield him his crop must be in the ground, many months before he knows the price of the crop. The land which is to bear the crop must have been coming on in the way of preparation for a year or two before the ripening of the crop. Of the wether which is to be sold to-day, the mother must have been feeding upon the farm four years ago;—but, why need I enter upon any detail to show the dissimilarity between a case of farming and a case of trade? There are, however, the *leases*, all taken in a time of high prices, or under a hope of high prices; and, when all these circumstances are considered, how very profound must be the ignorance of that man, who broadly and unqualifiedly asserts, that corn will not be carried to market, except the price be sufficient to pay the expense of cultivation?

I am, Sir, your most obedient and

Most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO PARSON MALTHUS,
ON THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND.

(Political Register, April, 1823.)

PARSON,

Kensington, April 10, 1823.

I ADDRESSED a letter to you, on this subject, in 1819. Since that time a *third* Population Return has been laid before Parliament. At that time very small was the chance of obtaining attention. The Boroughmongers were yet gay. The consequences of the glorious war had not been so much felt as at present. I think, that, now, there is better chance of making some impression; and, at any rate, here is a *humbug* to be exposed; and, to expose it is a duty. The exposure will, at the least, serve to show the people of other countries how those of this boasting country are cajoled and duped.

There is an opinion existing, that the people of these islands have, of late years, greatly increased in number. This is a *singular* thing upon the very face of it. *Why* should it be? There seems, as Mr. Godwin says, "no reason" for such an opinion. But, it prevails, and to appear to *doubt of the fact* is likely to excite wonder amongst the greater part of companies. Yet, *why* should it be? *Why* should English people take, all at once, or, of late years, to breeding *more than formerly*? *Why* should they *die less* in proportion to the births? In short, *why* should they *increase in number*?

Never was such a thing suspected till you wrote your *book on population*. You found the Boroughmongers greatly puzzled to account for the *increase of the paupers*; and you invented for their use this increase of population. It was plain enough that the people had been made paupers by the robberies committed on them by the means of paper-money; it was plain enough, that paper-money and taxes had produced the increase of paupers; but this was not a pleasant thing to tell the Boroughmongers, to please whom there must be some cause found out that cast no blame upon them. Hence your book, to prove, that *men increase faster than the means of feeding them*, unless there be some "restraint" on them, as to their *marrying and breeding*. This was a grand discovery for the Boroughmongers; and, it was still better, when you found out, that it was right to *check* this increase of population by *cutting off parish relief*! This was delightful. What an excellent parson, to make such a humane discovery for the Boroughmongers!

Your assertions were these: *first*, that there is a principle which is continually at work to cause an increase of population; *second*, that it is necessary that this principle should be checked; *third*, that in England it has not been checked, but, on the contrary, encouraged by the giving of parish relief to the poor; *fourth*, that this encouragement was the cause of great evil to the country; *fifth*, that it caused the paupers to increase in number and the poor-rates to increase in amount; *sixth*, that a law

ought to be passed to prevent any relief being given to people who should marry after such a day, or to the children proceeding from any marriage taking place after such a day. Here, however, I must take your own words. Those infamous words are these: "To this end I should propose a regulation to be made, declaring, that *no child* born from any marriage taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law; and no illegitimate *child* from two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance. After the public notice, which I have proposed, had been given, to the punishment of nature HE should be left; the punishment of severe want: all parish assistance should be rigidly denied him. HE should be taught that the laws of nature had doomed him and *his family* to starve; that HE had no claim on society for the smallest portion of food; that if HE and *his family* were saved from suffering the utmost extremities of hunger, he would owe it to the pity of some kind benefactor, to whom HE ought to be bound by the strongest ties of gratitude."

I will not stop here to notice the unintelligible language of this proposition. I shall remark upon that, perhaps, by-and-by. What I have here to do is, to show the falsehood of the assertions and the baseness of the propositions founded on those assertions. Mr. GODWIN gives you and your patrons credit for humanity of motive. I give you no such credit. Why am I to believe that your motives are not bad, when I find your doctrines false and your recommendations unjust and cruel?

The foundation of this mass of falsehood and cruelty is the assertion that the population of England has, of late years, *greatly increased*. I deny this fact; and I am sure you can produce nothing in proof of it, except those *Population Returns*, for the full value of which (when we have ascertained the value), I am quite willing to give you credit. Having asserted this increase of population, you next say, the population naturally will increase if not checked. Instead of being checked in England, it has been increased by poor-rates. Let us, therefore, put an end to poor-rates; and then comes the diabolical proposition above quoted.

I shall talk to you by-and-by about the *law of Nature*; but first let us pursue this question of an increase of population. You say that this population is increased by the poor-rates. Can you tell me how it happens that it has not gone on increasing from the same cause, ever since the poor-rates began to exist? Can you tell me that? Can you tell me why the poor-rates should have begun to produce this effect only of late years? You can tell me no such a thing. You can give no reason why the increase should not have been going on from the time that the poor-rates were first enacted. You can give no reason, why this increase should not have been regularly going on. In short, if it have been going on of late years, and going on from this cause, it must have *always* been going on; for before the poor-rates were enacted, indigent persons were relieved by the parish priests and by the convents. If, therefore, to relieve the indigent be to cause an increase of population in the country, this increase must have been going on in England for upwards of seven hundred years! Now, what a pretty swarm, if your principle and if the *Population Returns*, if these returns and if your principle were worth a straw, what a pretty swarm we should be at this moment! The poor-laws, themselves, have been going on upwards of two hundred years; and if, during that time, your principle has been at work producing an increase, such as the *Returns* tell us has been produced during the last

twenty years, there could not have been existing in all England above a *hundred or two pairs of breeders*, in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth! The last Population Return must have fixed the thing in the mind of every man not resolved to be a dupe; but of this I shall have to say a great deal more by-and-by.

I before asked why there should be, all of a sudden, such an increase of the English people. I do not ask what is the good of it, or what is the bad of it; but I here ask simply why it should be. There is no reason to be given for it, which will not equally well apply to every nation of Europe. We may as well pretend that the weather has grown better of late years, in England; but not in other countries of Europe. We may as well pretend this, as to pretend that your principle of population has been at work here, while it has not been at work amongst the continental nations. Upon the face of the thing, then, we should say, *this cannot be true*. There cannot have been an increase of people in all these countries at one and the same time. They have been engaged in wars for thirty years past, and so have we. What in God's name should cause us all to have increased in numbers, during all these wars! What proof have we of any such increase? All the appearances are against such a presumption. Either the churches of this country were built for the purpose of standing empty; or, at least, those who built them, were most prodigal of their labour and their money; either this was the case; or this country was, at one time, much more populous, throughout the far greater part of it, than it now is.

No doubt Lancashire, part of Yorkshire, and some other parts, are more populous than they formerly were. No doubt this is the case with regard to the four counties joining up to the WEN. The last war drew together great swarms round the sea-ports. But, as to the *kingdom in general*, where are the marks of an increasing population? In a Return laid before Parliament in 1818, containing an account of the benefices and population, and also an account of the state of the churches and chapels. In this Return we find several churches, several scores and hundreds of good fat benefices, where there is now, in some places, *scarcely any population at all*. And a great number of churches and of good fat livings, where the whole of the population, according to the Population Return, does not amount to *two hundred persons*. In many cases, the population does not amount to thirty. I have my eye now upon five parishes in Dorsetshire. They all stand following each other upon the list. *Almer*, population 160; *St. Andrew in Milbourne*, population 200; *Ashmore*, population 153; *Askerwell*, 197; *Athelhampton with Burleston*, 30; *Bittiscombe*, 70; each of these places has a church, each of them is a benefice. *Athelhampton with Burleston*, which contains only 30 people observe, has both a church and a chapel. So that, here are 810 people all taken together; and they have amongst them six churches and a chapel; that is to say, one place of worship for every 115 persons; and, of course, for about every forty or fifty grown-up persons. Now, is it to be believed, Parson, that these churches were built for the use of a population like this? Is it to be believed that the churches were built solely for the purpose of finding out an easy life for the parsons that were to be put into them? It appears that, according to their own confession, the livings of four of these parishes bring 600*l.* a year. The worth of the two others is not mentioned; and they are not mentioned expressly because they are worth more than 150*l.* a year each. Give these

two livings 500*l.* a year each, and then you have 1600*l.* a year given to parsons to take care of the souls of 810 men, women, and children. It is impossible to believe that such a thing ever was intended. No: these churches were built because there was a population that demanded churches. In the next column of the Return, there are the following parishes: *Buckland Ripers*, population 61; *Catherston*, 20; *Charborough*, 26; *Chilborough West*, 44; *Chilcombe*, 22; *Compton Abbis*, 40; *Farnham*, 56; *Hammoon*, 40; *Hinton Paver*, 26. Now, it is curious enough that these are all rectorial parishes, and that three of them are very large livings. Here are nine parishes, and nine parish-churches for the sake of taking care of the souls of three hundred and thirty-five men, women, and children; so that here are only thirty-seven souls and a fraction to one parson. Just stepping into the next county, Wilts, we find the parish of *Bremhillam* with a population of 16; *Calloes*, 20; *Calstone*, 29; *Chalfield Magna*, 16; *Draycot Foliot*, 38; *Foxley*, 45; *Langford Paver*, 20; *Pertwood*, 20; *Rollstone*, 39; *Sharn-cut*, 8. Here are ten parishes, all rectorial livings, except *Rollstone*, four of them are livings which, according to the Return, yield about 400*l.* a year amongst them. But the other six are large livings. Let me explain this matter. The Return was to specify the value of no living that was ABOVE 150*l.* a year! Why not? Why not specify the worth of those *above* as well as those *below* 150*l.* a year? Why the reason was, to be sure, to keep from the knowledge of the public, the value of these rich livings.

To proceed, then, here are ten livings, worth, in all probability, more than four thousand pounds a year, to take care of the souls of 152 persons, amounting to about sixteen pounds per soul, per annum. It is monstrous to suppose that these parishes were founded and these churches built, without twenty times the population. In one of the parishes, *Draycot Foliot*, where the living is a large living, too, there is no church at all. The people if they go to church, go somewhere else, and the parson still gets the money. In numerous instances there are no churches at all; but though the church is gone, and the people, too, the fat living remains.

It is impossible to look at these things, and not to see that one part of the nation has been depopulated to increase the population of another part. I have given the list of about twenty parishes here, which have become nearly depopulated. I could give a list of about four thousand parishes in England and Wales, for the present population of which, every man must be convinced that a church would never have been built. Churches, indeed, could not have been built by a population not exceeding that of the present day. How were 70 or 80 or 100 persons to build a church; one-half of them being females, to begin with, and two-thirds of the other half, being babies, boys or old men. How were churches to be built by a population like this? It is, therefore, manifest, that the agricultural population of the country has greatly decreased. There would have been no sense in building the churches; to have built them would have been downright brutal folly, if the population had not been beyond all measure greater than it is now, in the villages throughout the greater part of the country.

When people see new houses, they are apt to think, that they see signs of increase; and this they certainly do see, where they see the *boundaries* of towns and cities extend themselves; where they see whole

towns rising up here and there around this WEN. But, to see new houses building in towns and villages is no sign of increase, any more than it is to see wheat-stacks building in a farm-yard. It is true, these are new stacks; but they only come to replace others that are just taken away. Houses are continually wearing out; and if, upon going through a town or a village, you do not see one new house; one house built this very year; one of these for every forty houses that the town or village contains; you may set down that town or village as being in a *state of decay*. In mere villages where the houses are weak, there ought to be *one new one out of every twenty*; for these frail houses do not last, upon an average, above twenty years.

Let any man take these observations for his guide; let him go through the country towns and villages; particularly those to the westward, once so populous. Let him take notice of the tumbling down houses; of the totally dismantled small farm-houses. Let him look at the little barns, and yards that were formerly homesteads, and that are now become mere cattle sheds. Let him look at that which was the farm-house, but which is now become the miserable abode of two or three labourers and their families, who are perishing with hunger, cold and nakedness, beneath that roof where ease and happiness dwelt, until the accursed paper-money system laid its fangs upon the country. All these small farm-houses have disappeared; and yet the villages have grown smaller and smaller. The accursed paper-money has drawn the wretched people into crowded masses. All the laws have had the same tendency. That mixture of agricultural with manufacturing pursuits, which was so favourable to the health and morals of the people and to their ease and comfort, at the same time; this is gone from the villages and country towns; and the population is gone along with it; and gone, too, to become a sort of slaves, regularly drilled to their work, and kept at it very nearly literally under the lash.

Accordingly, there is scarcely a village, at a distance from fund-holders, manufacturing rendezvouses, watering-places, sea-ports, or barracks: there is scarcely a village at a distance from all these, which contains a *fourth part* of the people that it formerly contained. I have mentioned above twenty parishes by name. In most of these parishes, two or three farmers have come and swallowed up farms, formerly occupied by probably fifty farmers. Nothing is more common than to see a man occupying land, which formed, not more than thirty, forty, or fifty years ago, *twenty farms*. Three, four, or five farms made into one, is a thing to be seen everywhere. And yet, as I observed before, the population of the villages is decreased. In going through a village, in almost any part of the country, except where the funds or the manufacturing establishments have an influence, you are sure to see ten houses almost falling down, for every one that you see building. In numerous instances, I found, in my rides during the last fall, houses quitted, from the danger of their falling down; and I very seldom found that any new house was building in the stead. I went into scarcely any agricultural village, where I did not see the old bricks and other rubbish of a house or two, that had recently stood upon the spot where the rubbish now was. On the outskirts of almost all the villages, you find still remaining, *small enclosures of land*, each of which has manifestly had its house formerly. They are generally in pasture at this time; but, if you look attentively at the ground, you will see unevennesses which show you that here are

the relics of the foundation of houses ; while, if you look at the fences you will see gooseberry, currant, or raspberry bushes, making their appearance here and there. In the middle of such little plots of ground, you frequently see old pear-trees or apple-trees, or the stumps of them remaining. All these are so many proofs of a greatly diminished, and of still diminishing population.

It is possible that as much human sustenance may be produced in these agricultural parishes as there used to be, though the number of hands may be much smaller. It is very well known, that horses and tackle now do, in many cases, what was formerly done by the hand of man. But, that there was more land in cultivation formerly than there is now, nobody can doubt. They produce to us the long list of enclosure bills ; but it is curious enough that they never tell us, that the far greater part of this land was cultivated formerly, without any enclosure bill at all. If the Parliament would lay out a few thousand pounds of our money, in order to ascertain how many hundreds of thousands of acres of land was in cultivation before the Revolution, more than is in cultivation now, I should not grudge that money, as I do the money laid out in Population Returns. However, the great proof ; the *undeniable* proof, of depopulation, throughout a considerable part of the kingdom, is this fact ; that there are nearly a third part of the whole of the churches, which, if the population were the same, when the churches were built that it is now, those churches were built by crazy people. They were built without any reason for building them. Many of them stand within a mile of each other ; and it frequently happens, that the two parishes do not now contain people enough, allowing for sick people, and little children, and for those that must stay at home to take care of the house or of the cattle : it frequently happens that the two parishes do not, if you make these allowances, contain people enough to fill one pew ! It is monstrous, then, to suppose that these parishes have not, in a great measure, been depopulated. How are we to believe that people could have built churches unless there had been numbers sufficient to fill them ? It is not in one, two, or three, but in *hundreds of instances*, that the churches are now *wholly gone* ; and the people are left to straggle to the next parish-church, while the parson, however, takes care to sack the amount of the benefice, notwithstanding the notorious fact, that, when tithes were founded, a fourth part of them was allotted to the building, the repairing and the beautifying of the churches. All this seems now to be forgotten. The churches are, in many cases, suffered to tumble down ; the parson continues to pocket the amount of the tithes ; and the paternal government brags of the increase of its family.

The *size*, the size of the churches ; this alone would be enough to convince any man of sound judgment, that there has been a prodigious decrease in the population of a great part of the kingdom. The curious Return of which I have spoken above, professes to have in view to ascertain *how many people the several churches will hold*. So that, one naturally is inclined to look with a good deal of curiosity to what is said upon this subject, in cases where the population is reduced to a mere nothing. Let us take a little list here. The parish of BREMHILLHAM contains *sixteen* persons altogether. The parish is a rectory. The parson is required to write down, " number of persons they can contain ; " that is to say, number of persons the churches can contain. Now, this parson of BREMHILLHAM, states in his answer, that his church will contain " *the*

population;" that is to say, his church is capable of holding *sixteen persons*, supposing the whole of the people of the parish to be at church at one time. Now, sixteen grown-up men can stand in a space *four feet square*. We know that six can sit in a stage-coach; and yet this parson tells us, that his church, "can contain the population," of his parish. What, then, is there a *double meaning* here? Is there a little bit of the Jesuit played off among us sincere Protestants? The church *can* contain the population; but the pious pastor does not say that it can contain *no more!* But, this was not the question: the question was, *what number of persons they can contain*; that is to say, how many persons can your church contain? That is the amount of the question; and, notwithstanding this, it is stated, in this Return, that the church can contain "*the population*," in the case of scores of parishes, where the population is *under forty*. Perhaps there is not a church in England, the porch of which would not hold twenty men. Certainly not one, the chancel of which would not hold a hundred men, standing upright; and, perhaps, there is not one that would not hold more than three hundred. We have seen above that there are *eight* people living in SHARNCUT, in the Return, the rector (for this is a rectorial living,) says that *his church can hold eight people!* And this he signs with his name; and it is sent by the bishop; and the bishop sends it to the King in council; and the King in council lays it before Parliament. So that, here is the Parliament informed, and here is the nation taxed to pay for the printing of the information, that there is a church at SHARNCUT in Wiltshire, that "*can contain*" eight living souls; a whole eight of them, at one and the same time. After this it must be a pretty beastly people to be guided by these Returns. The thing to remark with regard to this Return, is the cavalier-like impudence of it. It is manifest that the question was intended to get an account of what number each church would contain, when it was sufficiently filled. There was no sense in the question if this was not the object of it; and, yet, here is a man to take his pen and write down the figure eight, against this question, and send it off to the bishop without any ceremony. In all probability his church would contain *several hundreds* of persons. I never yet saw a church that would not. It is very seldom, indeed, that the meanest and most miserable country church is less, in the clear, than fifty feet long. Cut off a bit for a belfry and leave a piece for the communion table, and you have still a room thirty feet long, at least, and from fifteen to twenty feet wide. Two rows of people, sitting on benches up the middle of this room will make three score. There are about fifteen or sixteen pews generally in such a place. It must be a miserable hole that has not a gallery to contain a hundred. Add a few cross benches here and there. But, why need I make any such calculations, when it is notorious, that Methodist meeting-houses, not a quarter part so big as the smallest church in the kingdom, contain two or three hundred persons each.

It is impossible, then, to believe anything in these Returns, if the facts stated make in favour of the parties. When they were compelled to state that the parish contained but *eight* people, and, in other cases, sixteen, twenty, thirty, forty, and so on. When they were putting down these numbers, it would have been awkward to say that the church was capable of containing *two or three hundred persons*; for, that would naturally lead the mind back, as my mind is now led back, to the question: *What were these churches built for?* Then I proceed

to ask; What, in God's name, were the tithes granted for, in cases like these? And, since the population is gone; since there are no souls to take care of; why are there benefices wherewith to maintain parsons? If our population be increasing too fast, why not check it amongst the breed of parsons? If the population be removed, so that the churches are not wanted in the places where they were built, and that churches are wanted in other places; if this be the case, *why tax the people* for the building of new churches? Why not take the amount of the tithes in those parishes where there are no churches now, or from which the population has departed, why not take the amount of these tithes, and expend them on the building of these new churches, and in finding parsons for these new churches? At CATESBY, in Northamptonshire, there are a hundred and seventeen people; the living is a rich vicarage; but there is neither church nor chapel. At STURBY in the same county, which is a rectorial living, which contains thirty-two people, there is neither church nor chapel. At HORNFIELD, and at MARTINSTHORP in Rutlandshire, there is neither church nor chapel. The former parish contains twenty-seven people, and the latter parish contains *five* people. But the livings are worth something. According to the confession of the parson himself the care of the five souls yields him sixty-six pounds a-year! That is to say, twelve pounds, ten shillings per annum per soul! The parish of HASLEBURY in Wiltshire has written against it, as follows: "A rectory: a very small parish, two or three families. No church or chapel: the parishioners go to Box." This Box is an adjoining parish. But it is clear that they must go to the devil, if they had nothing for it but their own church. "*A very small parish,*" the parson says, but he does not say very small tithes. The amount of the tithes is *left blank*. That amount is, therefore, confessed to be *above a hundred and fifty pounds a-year*; this is confessed by the sum being left blank; and it may be six or seven hundreds a-year, and very probably is.

Here, then, we have a pretty scene! Parishes in great numbers, without any churches at all, while the people are taxed to build new churches elsewhere; but while these rectors and vicars still retain all the tithes in the places where they have suffered the churches to tumble down. Nay, while this has been going on; while the churches have been tumbling down, and the parsons receiving the tithes at the same time; while two or three livings have been suffered to be possessed by one and the same parson, a hundred thousand pounds a-year have been voted out of the public money, *for the relief of the poor parsons of this church!* And never have you, PARSON MALTHEUS, proposed to check the breeding of these parsons, or to *leave them* to the law of nature.

To return, for a moment, to the churches, Mr. WHITE, in his account of SELBORNE, observes, that the population of the parish must have been much greater formerly than it was when he wrote, because, says he, the church is now so much larger than is necessary to hold the parishioners. I should stop here to express my acknowledgments to two gentlemen who have had the great goodness to send me a copy, each of them, of Mr. WHITE's book, which I have read with great attention, and in which I have found a great deal of entertainment. Mr. WHITE wrote in the year 1788 or thereabouts. He says that the parish must have been much more populous than it then was, seeing that the church was *much too large for the number of inhabitants*. He says, also, that the burying-

ground was once larger than it is, or, rather, than it was when he wrote. He gives an account of six or seven mills having been, where there was no mill at all, at the time when he wrote. It is curious enough, that, in the Return, of which I have spoken above, which was sent by the bishops to the King in Council, and by the King in Council to the Parliament; in this Return it is stated, that the parish of SELBORNE contains 770 persons; and that the church will contain, 560 persons! This is a droll affair! Here this half-depopulated village has not got a church big enough to hold its people; though, in 1788, Mr. WHITE, the vicar of the parish, said that the church was a great deal too big. Perhaps, indeed, those who made out this Return, might, if you were to put it home to them, say that they meant the church would contain the 560 persons; but that they did not mean that it was not big enough for a parish of 770 persons, seeing that not one-half of the people are ever at church at one and the same time. However, we have, in this case, the *dimensions of the church*, which Mr. WHITE says, leaving out the chancel, is fifty-four feet long and forty-seven feet wide. He says there are three aisles, which, I suppose, are about each forty feet long. A double row seated up these aisles would hold about 240 persons. The area of the church is 2538 square feet. So that, supposing there to be neither gallery nor bench of any sort, here are three square feet and a quarter upon the pavement for every soul in the parish. And yet this Return says that the church will hold 560 people; and if the Return be not perfectly Jesuitical, it must mean that the church will hold no more than 560. Thus, then, we have seen what these Returns are worth; that is to say, we have seen, that they are never to be relied upon in any case, except where they tell against the wishes of the parties who make them.

The size of the churches is a thing of great consequence. We find them, throughout the agricultural part of the country, to be out of all reason too large. I have shown that there are many hundreds of parishes, the whole population of each of which, might be placed in the *porches* of the church. I have given instances of several parishes, the present population of each of which might be put into a stage-coach. I have given instances, or, at least, have stated that there are hundreds and hundreds of parishes, the present population of each of which do not amount to a hundred; and that there are several thousands of parishes, the present population of which does not amount to two hundred. There were about ten thousand churches in England; and, at this very moment, the whole of the present population could, except in those parts where men have been drawn together by the paper-money, be not only accommodated with these churches; but, with the help of a little straw in each parish, actually hidden under the roofs of these churches.

Back I come then, after exhibiting all these very suspicious circumstances relative to these Clerical Returns; back I come to inquire once more, what ground there can be for supposing that the population of England has increased. Here we have a whole list of parishes actually wasting away to nothing. This is a fact that it is impossible to deny; and yet you, and your patrons the Boroughmongers, insist upon it that there is an increase of the population; and, what is more, a great part of the public believe you. This is one of those falsehoods that men tell till they believe it to be true themselves. There have been several of these great *national lies*. And there are several of them now indeed. They are *pieces of property* which the nation seems to claim as its own. An

instance or two may not be amiss: because, at first blush, it appears monstrous to suppose that this population story is a lie. Yet it is a lie; and one that has great practical effect, too. It is at this moment assisting to complete the ruin of a great many farmers. They have read in the newspapers of the increased and increasing population of the country; and they take it for granted that the thing is so. Upon this ground they *expect an increasing demand for their produce!* "Only think of our increasing population!"—This exclamation you hear from them in all parts of the country. So that this population-lie is a thing of great *practical effect*. It is just a thing to suit the present system: it answers the present purpose; and this system sets all consequences at naught.

It is of importance, therefore, to make a regular attack upon this great national lie; in the setting about of which, I will, as I said before, give an instance or two of other pieces of public property of the same sort. One of these is, that the late king made the twelve judges independent of the Crown, by *giving up the power of turning them out at his pleasure*. This is a pure lie. He did no such thing. He did nothing to render them more independent than they were before. Whether they were rendered at all independent by the Act which gave them their places for life is more than I pretend to know. But, at any rate, that Act was passed in the reign of WILLIAM the Third, and not of GEORGE the Third; and the lie of which I have been speaking; this great national lie was never heard of till about the time of PEG NICHOLSON and the pop-gun plot! It was hatched up at that time by the GIFFORDS and BOWLESSES and other anti-jacobin hacks of the day. I myself believed it to be true for a long while. One of these very hacks, talking to me about it in 1801, and perceiving that I was gulled as well as the mass of the people, put me right; and, when I expressed my *surprise*, he said, "'Tis a feather: Old William is dead; and we have a right to take it, and stick it into the cap of one that it will do some good to." When I expressed my wonder at the *boldness* of sporting forth this lie, his answer was, the answer of the stock-jobbing press of the present day; "Who is there to contradict us; who is there that will dare contradict us?"

Another instance is this, that no Englishman can have his liberty or property taken away from him *without consent of his peers*. This is a lie of a great deal more importance than the last. This is a prime piece of national property. So great a lie is it as for its equal never to have been heard of amongst men. In all cases under the game-laws (under which nearly seventeen hundred men get imprisoned in a year); in all cases under the revenue laws; in all cases under the modern law of trespass; in all cases under the vagrant laws; in all cases under the poor-laws; in all cases under the militia laws; in all cases between servant and master, and especially where the master is plaintiff: in all these cases; and in divers other cases, it happens, nine times out of ten, that the punished party, whether by fine, by imprisonment, by hard labour, by whipping; nine times out of ten it happens that the punishment takes place, *without the consent of a jury of any sort!* Yet, so grand a lie is this; so prime a piece of national property is it; so completely is it *part and parcel* of our THING which is the "envy of surrounding nations and admiration of the world;" so grand and so complete is this lie, that it is believed by ninety-nine hundredths of the people of England themselves.

Another great national lie was the reduction of the Debt by the Sinking

Fund. That, however, has been greatly impaired in point of virtue. The *Bank Restriction* was another famous idea. The very word *restriction* itself. The bare invention of that one word was sufficient to immortalize the inventor. For nearly twenty years ninety-nine hundredths of this people believed that the cellars of the Bank were full of chests of gold; that the Bank wished to pay this gold in exchange for its paper; and that the Bank was, very much against its will, *restrained* from doing this.

Now, after having cited these instances, may I not hope that people will attend to what I have to say about this surprising story of the population? You have greatly the advantage of me, Parson. He that has a lie to uphold, and a lie, too, that flatters the vanity of the people, has a decided advantage over his opponent. There has a taste grown up of late years amongst us; a strange taste *to be like the continental powers*: to be one of CASTLEREAGH'S great powers; to have whiskers as curled, spurs as long, swords as broad, rattletraps as noisy, and *population as great!* At the beginning of the French revolution, we very contentedly gave the French three persons for one, which we might do with great safety, because *one Englishman could beat three Frenchmen*. But, somehow or other, after the ever-memorable retreat of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, we discover that there was not this difference in the individuals, when pitted against one another. One of the great maxims of our worthies, is that our *spirits*, as they call them, are always to be kept up; that is to say, it is necessary always to keep us fed with some lie or other, to tickle our vanity, and make us patient, under expense, loss, and defeat. According to this maxim, the population story appears to have been trumped up. When the DUKE of YORK came home from the Helder, and left his army to be ransomed by the giving up of a great many thousands of French sailors, who were then our prisoners of war, the anti-jacobin hacks wrote a song, a bragging boasting song, ridiculing the French and the Dutch, and calling them cowards. This song was actually distributed and sung about the streets *by authority*. It represented the French as having been beaten, and welcomed the Duke home as a conqueror! This was only to keep up the spirits of the people; and the population lie has, doubtless, the same amiable purpose. The empty-headed coxcombs, down yonder, talk about the "British Empire;" being an empire, it must necessarily, have a good many people in it; and, therefore, we have been at work to swell ourselves out, till it is we, and not the French, according to the old song, that are *bursting like the frog in the fable*. In short, to cry up the population; to make the world believe, and particularly to make the duped people of England believe, that there has of late years, been a great increase of population in this kingdom, has been a point constantly laboured at; as constantly as to make them believe, that they were free, and that all other nations were slaves. Thus you hear the Courier newspaper, for instance, observing with all the coolness imaginable, that it could wish with all its heart; such is its love of liberty; such is its innate love of liberty, that it could wish, with all its soul, to see the people of France *as free as the people of England are*; but that it knows too much of human nature to believe the French people *capable of enjoying so much liberty!* Next after the English, the modern English, come a part of the Americans, for cool impudence in this sort of way; and you frequently hear a prig from Virginia or Carolina, or Kentucky or Tennessee, who has, perhaps, let a negro's guts about his heels

half a dozen times : you very often hear one of these prigs observing, coolly as possible, that the French are not yet in a state to *be capable of enjoying liberty* ! I never hear these prigs without thinking that that is a bad law that deprives me of the liberty of breaking their necks : just twisting their heads off as one would twist off a cabbage. Yet, this abominable impudence ; this cool, this placid, this Quaker-like impudence, answers its purpose for *home use*, at any rate. At the present day it does not deceive the French people, the intelligent part of whom really entertain the opinions expressed in my last Register ; but the impudence serves to keep up the cheat in England. It serves to make the people believe, and it does make them believe, that, at any rate, *the French are slaves* ! It communicates that comfort to their kind souls ; and it makes them like the Government for having restored the Bourbons, which has made the French slaves. It is all a lie from the beginning to the end ; but that is no matter : it serves to buoy up the THING ; and that is all that is wanted.

After these instances, are we to believe in an *increase* of our population without any reason for such belief, and after all that we have seen above, tending to an opposite conclusion ? There is no reason why there should have been an increase of population ; and all the proof that we have on this subject, rests upon *three Population Returns*, laid before the House of Commons, and published by the order of that House. According to these Returns, the population, that is to say, the number of persons, in England alone, has increased since the year 1801, from 8,331,192, to 11,261,437 ; that is to say, to speak in round numbers, there has been an addition of *three millions* made ; an addition of three millions to *eight millions in the course of twenty years* ! A falsehood so monstrous as this ; a lie so glaring, never, I believe, was put upon paper before. Out of what cause it arose, is not for me to say ; but mind, here is a country which it is pretended, in these same Returns, did not contain quite five millions of people in the year 1700. Here is this country, which took a *hundred years* to make the five millions into eight millions ; here is this same country making the *eight millions* into *eleven millions*, in the course of twenty years !!! Bang ! Bang ! Bang ! Let the world produce us the like of this if it can. The country had, according to these return-makers, but five millions of people in it in 1700 ; and yet this same country, actually *adds* to its numbers three millions in the course of the *last twenty years* ! And, then, pray, credulous public, do observe, that the numbers increase just as much in the last twenty years, as they increased during a hundred years before ! But, *upon the face of the thing* : without going into any inquiry about it : without any argument or any fact, is it not monstrous to attempt to make us believe that a population of eight millions has swelled up to eleven millions in the course of twenty years, one half of which years have been years of *war*, and the other half years of *distress*, and, during the whole of which, there has been emigration going on from this country to the United States of America, and no emigration from other countries to this ? Is not this a monstrous proposition ? Is it a thing to be believed, though upon the oaths of fifty thousand return-makers ? If we can believe this, we may believe that there may be a hundred millions of people in England in the course of a couple of centuries more. Indeed there must be, if this increase go on ; and why it should not go on, if the present story be true, no man can give us a reason.

Then, if we *take a look back*, we shall find, that in 1600 there could have been only about a couple of million of people in the country; that a couple of hundred years before that there could have been no people at all in the country, or, only two or three pairs turned down as breeders, at any rate; and then, how the devil *came the churches!* They were built *four hundred years before that*; and will you, PARSON, undertake to make us believe that the churches were built without there being any body to go to them; that they were built, too, without hands, and that they bred the people in their bellies; that they made the people, and that the people did not make them? Will you undertake to persuade us to this, Parson? Yet, this you must undertake and you must succeed in it, too, before you can make us believe, that England contained eight millions of people in 1801, and eleven millions of people in 1821.

Upon the face of the thing it is false. If a man were to come and tell you that all his mares had taken to have two foals at a time instead of one; or that they had taken to breed every nine months in place of every eleven months; you would not believe him the sooner for his swearing to it, or for his bringing an account of it upon paper signed by his bailiff and his carter. You would say: No, no, my friend: you are, doubtless, a very honest fellow; but you and your people are all mad. Yet, your population story, is not a bit less incredible than would be this fellow's story about his mares. If we have been increasing at this rate, can you contrive to hatch a reason why the French *should not have increased at the same rate?* Not you indeed. I defy all the parsons that ever sucked down tithe-pig, to give us a reason for believing that the French have not been increasing as well as we. Seeing, therefore, that we have got from eight to eleven millions during the last twenty years, it follows, of course, that the French, who stood estimated at about thirty millions at the time that we had eight, must now have upwards of thirty-seven millions! The rest of the nations of Europe (unless you can show us a reason to the contrary), must have gone on augmenting their population at the same rate. Thus, then, Europe has received more than a fourth of addition to its population within the last twenty years; and it happens, that, just at the end of these twenty years our population-increasing Ministry are proclaiming, that, throughout the whole of Europe, there is an OVER PRODUCTION OF HUMAN FOOD; and that this over production is so great, as to produce a series of calamities, which, in one particularly unhappy part of our own country, has led to *innumerable deaths by starvation!*

Again, therefore, I say, that, upon the face of it, the population story is false. You will say, "WHY; why should all these people make out false Returns?" I do not say that they have all made out false Returns. I do not charge any particular person with making false Returns. I can see motives enough for swelling out the numbers: I see the old frog in the fable plain enough: but this is not my affair: my affair is the fact. There have been three Returns made out. I am about to prove that the first, or the second, MUST BE FALSE: and having shown that, I may, I think, laugh at the third?

The public will observe, that, prior to the year 1801, *there is no proof pretended to be in existence.* All before that time is matter of *estimate*; and those who have read the book of the thief-catching DOCTOR COLQUHOUN, will be able to form a judgment of what sort of work, in a case like this, *estimating* is. In short, it is just what a man pleases to make

it. He wants to come at a certain point. If the basis of his estimate does not bring him to this point, he alters the basis; that is all. But, in the year 1801, we came to an *actual enumeration of the people*. Here there was no estimating. The querists were to go from house to house, they were to take an account of every man, woman, and child, and write it down. From each parish they were to send this account to the Government. Each account was to be signed by the parson, and by the parish officers. Now, then, here was truth, to be sure. In 1811, there came another Return; and, if there be any man in his senses, in England, to deny that one of these two contains a lie, England must contain a more profligately impudent wretch than any other country upon earth.

We are now going to see a piece of lying, which is a real curiosity. The reader will please to observe, that the two Returns were not made out in exactly the same form. The columns in the first Return, as far as they related to numbers of persons, stood thus:—

Persons chiefly employed in agriculture.

Persons chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft.

All other persons, not comprised in the two preceding classes.

Total number of persons.

I beg the reader to pay attention to this; because, as he will soon see, the detection of this great national lie; of this grand, this superb humbug, turns, in a great measure, upon this distribution of persons. Between the year 1801 and the year 1811, I wrote several articles in the Register, upon the subject of the poor-rates and the population. I combated you, PARSON MALTHUS, by the means of this very Return of 1801. Here, said I, is cause enough for the sufferings of the labourers and the increase of the poor-rates. But, stop: I am before my story. I must, before I go any further, state the particulars of the Return of 1801.

Persons chiefly employed in Agriculture	1,524,227
Persons chiefly employed in Trade, Manufactures, and Handicraft ..	1,789,531
All other persons, not comprised in the two preceding classes	5,017,434
	8,331,192
Total of Persons	

Here, said I; here is quite enough to account for the misery of the labouring classes and for the increase of the poor-rates. Here are five millions of idlers to three millions and a third of people doing work of any sort whatever! Here are five idlers to three and a third of working people. No wonder that we see so much misery! And, then, I appeal to you, in the most pathetic strains. "Come come, blessed PARSON MALTHUS, come! Come with thy check-population powers, and do put a "stop to the breeding of these five millions of idlers, lest they, in the "words of Holy Writ, *swallow us up quick!*" But you, PARSON MALTHUS, instead of listening to me, persevered in your project for diminishing the increase of the labourers; and that project went on till, at last, it came out in a sort of tapering dribble, from Lawyer SCARLETT.

However, this was a shocking picture to exhibit to the nation. It was really a horrible sight, to behold *five millions of idlers* sucking away the blood and sweat of three millions of industrious persons. Five drones to three bees was making it the devil of a hive to live in. That famous old lady the Bank of England had brought her family to a fine pass. At

last, the time came for making out *another Return*; and now let us see how that Return was managed. Let us see, also, how it squared with the first Return.

A *new mode* of making out the Return was fallen upon. An *increase of population we were to have, of course!* But, what we had to look at was to see whether the idlers *increased or decreased*. When the new Return came out in 1811, I was in *great haste to get it*; because, having taunted the system so many times with its *five millions of idlers*, I suspected, that the new Return would *cause the number of idlers to diminish*. With great eagerness, therefore, I twirled over the leaves of this Return as soon as I got it. Ah! the Return-makers have been too cunning for me; or, at least, the new Return was calculated to *bother me*. I expected to find the Return made out in the same manner that it was made out before. There were before, agricultural persons, 1,524,227; trade, &c. 1,789,531; all others, 5,017,434. Very well, said I; now let us see, what are the present *numbers of persons* compared with those of 1801. Oh, no! The new Return *took care that I should not see this!* It did not speak of *persons* as before, but of FAMILIES! Why this change? What was it for? The answer will suggest itself to the reader in a minute.

The new Return stood thus:—

<i>Families in Agriculture</i>	697,353
<i>Families in Trade, Manufactures, &c</i>	923,588
<i>All other Families</i>	391,450
	Total of <i>Persons</i> . . . 9,538,827

Here is a pretty change in the space of ten years! The idlers were five millions out of eight in 1801. Consequently the families of idlers would at that time have contained five in number for every three of both the other classes! Pray mark this. If the Return of 1801, had stated families instead of persons, there must have been five families of idlers, to three families and a third of the other classes. In short, something approaching towards *twice as many* families as the two other classes contained. But, what the devil do we find, PARSON, in this new Return? Why we find *more than five times* as many families in the two other classes as in this class of idlers! Ten years before there was but a *million and a half* of agricultural people, while there were five millions of idlers. But, in this new Return, there are almost *twice as many* families of the agricultural people as there are of those of the idlers! Ten years before there was only a *million and two-thirds* of persons in trade, handicraft and manufacture; and there were five millions of idlers; but now behold, there are *nine hundred and twenty three* thousand families of trade and handicraft people; and only, so help me God, *three hundred and ninety-one thousand some odd* families of idlers!

Now, PARSON, *which* was the lie? Of these two Returns which was the lie, PARSON? To be sure, wonderful is the gullibility of this people; and, therefore, they may believe that both Returns were true; or, at least, there are some amongst them that may. But, before they can believe this, they must believe two things; not, that black is white and that white is black; but something a great deal more incredible than that. The increase of the population, during the ten years that we have just been speaking of, is stated at a *seventh*, a pretty good increase; but never

mind that. The labouring classes, must, therefore, *as to number of persons*, have been, when the last Return was made, 3,787,029. So that if the first Return was true, and the last Return also, there must, in 1811, have been, amongst the labouring and trading classes, only *two persons* and the third part of another person to *each family*! That is to say, only seven persons including *lodgers*, to *three families*!

Such a lie was never put into print, not even in a romance, on any other occasion in the world. The monstrous falseness; the prodigious impudence in this case, puts an end, at once, to all argument about the thing. One of these two Returns must be false. No one will deny that one of them is false. Which is the *most* false it would be very difficult to say; and yet, I believe, it must be a bold man indeed who would take upon him to say that the last Return is any truer than the falsest of these two.

I have now, I think, settled the point; not as to what the number of the people of England really is; for that would be very difficult to be guessed at, even to be guessed at, I say, by any of these things that have gone under the name of Returns. But I have settled the point, that the statements in these Returns are not worth a straw. If the two first Returns be true, then, in the year 1811, the persons in the families of labourers, journeymen, farmers, tradesmen, manufacturers and merchants: if those two Returns were true, the persons in a *family* of these classes, could, upon an average, not possibly amount to more than *two* and one-third of another, including lodgers! So that, if those two Returns were true, there could have been no children at all amongst all these classes! Now, we know that this was not so. We know, then, that one or the other or both of these Returns *must have been false*. We know that there was a great national lie somewhere in it. As one of those two Returns was a lie, what reason have we to suppose the *third to be true*, when its result is a statement at war with nature, with reason, with common-sense; when, in fact, it inculcates belief in an impossibility? Upon the face of it, it is false. The more we reflect on it, the more we are convinced of its falsehood. Reason upon it forward or backward; adopt a belief in it; pursue that belief to its consequences; go upwards or downwards; and the conclusion is so monstrous as to make you blush at your credulity. If the second Return and the third Return be true, two more centuries must see the English people swarming like the lice in Egypt; and three centuries back (four centuries after the churches were built), there could only have been a single Adam and Eve turned down to breed! Upon the face of it, again and again I say the thing is a lie. The *Returns*: these only have you to oppose to every thing like reason upon the subject; and one out of the first two of these I have proved to be a lie.

Thus, then, is the whole fabric of delusion demolished. This great national lie will, doubtless, live for some time to come yet; but it has now got a blow. It will not be so successful as it was. It will continue to gull those who like to be gulled; but they are not of a great deal of consequence. I have given the lie a blow, in short, and, in the course of a twelvemonth, I shall have pretty nearly deprived it of its powers of delusion. This, however, is only the *first part* of what I have to address to you. Your doctrine of the *law of nature* is an interesting matter; and especially at this time, when between sixteen and seventeen hundred men in the course of a year, are put into prison for endeavouring to

catch *wild animals*. No small part of these are sent to prison by *parsons*; and yet you, PARSON MALTHUS, are for leaving them to the *law of nature*; that is to say, you are for leaving them to the law of nature when they come to ask for relief. But you say nothing about leaving them to the law of nature when they are in the pursuit of hares, pheasants, and partridges. These matters, however, must be reserved for another occasion. My business, at present, was the demolition of the population lie, in which, at any rate, I have made a very good beginning.

WM. COBBETT.

TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE,

ON

THE STATE OF THE COTTON FACTORY LABOURERS, AND ON THE
SPEECH OF ANDREW RYDING, WHO CUT HORROCKS WITH A
CLEAVER.*

(*Political Register, August, 1823.*)

Kensington, 27 August, 1823.

WILBERFORCE,

I have you before me in a canting pamphlet; and, upon your conduct and character, as developed in that pamphlet, it is my intention to remark fully, at some future time. At present, I shall use it only thus: to ask you what need there was, or what propriety there was, in spending your time in writing and publishing, "An Appeal to the religion, justice and humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire, in behalf of the Negro slaves in the West Indies;" to ask you what propriety, what sense, what sincerity, there could be in your putting forth this thing, in the present state of this country? It is to the inhabitants of the "*British Empire*" that you appeal, in this heap of shameless cant. "*Empire*" in your teeth, you retailer of bombast! The French do not call their country an *Empire*. They, possessing real wealth and strength, are content to call their country what it was always called; that is to say, a Kingdom. Take, therefore, this bombast and make what you can of it. But, your Appeal is to the Inhabitants of this Kingdom; that is to say, to the People of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

NOW WILBERFORCE, what do you want these people to do; you appeal to them for *something*. It is hardly to be believed that you do not want

* The Factory question is one that will be found in detail in the Parliamentary Reports of the two Committees on that subject—one in 1816, procured by the first Sir ROBERT PEEL; the other in 1832 procured by Mr. SADLER, M. P.—The case of the Factory *children* particularly will be found in the Report of the Parliamentary Commissioners in 1833, those Commissioners having been sent into the manufacturing districts to make inquiries. The case of children and adults, with a summary of the history of Factory cruelties, has been embodied in a small pamphlet, by Mr. JOHN FIELDEN, M.P. for Oldham, 1836.

them to do something in consequence of your appeal. You call upon them in behalf of the slaves in the West Indies. In short, this is what you appeal to them for, to cause the "transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition of *free British labourers*." There is a great deal of canting trash; a great deal of lying; a great deal of that cool impudent falsehood for which the Quakers are famed; a monstrous quantity of hypocrisy is there evident in these seventy-seven pages of yours; but this would appear to be the substance; this would appear to be what you want; namely, to make the West India Negro slaves *as well off as the labourers in this kingdom*. As to "*transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition*," and so forth, that is nonsense too beastly to be used by any one but a son of cant. To put your meaning into plain English, it comes to this, that you want the inhabitants of this country and of Scotland and Ireland, to do something that shall make the West India Blacks *as well off as the working part of the Whites* in these countries.

Now, this being your meaning, there is no man who knows anything at all of the real situation of the Blacks, who will not declare you to be totally ignorant of the subject on which you are writing; or to be a most consummate hypocrite. Why do you not give us something of a description of the labours, the lodging, the food, the drink, the state of health, and particularly, of the nature and quantity of the food, and the nature and quantity of the labour, in the West Indies. You do not give us any account of these. You pretend to want the Blacks to be *as free as British labourers*; but you do not tell us what you mean by the word *freedom*. The devil a bit do you make any *comparison* between the lives which the Blacks lead, and the lives which the White labourers lead. When there were a parcel of bothering petitions before the House of Commons last winter, relative to the Black slavery, Mr. JAMES, Member for Carlisle, observed that he was sorry to perceive that, while the Black slaves had so many friends, the poor White slaves, in this kingdom, appeared to have no friends at all in the House. I am, in this letter, about to give some little account of these unfortunate White slaves mentioned by Mr. JAMES, and of the laws which affect them. You talk a great deal about the partiality of the laws in the West Indies. What you say about the inhumanity of these laws is right enough; but have you Wilberforce, have you ever done anything to mitigate the laws which exist in this country with regard to those free British labourers of which you so cantingly talk? Never have you done one single act, in favour of the labourers of this country; but many and many an act have you done against them. In this canting and rubbishy pamphlet, you bring forward in the way of charge against the West India planters and Assemblies, the following: that "the killing of a slave was not to be punished, according to their laws, unless the killing were committed wantonly, or from *bloody-mindedness* or *cruel intention*. And," say you, "lest there should be any disposition to visit the crime too severely, it was specially enacted, that, 'if any negro or other slave, while under 'punishment by his master, or master's order, for running away, or any 'other crimes or misdemeanors towards his said master, unfortunately 'shall suffer in life or member, which seldom happens, *no person what-ever shall be liable to any fine therefore*.'" This is perfectly damnable, to be sure: this is tyranny: here is horrible slavery: the tyrants ought to be stricken down by thunderbolts, or to be otherwise destroyed. But, Wilberforce, listen to me a bit; did you ever hear of a parcel of people,

who were assembled at Manchester on the 16th August, 1819. These were persons whom you call *free British labourers*. Well, then, these labourers had not run away from any masters. They had committed no crimes or misdemeanors towards any masters. About five hundred of them were, nevertheless, killed or wounded: they suffered "*in life or member.*" And pray, WILBERFORCE, was anybody punished for killing and wounding them? Did anybody pay any fines for killing and wounding these free British labourers? Were not those who committed the killing and wounding *thanked* for their good conduct on that occasion? Did you ever object to those thanks? Did you not object to any parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of those who caused that killing and wounding? Well, then, this was all right, was it? The killing and wounding at Manchester was right: the thanking of the killers and wounders was right: it was right to applaud the conduct of the Ministers, and to object to inquiry. I find no fault of anybody about this, mind. I am not discussing this matter now, though this matter will have to be discussed one of these days. But if these things were all right, it being right that all these things should take place with regard to "*free British labourers,*" pray tell us, Wilberforce, why a person should suffer any fine for accidentally killing, for over-punishing unto death, a runaway negro.

You cannot be ignorant, that a coroner's inquest declared that an English soldier died in Yorkshire, last year, in *consequence of having been over-flogged*. This was not a free British labourer, to be sure; but it was a British soldier. Did you ever hear, Wilberforce, of anybody having been *fined*, or having suffered in any way, for causing death to come to that man by over-flogging? This was a parallel case to the one selected by you. The soldier had committed a crime. He was flogged, and died in consequence of the flogging. Nobody was fined for it, nor called to account for it. Well, then, why did you not, in fairness to the West India planters, quote this case? Why did you not show that British soldiers might suffer in life or member while under punishment, and that no persons were liable to fine for it? Why did you not make an appeal to the "*religion, justice, and humanity*" of the nation, in behalf of British soldiers, and of your famously free British labourers at Manchester? You have selected certainly the most odious, the most tyrannical, the most terrible part of the Colonial Code; and yet you see what a pitiful figure you make with it. Before you set about appealing again in behalf of the black slaves, pray say a little something about the two cases that I have just mentioned; and endeavour to recollect the state of the people of Ireland, living, or rather existing, under that renowned law, the Insurrection Act.

However, I am rather wandering from my purpose, it being at present my intention to give some account of the state of the "*free British labourers*" of the cotton factories in the North; and to introduce, and put upon record, the speech of ANDREW RYDING, who, some time ago, cut HORROCKS with a cleaver. Your appeal is, to the inhabitants of this country. You make your appeal in Piccadilly, London, amongst those who are wallowing in luxuries, proceeding from the labour of the people. You should have gone to the gravel-pits, and made your appeal to the wretched creatures with bits of sacks round their shoulders, and with hay-bands round their legs: you should have gone to the roadside, and made your appeal to the emaciated, half-dead things who are there cracking stones to make roads as level as a die for the tax-eaters to ride on. What

an insult it is, and what an unfeeling, what a cold-blooded hypocrite must he be that can send it forth; what an insult to call upon people under the name of free British labourers; to appeal to them in behalf of Black slaves, when these free British labourers; these poor mocked, degraded wretches, would be happy to lick the dishes and bowls, out of which the Black slaves have breakfasted, dined or supped. What! while it is notorious that millions of human beings in these wretched countries never taste of food other than that which is not sufficient to nourish even a poor pig; when it is in evidence before the House of Commons itself, that English labourers, once so well fed, carry even to the field with them cold potatoes instead of meat and bread! Talk, indeed, of "*transmuting the wretched Africans into this condition.*" If the West India planters were to attempt such transmutation, they would speedily have to repent of it. If they were to attempt to give their Black slaves potatoes instead of the Indian meal and pork and rice, which they do give them; if they were to attempt such transmutation, they would soon find, that, to submit quietly to the eating of cold potatoes, men must be under that THING which is called the "*envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the world!*" But, and this brings you to the test, can you produce us any instance of negro slaves *starved to death*? Away with all your trash about "*free British labourers,*" and about "*moral sentiment.*" You seem to question in one place, whether the Blacks be, "*as yet, fit for the enjoyment of British freedom.*" This is nearly in the words of that old canting vagabond, Judge MACKEN, of Pennsylvania, when speaking of the French nation. Fit for the enjoyment of *what*, Wilberforce? You seem to doubt whether they be as yet fit for the enjoyment of this blessed thing. But, surely, they may be fit to be shut up in their huts from sunset to sunrise. A part of these free British labourers are so shut up; and if they transgress, they are, without trial by jury, liable to be transported for seven years. That is pretty well for a British labourer; but, let me bring you back to the point. You never attempt to tell us; you never so much as insinuate, that the Blacks perish or even suffer for want of food. But it is notorious that great numbers of your "*free British labourers*" have actually *died from starvation*; and that, too, at a time when the Minister declared from his seat in Parliament that there was in the country an over-production of food. This is notorious. This can be denied by no one. The devil himself, if he were to come to the assistance of the hypocrites, could not embolden them to deny this fact. This being the case, then; and it being equally notorious that no black slave ever suffered for want of food, will not the care, will not the anxiety of a really humane Englishman be directed towards the Whites, instead of towards the Blacks, until, at any rate, the situation of the former be made to be as *good* as that of the latter. A very large portion of the agricultural labourers of England; a very large portion of those who raise all the food, who make all the buildings, who prepare all the fuel, who, in short, by their labour sustain the community; a very large part of these exist in a state of almost incessant hunger. The *size* of the people is diminishing from this cause. They are becoming a feeble race, they suffer from numerous bodily ailments engendered by the poverty of their food. Their dress is fast becoming nothing but rags; and in short, every hardship and every suffering that labour and poverty and starvation can inflict, are becoming their lot. You know this as well as I do; but instead of being, as I am, engaged in constant endeavours to

put an end to this degradation and suffering, you are constantly endeavouring to perpetuate them. Never do you utter a syllable against any of the measures by which the suffering of the labouring classes has been produced : never do you propose, second, approve of, or in any way give countenance to, anything tending to turn the villanous cold potatoes into bread ; and you do all the mischief which it is in your power to do, by endeavouring to draw public attention away from the real sufferings of the people at home, to the imaginary sufferings of the Blacks. In many respects your charges against the West India planters and Assemblies are false ; and the whole of what you say about them is a tissue of disfigurings and misrepresentings. But, suppose the *whole to be true*. Still it is manifest from your own showing, or, at least, upon the supposition that you have shown all ; it is manifest that your “ *free British labourers* ” are worse off than your Black slaves. This fact alone is sufficient to characterise you and your endeavours. But my charge against you is this : that you do the labourers of England great harm, or, at least, all the harm in your power ; that you not only do them no good ; that you, the great canter and noise-maker about humanity, never seem to admit that they have anything to complain of ; but, on the contrary, that you describe their situation as desirable, by putting it in contrast with that of the Blacks, by the use of the words *free* and *freedom*, as applicable to their situation ; and in short, by every trick that the invention of a crafty political hypocrite can furnish.

Thus far by way of preface to the speech of ANDREW RYDING, which speech I think it my duty to put upon record, as most strongly illustrative of the tendency of that system which is “ *the envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the world* ; ” of that system of which you are the eulogist ; of that system, for the blessed enjoyment of which (so elevated does it cause human beings to be) you seem to doubt whether even your beloved Blacks are as yet fit. I shall have a good deal to say, by-and-by, upon the matters contained in this most eloquent speech of ANDREW RYDING. At present, and before I insert it, I have only a few words to say with regard to the occasion that brought it forth.

Some time ago, the newspapers informed us that ANDREW RYDING, a cotton-spinner of Preston in Lancashire, had attacked and wounded HORROCKS, who is a big manufacturer at that place, and who is also a Member of Parliament. The vile newspapers called RYDING an *assassin*, just as they called the fellows who, in derision, threw a child's rattle at WELLESLEY. However, RYDING has been tried *for his life*, at the late Assizes at Lancaster. The account of this trial, though very likely imperfect enough, has let us into the history of the cause of this attack upon HORROCKS. In the prisoner's most interesting and most eloquent speech we have this cause most fully stated. There was, it appears, a lawyer by the name of JONES, who cross-examined the witnesses for the prisoner. This Mr. JONES did, it appears, entreat the prisoner to *desist* from general observations ; but the prisoner said, “ I beg that the counsel will allow me to choose for myself.”

It is necessary to premise farther, that HORROCKS is partner with one MILLER, and that they are enormously big manufacturers at Preston, for which place HORROCKS is a Member of Parliament. The *turn-out* of which the prisoner speaks, was to prevent a lowering of wages amongst the spinners. The minute description which the prisoner gave of the sufferings of these poor men and their families was, as will be seen, not inserted by the reporter. This must have been a very important part of

the speech, and it ought to have been inserted. However, I take the speech as I find it reported in the *Morning Chronicle*, hoping that the public will attend to every part of it. It is a speech of much greater importance than that delivered, the other day, by the Lords' Commissioners, in the House of Lords; and it forms a pretty good commentary on the boasts about "envy of surrounding nations, and admiration of the world."

"The case was here closed for the prosecution, and Mr. Justice BAYLEY having intimated to the prisoner that the time had arrived for him to offer anything he had wished to communicate, his Counsel being only allowed to examine witnesses.

"The PRISONER replied with a firm tone, that he had much to offer—much to dwell upon; but the only difficulty, and he trusted his Lordship would remove it, was where he was to begin. Am I, said he, at liberty to begin when I first conceived the subject—when the thought entered my mind, or am I to begin at that time when the thought was put into execution?

"Mr. Justice BAYLEY.—You must not advise me; it is not your province. You have your own Counsel, and consult with him; by so doing you will be better prepared to enter on your defence.

"PRISONER.—All I demand, or rather wish to be informed of is, am I at liberty to begin where I like in the course of this transaction?

"Mr. Justice BAYLEY.—Most certainly where you like; take the advice of your Counsel, and take your own time.

"PRISONER.—Then, Gentlemen, I shall describe the whole thing from the beginning.

"The PRISONER resumed. These are the facts. The first time the thought occurred to me of attacking Mr. Horrocks, was *at the turn-out two years past*, and from that time how it continued to gain a footing in my mind. Both Mr. Horrocks and Mr. Miller were unknown to me personally, but I made every exertion subsequently, both to know and see who they were; and the result of my information was, *that they two were the sole cause of the falling-off in the wages of the spinners*. Everything I heard or learnt added to that conviction. I was then spinning for Mr. Kay. We were in the habit of asking his Manager, who reduced the wages ten per cent. The unequivocal answer was, *that it proceeded from Mr. Horrocks*, at a Meeting of the Masters. We were told that Mr. Kay and Mr. Paley both objected to the fall, but still the fall took place. The Manager told us what occurred at that Meeting of the Masters; we found that many of the Masters declared that it would have been better for the men to be dropt (reduced in wages), for they were receiving too much. Our uniform question was, *Who is the cause?* The Manager answered, sometimes with a laugh, that Mr. Horrocks was, and that it was *agreed that all the Masters should lower as he did*. It was asked by us, Whether the Masters allowed Mr. Horrocks to be their head, and act as leader over them? The Manager laughed but said nothing. After turning the subject over in our minds, *we all agreed to turn out*, and to resist a decision which bore so heavily upon us. The factory of Mr. Horrocks, as well as those of the other Masters, stopped,—that is, not that his workmen deserted him, but because they would not work in our room at Mr. Kay's factory, when we went away. We had two meetings at the Green Man, in Preston, where we agreed to strike for the ten per cent. reduced. There are regulations in all factories, by which a workman is bound to give the master a month's notice before he quits the wheel, and, *nevertheless, Mr. Horrocks' people were turning off the men without any notice at all*, because the men refused to go to work in another factory, and for *thus refusing*, there are at this moment some of these men *suffering imprisonment for two months* in the House of Correction at Preston. The men were determined, and stuck by their resolution, and would not work for some time. We remained out three weeks, and finding on the third week that men were procured from one factory to work in another, some of us went back to our wheels at Mr. Kay's. It was under such circumstances that we judged it proper to return.

"On our return, we understood that Mr. Kay wished to examine us apart, and that he would take no advantage of what any man said. But he examined us in a body, as one might say. He first questioned a man called Naylor, and said,

'Now, do you deserve anything, Naylor? What ought you to get for your voyage? You are a drunkard and an idle fellow, and shall have no loom here.' Naylor cried, but Mr. Kay added, 'So you went delegating and borrowing money for these people, and abusing me every where; for that you shall not work here.' Such was the treatment of Naylor. Then came Wilson's case. *He was also abused and denied work.* The third man used so was Hodges, and he was also called idle and drunken, although I solemnly believe (whatever was the fact as to the other two) that Hodges had not drank liquor for five months. It is not my intention to say that he was never addicted, but I know that the Methodists (*I do not belong to them*) got hold of him, and he thence dropt liquor; for he himself told me that he would try how his body would fare by giving it up for a year, and he was in the act of that trying when this charge of drunkenness was made against him. I know that he never, for some months, tasted a second pint of beer; and, as to spirits, I well knew he took none. When I knew that, I went forward to Mr. Kay, and said what was true of the man at that present time. For so doing I was taunted by Mr. Kay, who said: 'Oh! I suppose Hodges gave you more than your share of the subscription-money at the meetings, or an additional glass of ale or grog.' I answered, 'Why speak so, Mr. Kay; do I deserve it from you? I do not believe Hodges would bribe any one; and, even if he were capable, why do you suppose that I am a man to be bribed over or won by such means?' I said so because his Manager had often told me I was the only honest and not cheating spinner in the factory. I was called by him '*his honest man.*' I answered, 'Call me not a man, for I am not yet'—being under twenty-one years of age. It was thus Mr. Kay wanted to make Hodges out a drunkard, and me a rogue; and acting thus at the very time when *all the Masters had bound themselves by a solemn oath* (though complaining of the *combination of the men*), as I believe—at all events, if not by an oath, they bound themselves by *their signatures* to forfeit a penalty of three hundred pounds (which I have been told has been in some instances paid by Masters not agreeing). *This worked upon my mind*, it perplexed and confused me. *I knew not what to do to obtain justice*; I prayed to the Almighty sometimes on my knees, before I lay down on my bed. Sometimes in the bed itself (for, my Lord, it is my habit to pray one way or the other every night) *to guide me how I ought to act in this perplexity. I never injured any man.* I had no disposition to murder or harm any person, having no inclination to be unjust; but with the thought I could scarcely sleep an hour, I awoke before five o'clock the next morning. The thing stuck in my mind. It is false to say that I said I would shoot him; my words were, that I might shoot him. I believed that Masters who treated their workmen thus *ought to suffer something.* These were my thoughts in April 1821, at the time of the turn-out. I then worked with Mr. Kay; I was also a Member and one of the Committee of the Preston Union. We met at the Green Man, and at one of these meetings (but remember I was not present), Walton, the constable, suddenly came in upon the people, and seized their books, without producing any warrant or authority whatsoever. I was on my way to the meeting when he did so, and I met some of the men running away; I cried out, 'You cowards! what are you about, to suffer any man to treat you thus? Return, and compel him to give back your books; for what purpose do you thus fly?' They went back, caught Walker by the throat; a scuffle arose, and one man had his coat torn from his back; the constable had thrown the books out of the window, but his throat was let loose upon a positive pledge of getting the books back. They were sent back on the following day. This occurrence took place in June, 1821. Soon after that Mr. Kay sent for him; I said, 'Thou pretendest to be a friend of the poor, but thou art their bitter enemy;' I hoped I was not, and inquired why he sent for me [here the prisoner adverted to a charge made against him for spoiling his work, which he denied], and why it was that I was discharged from the factory. [The prisoner then detailed how he moved about for work at different places, Warrington and Manchester, &c. till the end of the year 1822.] Having been *attacked with illness*, I returned home from Manchester last spring; I certainly did bid for pistols at an auction-room, but why I did so, I cannot tell. Had I the money, I would have bought them, although if I really wanted the money I could have got it. *The ill treatment of the men by the masters still prevailed in my mind*; I could not get quit of it; *I could not work as I did before*; I often spoiled my work. The thought took hold of me, I was thinking of it while I worked, and

that was the reason why I could not work as well as I did before, for spinning requires constant close attention. What occasion had I for pistols? I never fired one in my life. I have fired a gun. *I wanted to punish or be revenged on both the masters who personally did the injury; but murder, or intention to murder, never entered my mind. I have not told my stronger reason for wishing to punish them. Well, to do it shortly; the three men I told you of were tried at Preston Sessions, and punished with imprisonment for two months in the House of Correction, where one of them is yet; and though very poor, they were condemned to pay the costs of the law prosecution; that was from twenty to one hundred and fifty pounds!!! It was my firm resolve to do nothing like a coward. Whatever I should do, I determined to do in the face of day, and before the eyes of the world. As the cause of the misery I at length resolved to attack Mr. Horrocks, but how to do it was the subject of my consideration. I at first was inclined to strike him with a stick; then I was disposed to slap him with my fist; but then, thought I, I shall only be brought before the Sessions at Preston, where of justice I shall get no part, because he is a rich master and I am a poor workman. It was this reflection that induced me to attack him with some weapon that should cut him, but not destroy life. By doing so, I knew well that I should be tried for my life; but then, thought I, that trial will take place before the country at Lancaster, where a hearing will be allowed me, to show to the world the oppression, and the persecution, and the injustice of these masters, and to ascertain whether the Government under which we live will permit to these masters every sort of combination, at the time when if the workmen start at a single meeting, the masters are permitted to treat them at their own will and pleasure. [The prisoner here entered into a description of the particular sufferings attending the imprisonment of the men he mentioned, and of the conduct of a gentleman named Backhouse, who wanted, he said, to inveigle him into the prison, to catch him into a stratagem that failed, because the magistrates refused to go to the prison to examine the men, but sent for them at the Bull Inn.] This treatment of my fellow-workmen enraged me very much, and I felt it called and claimed revenge in some way for the calamity so inflicted on my fellow-creatures. There was no justice, I saw plainly, for the poor man, though it had been often told to us, that the law of this country was equal to the poor and to the rich. With that impression firmly rooted in my mind, I took out the cleaver, not intending to kill but to cut; I went to Church with the expectation of meeting Mr. Miller with the Corporation; I did not think to meet Mr. Horrocks, for I was informed that he was confined to his bed, and so ill, indeed, as to have made his will. I felt the cleaver, and found that it was not sharp. I approved of its being so, because it would bruise or cut, but not kill. It was my intention to do him bodily harm. Having left the Church because Mr. Miller was not there, on the Church-terrace I saw Mr. Horrocks; I advanced before him, and conceived he was the man; I followed after him, though with no determined purpose. It is very correct that I well know what I have done, but I did not at the time know what I meant to do. I did not mean to hit him on the head, but on the shoulder; on the head, however, he was hit, though it was not my intention. Mr. Horrocks has told you what I did; I do not deny it; but now it is for you to say to the world whether or not you think I am guilty of murder, or that I was influenced in the way laid down in that indictment. I shall trouble you, my Lord and Gentlemen, no farther, but only to thank you for the attentive and kind attention you have given to me."*

This speech speaks for itself pretty well; but many of my readers do not fully understand the nature of the Combination-law here alluded to. That law ought, however, to be understood by every man in the country. Within these five or six months, the nature of the Game-laws has been made known to the country. Those laws and the New Trespass-law were but very imperfectly known before the date of Mr. DELLER'S Petition, and of Lord CRANBORNE'S Bill. Now, however, the nature of these laws is pretty well known. The Combination-law is not yet sufficiently known. Let us see, then, what it is; for had it not been for this law, there would, 'in all probability, never have been any of those things which finally led to RYDING'S attack upon HORROCKS.

The Combination-law was passed in the year 1799; that is to say, in the thirty-ninth year of the reign of the "*good old King*." Before he had blessed us with another year's reign, that Act was repealed and another passed in its stead. This last Act, which is now in force, was passed on the 29th of July, 1800. The first Act sets out with saying, "That great numbers of journeymen, manufacturers and workmen have, by unlawful meetings and combinations, *endeavoured to obtain advance of their wages*." The Act keeps on talking of unlawful combinations, and illegal purposes; but then it takes care, in the very first clause, to declare such meetings and combinations *to be illegal*. After this, it goes on jovially; and enacts the punishments which are to attend the commission of such illegal doings. In other words, it first makes the thing criminal, and then allots the punishment. That punishment is imprisonment, in the common gaol, or in the House of Correction; and that, too, *without any trial by jury*. "*Lord ERSKINE and trial by jury: with nine times nine*." Of such stuff as this are the minds of the stupid asses made of, who give their money into the hands of HOBHOUSE and Company for the support of the cause of liberty in Spain.

Well, WILBERFORCE; the combiners are to go to gaol or to the House of Correction, to the former for not more than three months, and to the latter for not more than two months, for the first going off. *Two justices of the peace*, who are appointed and displaced at the pleasure of the Ministers; two of these men are to hear, determine and sentence, *without any trial by the peers of the party*. It being very difficult to get proof of this combining for the raising of wages, there is a clause in the Act compelling the persons accused to give evidence against themselves or against their associates: If they refuse, these two justices have the power to commit them to prison; there to remain, without bail or mainprize, until they submit to be examined and give evidence before such justices.

Now, you will observe, WILBERFORCE, that this punishment is inflicted in order to prevent the workmen from uniting together; and by such union, to obtain an addition to their wages, or, as in the case of RYDING and HORROCKS, to prevent their wages from being reduced. Every man's labour is his *property*. It is something which he has to sell or otherwise dispose of. The cotton spinners had their labour to sell; or, at least, they thought so. They were pretty free to sell it; before this Combination-law of 1800. They had their labour to sell. The purchasers were powerful and rich, and wanted them to sell it at what the spinners deemed too low a price. In order to be a match for the rich purchasers, the sellers of the labour agree to assist one another, and thus to live as well as they can; till they can obtain what they deem a proper price. Now, *what was there wrong in this? What was there either unjust or illegal? If men be attacked, either in the market or in their shops; if butchers, bakers, farmers, millers be attacked, with a view of forcing them to sell their commodities at a price lower than they demand, the assailants are deemed rioters, and are hanged!* In 1812, a poor woman, who seized, or rather, assisted to seize, a man's potatoes in the market at Manchester, and, in compelling him to sell them at a lower price than that which he asked for them: this poor woman, who had, very likely, a starving family at home, *was hanged by the neck till she was dead!* Now, then, if it were a crime worthy of death to attempt to force potatoes from a farmer, is it a crime in the cotton-spinner to attempt to prevent others from getting his labour from him at a price lower than he asks for it. It

is impossible; statutes upon statutes may be passed, but it is impossible to make a man believe that he has fair play, if farmer's property be to be protected in this manner, and if it be a crime, to be punished by imprisonment, without trial by jury, to endeavour to protect the labourer's property.

This Combination Act does, however, say, that the "*masters shall not combine against the workmen.*" Oh! well then, how fair this Act is! And what did RYDING mean, when he talked about the *partiality* of the law? What did he mean by saying that there was no law for the poor man; that there was no justice; that the masters could do what they pleased without being punished? Why, did he ever read this law? Does he know the contents of the fortieth year of the *good old King, chapter 106*? Does not this law say that all contracts between masters and other persons for reducing the wages of men; does not it say, in short, that all such combinations of masters against workmen, "shall be, and the same "are hereby declared to be, *illegal*, null and void, to all intents and "purposes whatsoever?" Does not the law say this; and does not it empower the two justices to *send the masters to the common gaol and the House of Correction*? No, the devil a bit does it do such a thing! No such a thing does it do. However flagrant the combination; however oppressive; however cruel; though it may bring starvation upon thousands of persons; though it may tend (as in numerous cases it has tended) to produce breaches of the peace, insurrections and all their consequences; though such may be the nature and tendency of these combinations of the masters, the utmost punishment that the two justices can inflict, is a *fine of twenty pounds*! But, and now mark the difference. Mark it, WILBERFORCE; note it down as a proof of the happiness of your "*free British labourers*:" mark, that the masters cannot be called upon by the justices to GIVE EVIDENCE AGAINST THEMSELVES AND THEIR ASSOCIATES. Mark this, you who have so much compassion for the Blacks. This is the happy state to enjoy which you seem to be almost afraid that the Blacks are, as yet, not quite fit! The "*transmuting* of the wretched Africans into the condition" of these cotton-spinners; these *free* British cotton-spinners, the elevating of them, as you call it, might, indeed, be apt to turn their poor shallow brains. You are for giving them, "*free scope* for their industry and for their *rising* in life." You are for giving them an interest in defending the community. To be sure, these cotton-spinners have, living under this Combination-law, a very free scope for their industry; a great deal of chance of rising in life; and a monstrous deal of interest in defending the community! The cotton-spinners are not, however, so beastly; such complete brutes as not to be able to discover something of the nature of their real situation.

I shall not stop, upon this occasion, to ask whether you, Wilberforce, know anything about the passing of this Combination-law. I shall not ask, how such a law came to be passed; for there is no man in his senses that does not clearly see the reason for passing it. But, I shall proceed now to give, in addition to what we have in the speech of ANDREW RYDING, some account of these *free* British labourers to the enjoyment of similar blessings with whom you are anxious to elevate the Blacks. There has been, for many years past, an almost continual struggle between the cotton-labourers and their employers. Recently there has been, if there be not at present, a struggle of this sort going on at Bolton in Lanca-

shire. The workmen, in answer to one of their assailants who calls himself *Boltoniensis*, have published a statement, from which I make the following extract. In all human probability, no redress will be obtained by these people. They, however, have published this statement of their case. It is dated on the 15th February 1823, and published at Manchester, by J. PHENIX, No. 12, *Bow-street*. Read it, WILBERFORCE, and then go back to the WEST INDIES, collect a parcel of Black people together, and offer them a comfortable situation amongst these "free British labourers." The things related are so monstrous, so horribly degrading; so beyond all measure cruel and insulting to the poor people, that I could fain believe them not to be true. However, here is the account, and the reader will, when he has gone through the humiliating detail, be, with me, convinced, that shocking as it is, it is true.

Boltoniensis says, "The reports respecting fines, a shop, &c. are false; and that the whole of the fines in the year 1822, including what was charged for broken and lost skewers, amounted only to 8s. 0½d. each spinner, or something less than 2d. per week. It is easy to tell this to the public, who cannot disprove it: but the public will at once see, that if an individual is fined, the fine falls on that individual, and is not borne by the rest of his shopmates: therefore, average in such cases, may be easy to *Boltoniensis*,—not to the sufferer.

"A list of fines at Tyldesley; and the heat from 80 to 84 degrees;

Any spinner found with his window open	1s.
Any spinner found dirty at his work	1s.
Any spinner found washing himself	1s.
Any spinner leaving his oil-can out of its place	6d.
Any spinner repairing his drum-banding, with his gas lighted ..	2s.
Any piecer spilling water on the staircase, from a degging-can ..	1s.
Any spinner slipping with his gas lighted	2s.
Any spinner putting his gas out too soon	1s.
Any spinner spinning with gas-light too long in the morning	2s.
Any spinner having his lights too large, for each light	1s.
Any spinner heard whistling	1s.
Any spinner having hard ends hanging on his weights	6d.
Any spinner having hard ends on carriage-band	1s.
Any spinner being five minutes after last bell rings	2s.
Any spinner having roller laps, no more than two draws for each roller lap	6d.
Any spinner going further than the roving room door, when fetching rovings	1s.
Any spinner being sick, and cannot find another spinner to give satisfaction, must pay for steam, per day	6s.
Any spinner found in another's wheel-gate	1s.
Any spinner neglecting to send his sweepings three mornings in the week	1s.
Any two spinners found together in the necessary, each man	1s.
Any spinner having a little waste on his spindles	1s.

"[All these fines are as easy to be made as the underling can scratch his pen; and it is entirely at his humour or caprice.]

"At Tyldesley, they work fourteen hours per day, including the nominal hour for dinner;—the door is locked in working hours, except half an hour at tea time;—the work-people are not allowed to send for water to drink, in the hot factory;—and even the rain-water is locked up, by the master's order, otherwise they would be happy to drink even that.

"The public has seen the fines, of which the spinners at Tyldesley are perpetually in jeopardy, and by which (some of them inconsistent, others contradictory) the poor people's earnings are extracted before they receive it. One poor sick man was stopped 4s. because he could not work. *Boltoniensis* may laugh at these matters, and call them trifles; because he tells the public, when averaged, they are but a trifle. The public do not inspect the books; if they did, they would find that the earnings are exaggerated, and the fines depressed by him, as the following few cases, out of many others, will show distinctly:

"A person, who shall be nameless, about the end of 1821, or beginning of 22, span a set of 150 hanks, weighing 19lbs. for which he received nothing:—another person, about same time, span a set of 90 hanks twist, which was wested, with loss to the said person of 24s. and upwards:—another, about same time, was served in the same manner, and suffered the same loss:—another suffered in the same manner, with 80's twist, but his loss was only 21s. or rather better. I must go on,—but the next person, who span 60 hanks twist, was fined 20s.; but, rather than pay it, he left, and so obtained it:—the next span 110 hanks twist, and was abated for roller-laps 10s.:—my next example is curious; a person was fined for roller-laps, by Mr. —, 7s., and the officer, who was in another room, consequently did not see the said roller-laps, was fined 5s.:—last, but not the least sum, a poor carder was fined 10s. Next comes the poor engineer, who was fined 20s.; but the poor man, who knew he had done his duty, resolved rather to quit the employ. Accordingly he packed up his trifles, and was about to decamp; but his trifles were stopped, and he subjected, at last, to the fine.

"*Boltoniensis*, the advocate for abuses, mentions a shop, respecting which false reports had been circulated; but he does no more than say, the whole of the hands have been uniformly paid in cash every fortnight, without the least restraint.—This is perhaps true; except as to the fines, &c.—But this does not say *there was no shop*.

"That Mr. S. keeps a shop is undeniable: that he is tenant to the employer is as true; and pays 50*l.* per year rent for a shop five yards square, and a kitchen and house part six yards square. The other parts of the house are a warping room, a parlour furnished, and a bed-room with two beds. The warping-room, parlour, and bed-room, are the landlord's, or the master's, who also lets the cellar for 2s. 5*d.* per week; and, that no avenue of gain may be missed, the very passage is appropriated to a butcher of West-Houghton, who *allows the master 15 per cent. of his gain*, by selling flesh to the work-people.—As to the shop, the articles sold are as dear as at any small retail shop in the neighbourhood, and dearer than they can be had at many places: particularly wearing apparel. As to the propriety of this shop, it is not so easy to say; but facts will speak for themselves.—The master of the factory does *not force his workmen to buy at the shop*; but if any buy at another shop *he is challenged, and threatened to be turned off*. If any workman's wife purchase but a trifling matter at another shop, (which they would not do if this afforded equally cheap and good) Mr. S. tells the bookkeeper, and the latter says to the workmen, that the master *will not allow such work*, and they must tell their wives neither to go to another shop, *nor give saucy language to the shopkeeper*, for the master will not allow it.

"That persons are sent from Bolton regularly, at stated times, to inspect, overhaul, and take stock; at this shop, is certain; which common sense would call a propriety, but at any event, a large interest flows from it, beside extortionate rent. The public will judge for themselves, but much more might be added.

"Amongst the many reports circulated, false or true, *Boltoniensis* has not taken notice of one; which is pretty common, and no less true; namely, the extravagant charge made for house-rent, at the healthy, plentiful, and cheap district already quoted; and the public will see, that whatever is cheap there, *rents are not*. Cottages of exceedingly small dimensions are let to the workmen at the factory, at 9*l.* 2s. per year; but they have the rent stopped, or rather, they *pay it each fortnight*. A cellar is 2s. 6*d.*, and if a house or cellar be empty, and a workman comes to work, if he have another house or cellar, he must *pay rent for the empty one*, whether he occupy it or not; and they have also to bear every species of imposition *without grumbling*; or if any thing like that be heard, they are discharged. It may seem strange, yet it is true, that one spinner had to pay rent for one of these habitations a whole year before he saw the key, or had possession; he had it afterwards, but set it to another for six months longer. Sometimes a spinner may be ill, as all men are by times; if a person come from Bolton or elsewhere, to occupy those sick wheels, as they are termed, though the sick person has an habitation, yet the person who spins for him must pay for one, if there is any empty. People bear with these impositions for the sake of employ; who then can suppose them idle, or that they seek or crave exorbitant wages? Their earnings go from whence they came, and enrich those who employ them. From the account already given, it will be seen that they have no time to make away their earnings in extravagance. Why then should they not live? Why should masters muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn?

"All that was wanted by the Tyldesley spinners was to be paid as other spinners were for the same kind of work; their peculiar heavy charges, on many accounts, as has been already shown, required it; and, as to the concluding observation of *Boltoniensis*, respecting whether, if there were any room for an advance of wages, it should be given to the spinner or the weaver? To this it may be proper to observe, and every weaver of sense will observe it, that the insinuation is merely to cajole the weavers, and no more. They are aware that no good ever came from that quarter, therefore the idea of robbing Peter to pay Paul, is insignificant, like its author; as advance of wages is not the argument, but an uniformity with other masters.

"To close the whole subject, which is merely done to give the impartial public an accurate view of the case and its bearings, it is hoped that the peculiar hardships which spinners have to undergo in their employ, cooped up in factories heated by steam for fourteen hours in each day (save the nominal dinner-hour), during which they are subject to such rules as have before been related, and at night in winter they have to inhale with every respiration the *effluvia of the noxious gas mixed with steam*; and the whole day, *the dust and cotton flyings*, which, with incessant labour, renders them old men when others are hale and strong; then, unless they have been peculiarly careful, they can turn to no business, but pine in a workhouse.

"The spinners wish well to their masters,—they grudge them not their gains; but if the golden rule of 'Do to others as you would wish them to do unto you,' had been observed, then these would not have appeared."

That, then, WILBERFORCE, is the state of your "*free British labourers.*" Look at the fines! See the crafty invention for mulcting the poor creatures of their earnings. Think of the horrid state of things when a fine for the *two men being together*, can be thought of as a thing necessary to be imposed! Think of a fine, amounting to a large part of a week's wages, for a man's opening a window to get a breath of cool air, after having been shut up for many hours in a heat of from eighty to eighty-four degrees! Look at the regulation to prevent the thirsting creatures from drinking even the rain-water! Look at the SHOP: in short, look at all the artifices, all this ingenious mixture of force, menace, and fraud: look at the wretched creatures: look at their miseries: look at their perishing and emaciated frames: then look at your fat and laughing, and singing and dancing negroes and negresses; and then believe, if you can; flatter yourself, if you are able, that we shall think you a man of humanity, making, as you do, such a bawling about the imaginary sufferings of the latter, and saying not a word about the sufferings of the former, who are your own country-people, who are living under your very nose, and with whose miseries and degradation you must be acquainted.

Adverting, now, to the trial at Lancaster, it is curious to observe, the verdict upon this occasion: it was this, "*Guilty; but of unsound mind.*" And I have read that RYDING has since been sent to the Lunatic Asylum of the county! It is very curious, too, that, from the beginning of the trial, there appeared to be no pressing for the capital punishment. The execrable newspaper, called the *Preston Chronicle*, had, it seems, published some most infamous statements relative to what was ludicrously called the *assassination*. The prisoner observed, that when he was at the house of MILLER (partner of HORROCKS), MILLER's wife refused him a glass of water; but that the husband said, "Let him have it, poor man, he has only a short time to live." Somehow or other, there appeared not, however, any disposition to bring him to the gallows. His mother and father were called by his counsel to prove him insane. He reproved his mother most severely for what he called her false swearing. Her evidence, however, was received with the greatest indulgence, and even with respect.

Those who have read the speech with attention will need little assistance to enable them to form a correct judgment with regard to the state of his mind. The strangest madman in this world he must have been : for he intended to do everything which he did, and he produced all the effects which he intended to produce. "I knew," says he, "that if I cut him I should be tried for my life : I knew that that trial would take place here, and would be heard of in all parts of the country. I knew that, in this way, I could bring the case of the injured workmen fully before the country ; and that we should then see whether the Government would support the masters in their doings against the men !" Did ever a madman speak thus before ? Perhaps it is a peculiarity belonging to the "Lower Orders," that they become possessed of great talents when they are mad. Be this as it may, I know of a great many very pretty gentlemen, who are not generally thought to be insane, and the whole of whose skulls do not, in my opinion, contain as much sense as there manifestly is in the "unsound mind" of this single cotton-spinner.

The trial was, on the part of the prosecution, carried on in the most quiet manner possible. In the report, there is no speech given to Lawyer SCARLETT, who opened the business. Who selected the counsel for the prisoner I cannot tell ; but he appears to have been extremely anxious that the prisoner should go into no matter of a general nature. Into that matter, however, he went ; and his speech is, perhaps, the best commentary that could possibly be made upon the Combination-Law ; upon that law, which, for combining to raise their wages or to keep up their wages, punishes the workmen with imprisonment in the common gaol or the House of Correction, and which, for combining to lower the men's wages, or to keep them down, punishes the rich masters with a fine of twenty pounds : that law ; that never-to-be-forgotten-law, which compels the workmen, under pain of unlimited imprisonment, to give evidence against themselves or their associates ; and which calls upon the combining masters to give no evidence against themselves or against their associates ! Why was the clause passed to compel the workmen to give evidence against themselves and their associates ? Because, without such power of compulsion on the part of the Justices, it would be next to impossible to get at evidence. How, then, if such were the difficulty to get at evidence in the case of the workmen, numerous as they necessarily must be, and exposed to temptation by their poverty : if this compulsory clause were necessary in their case, how much more necessary in the case of the masters, comparatively few as they must be, in point of numbers, and wholly unexposed to temptation to divulge the secrets of the combination ? The consequences have been such as might have been expected.—Who ever heard of a *master* being punished under the Combination Laws ? And yet you, WILBERFORCE, with all these facts before you, have the shamelessness to put forth an appeal to the inhabitants of this country, calling upon them to do something towards "transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition of *free* British labourers." Go to ANDREW RYDING ; make your appeal to, and get your answer from, him.

It is surprising to observe the quietness with which this affair of RYDING and HORROCKS has gone off. When it was first heard of, the base London press gave tongue, and was almost in full cry. Murderer, assassin, and all sorts of hard names were poured forth, with very little remorse. The traders of the press had the offender hanged, so clearly

that you could almost see him hanging before you. It is curious to perceive how quietly they let the curtain drop now. All the trash that they have received or pretend to have received from Spain and Portugal for the last year, have been of far less importance than the speech of this cotton-spinner; and yet they are as quiet as mice about it. If he had been hanged, they would have been noisy enough: they would have vied with each other in cant about a sacrifice to the "*outraged laws of the country.*" We should have had several days of it, and have been almost ready to sacrifice ourselves rather than not get out of their hearing. But this not hanging the man; and especially after such a speech, seems to have wholly disconcerted the traders.

When the Parliament shall meet again, there will, I trust, be Petitions for the repeal of this Combination Law.* Any of us can petition. The "*admiration*" has not yet made that criminal, and while you, WILBERFORCE, are petitioning for the Blacks, I am resolved to see if I cannot find somebody to join me in a petition for the Whites. You seem to have a great affection for the fat and lazy and laughing and singing and dancing negroes; they it is for whom you feel compassion: I feel for the care-worn, the ragged, the hard-pinched, the ill-treated, and beaten down and trampled upon labouring classes of England, Scotland, and Ireland, to whom, as I said before, you do all the mischief that it is in your power to do; because you describe their situation as being good, and because you do, in some degree, at any rate, draw the public attention from their sufferings.

It is not my intention to enter into a full examination of your hypocritical pamphlet; but I cannot conclude this letter without observing on the malignity which you discover towards the West India planters. You talk of the good example "*afforded in many of the United States of America.*" You must know that this conveys a falsehood as gross as ever was put upon paper. It is more than thirty years since the negro slavery was mitigated in the middle and northern States of America; but you must know that, in more than *three-fourths* of the territory of the United States, negro slavery exists without limit. You must know that the number of negro slaves in the United States has increased with the number of the inhabitants of that country; you must know that not a single pound of tobacco, rice or cotton, the three great exportable articles of the country, proceeds from any but the sweat of slaves. You must know, that even the free negroes are taken in the Northern States, and carried and sold in the Southern States; you must know that the seat of the Congress itself is a grand mart of negro slavery; you must know that, in spite of laws to the contrary, ships in great numbers are fitted out from the United States to fetch negroes from the coast of Africa. Knowing all these things, how very sincere a man you must be to represent the United States as holding forth a laudable example. Throughout your whole pamphlet, you do not even allude to the French. The King of Holland (mighty sovereign!) most readily consented to abolish the slave trade. The Governments of Spain and Portugal did talk of it, I believe. The United States of America were your rivals in *expressions* of humanity; but, when it came to the pinch, they would by no means consent to the right of searching vessels containing slaves, though the right was to be *mutual*! But, as to the French, they condescend to give

* In 1823 the Combination Law was repealed by 5 Geo. iv. c. 95; but the 6. Geo. iv. c. 129 is a Combination Law, though not so rigid as the old one.—ED.

no answer to your cant. Their colonies want the slaves, and they carry on the traffic in contempt of your remonstrances and your prayers. What is the use of all your efforts, as long as this is the case? You have this great nation to contend with; and she is neither to be bullied nor wheedled. Your *humane friend*, CASTLEREAGH, obtained a stipulation for the Abolition. What a scandalous, what a hypocritical proceeding! The Debt, however, soon pulled the thing down, made it repent of having held itself forth as a conqueror; and, at any rate, if it had not the grace to repent, compelled it to desist, made it hold its saucy tongue and submit in silence.

Great efforts are made to disguise the chagrin and mortification which the THING is now experiencing from the conduct of France. I know of few persons who have had more to do than you have in the causing of this mortification. It is now manifest to the whole world that France must become our master, unless we shake off the burdens which we have brought upon ourselves in order to possess the means of effecting what was hoped would be her ruin. We are now struggling against this Debt, and while we are thus engaged, she will deal us blow after blow. For my part, I have long foreseen and foretold, that such would be the consequences of the wars against France. Others now say the same thing, and the *old Times newspaper* of the 25th instant, has the following, whereby to show the advantageous result of that long and bloody war of which it was one of the most strenuous advocates: "One of the French Ministers, when lately speaking of the affairs of Spain, was met with the objection—*but what will England say to your military occupation of the ports and fortresses of Spain?*—The answer was, "What will GENEVA say? Why, England has now no more power on the Continent than a Swiss Canton. Her Debt, her divided Ministry, and her Irish Catholics are, quite enough for her.

This is false. This lying old newspaper could not possibly know that any French Minister said such a thing: nor would any French Minister say it under circumstances which would cause it to reach this lying old newspaper: but there can be little doubt that such is the language of the French Ministers, as far, at least, as relates to the Debt. The editors of this old newspaper hear hundreds of people expressing the same sentiments. This vile newspaper never has a thought of its own: it waits to feel the pulse of the public before it speaks. It knows the value of expressing opinions which are already entertained: it knows, in short, that the country is beginning to reproach the Government with the loss of power and the degradation of the country; and it only makes itself the mouthpiece of those reproaches. These reproaches, however, are wholly unavailing. The time is past for repenting of the contracting of the Debt. Contracted it is; and it is destined to avenge the people of France for all the injuries, and all the indignities which that Debt was the means of pouring forth upon them.

Your share of the glory of *conquering France* was the extorted stipulation with respect to the *Slave Trade*. That stipulation was hardly entered into before it was openly disregarded. Many were the pretences for not *demanding* the fulfilment of the stipulations; many the excuses for not doing that which we soon found we had not the power to do. How bold, how resolute our tone to the Kings of Holland and Portugal; but how mild our humanity, when it addressed itself to the King of France. MARSHAL NEY, *Wilberforce*: there "*humane*" WILBER-

FORCE, think of the death of MARSHAL NEY; and then wonder, if you can, that the mortification of the THING; that its cruel mortification; that its approaching degradation gives pleasure to the people of France and to every just man in England. Away with your cant about the happiness and the morality of the Blacks. You will next take us to the baboons and the monkeys; and, indeed, anywhere to make us lose sight of those who are suffering under our eyes, and screaming aloud to us for help. You can see the miserable Irish stretched out by thousands, expiring from hunger; and you can coolly invite us, in the name of humanity, and of Christian charity, to come forward and bestir ourselves in "transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition" of those *free* and stretched-out and starving creatures!

In another letter, when I have more leisure, I will give your pamphlet a thorough ransacking. Indefatigable as you are, your cant shall make no progress, while I hold a pen to expose it. *Answer* me, with regard to the over-flogged soldier: answer me with regard to the people killed and wounded at Manchester. To make comparisons of this sort, you have the cool impudence to call sophistry. Those who have long been your dupes, may be incorrigible; but your power to cajole is departed. Your craft has worn itself out: your name now excites, at the best, a smile or a shake of the head. Seldom has there been a man, who, with the advantages which you once possessed; with all that wonderful combination of cant-cherishing circumstances that once enveloped you; seldom has there been a man to spin himself out so completely as you have done. I think it very probable that you will live to see the repeal of every Act in the passing of which you have ever been instrumental. And, as such repeal would include that Combination Act of which I have above spoken, and which certainly produced the subject of the speech of ANDREW RYPING; I have no hesitation to say that this sweeping repeal, which would doubtless give you so much mortification, would give pleasure the most sincere to

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER,*

ON HIS
SPEECH, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON THE 23RD FEB. 1824.

(Political Register, March, 1824.)

SIR,

Kensington, 4th March, 1824.

I have witnessed so many of these boasting speeches of English Chancellors of the Exchequer, that I did not, at first, entertain the intention of answering, except by a short remark or two, the speech which you delivered on the 23rd of last month. A more attentive view of the matter has induced me to alter my intention. The close of your speech

* MR. FREDERICK ROBINSON, afterwards LORD GODERICH.—ED.

ought not to pass without an exposure from me. It contains not only the grossest of misrepresentations; but, also, that which is manifestly intended to uphold the worst species of political corruption. It contains, besides, an attack on all those who have stood forward in the cause of reform. It throws down the gauntlet to us, and says: "You said that "the Parliament, constituted as it is, never could extricate the country "from its difficulties; and, the country *is extricated from its difficulties, "without any alteration in the constitution of its Parliament."* Never was there anything more impudent than the closing part of this speech; and it is insolent in particular towards the Reformers of England. The whole of this corrupt press of London has given circulation to this unparalleled piece of insolence. The deluded nation is, I dare say, to be treated, at its own expense, with a *Treasury Pamphlet*, with a view of adding more permanent duration to the string of fallacies. This being the case, I shall use all the means in my power to counteract the delusion, and to resent the insolence.

Before I proceed further, I shall insert that part of the speech to which I allude. I have done this once before; but I had not then time to treat it in the manner that justice demanded. After I have inserted the words that I complain of as being false and insolent, I shall examine into the nature and extent of your assertions; and I shall, I think, ascertain before I have done, the exact worth of this bragging speech.

"It must be highly satisfactory to know, that the country is at this moment, in such a state of cheerful prosperity—with an increasing revenue, decreasing taxation, and a debt in a course of gradual and certain reduction. (Hear, hear.) We behold our country daily growing in *wealth*, augmenting in power, and increasing in influence:—in *wealth*, the result of sound policy and considerate legislation; in *power*, not to be abused for the *purposes of tyranny or aggrandizement*; in influence, not to be employed in *blustering dictation and empty boasting*, but to produce a firm conviction among surrounding nations of the sincerity of our professions, and of the honesty of our conduct. (Much cheering.) That sincerity and honesty must have the inevitable effect of producing in their minds a lasting persuasion that the *wealth, power and influence of which we are justly proud, are the tests of steadfast friendship, and not the menacing instruments of hostility or rivalry.* (Hear, hear.) I have not, of course, the arrogance to attribute these happy results to any exertions of my own, nor does His Majesty's Government *claim the merit of having brought the country to this state of content and prosperity*; many others, they are satisfied, have at least an equal right to the applause and gratitude of the nation: I claim them not for individuals; *I claim them for Parliament*—for that *calumniated, that vilified Parliament*, which we have been told by some is so *essentially vicious* in its nature and in its construction, that it was utterly impossible for it to extricate the kingdom from that condition of *distress and depression* in which it *was recently placed.* (Hear, hear.) They contended, indeed, how truly the result has shown, that in Parliament there was *nothing good*—that its councils were *venal, its Members corrupt*, and, in short, that unless every thing were at once *turned topsy-turvy*, and a new system of representation established, the nation could *never be relieved from its difficulties and rescued from its dangers.* (Continued cheers.) I say, and I say it boldly, that the *present state of the country* affords the best, because the practical refutation of what I maintain to be a calumny upon the Constitution. (Hear.) Parliament, the *true source of such general happiness*, may enjoy the proud, the delightful satisfaction of looking round upon the *face of a joyous country, smiling in plenty*, and animated with what I hope to see—unrestricted industry, content, comfort, prosperity and order, hand in hand, dispense, from the *ancient portals of a Constitutional monarchy*, their inestimable blessings among a happy, united, and, let it never be forgotten, a *grateful people.* (Loud cheers from all sides of the House.)"

In order to make my exposure as intelligible as possible to every reader,

I shall first state, one by one, the assertions, contained in the part of the speech here quoted. Nothing is easier than to make assertions. Anybody may assert; and, such is the state of that House of Commons which you so praise, that you knew perfectly, that there would be no one to contradict any of these assertions. Your assertions are, then, as follows:—

1. That you have an increasing revenue, a decreasing taxation, and a Debt gradually growing less.
2. That, as to Foreign Nations, you have increasing power and influence; and that these are not to be employed for purposes of tyranny, and are not to break out into *blustering dictation* and *empty boasting*; and that Foreign Nations must be convinced of your *sincerity* and *honesty*, and must regard your power and influence as the tests of *steadfast friendship*.
3. That the *Parliament* has the *merit* of having produced the present happy state of things, though it has been *vilified*, its Councils called *venal* and its Members *corrupt*, and though it has been represented as so *essentially vicious*, that, unless all were turned *topsyturvy*, the nation could never be relieved from its *difficulties* and rescued from its *dangers*.
4. That (you say it *boldly*) the *present state of the country* affords a practical refutation of this calumny.
5. That the country is in a *joyous* state, smiling in *plenty, happy, contented, united* and *grateful*.

These are the things which you assert. As to the first, I believe in no increase of revenue; but if there be an increase of revenue, how do you make out a reduction of taxation? Certain taxes have been taken off; but, if you collect more than you collected before; if, for example, you collect a hundred pounds more this year than you collected last year, how do you make out a decrease of taxation? Are not all the taxes paid by the people; and, if the sum be greater this year than that which they paid last year, what impudence, or what folly, or both, is it to say, that there is a decreasing taxation? The truth is, that your increase of revenue arises from causes, that are disgraceful to the Government, and oppressive to the most defenceless part of the people. A part of the increase of revenue arises from that increase of traffic with foreign nations, which you have obtained by sacrificing a considerable portion of the Navigation Laws. As far as an increase of revenue has proceeded from this cause, it is a thing to lament and be ashamed of. You have given up, in so much, the bulwarks of the country for the sake of money. You have sold the foundations of our greatness, for the sake of the ready penny. And, what is curious enough, at the very moment that you were doing this, other nations, and particularly the United States of America, are taking measures to counteract you, and to prevent you, even from getting money in exchange for your Navigation Laws. You being unable to keep Navigation Laws, the United States are passing such laws. They are taking all the steps necessary to prevent you from gaining one penny by the giving up those laws which have so long been the great bulwark of the country. However, you, in the meanwhile, pick up some little matter in exchange for your Navigation Laws, and this adds a little, though not much, to the amount of your revenue.

The great cause of the increase of revenue is, however, the shifting of the incomes of the people from one class of the community to another.—The amount of the duty on exciseable articles, has been looked upon as a sort of criterion of the state of the people. If these duties increased, it has been regarded as a sure sign of increase of happiness among the people. I shall by-and-by have to show, most clearly, an increase of misery among the people at large. But, without going into the facts at present, what can be more fallacious than to conclude, that, because there is an increase of consumption of exciseable commodities, there must be an increase of comfort amongst the people at large. Such increase of comfort may, by possibility, be co-existent with an increase of consumption of exciseable commodities; but there is no reason why it *must* be so; because, the system of a Government may be such (and the system of our Government is such), as to take almost the means necessary to existence from the most numerous part of the community, and to give those means to another part of the community, which other part of the community will lay out a larger portion of the means in taxed articles, than would have been laid out in those articles if the transfer had not taken place.

Four-fifths, probably, of the whole people of England, Scotland, and Ireland, are landowners and their households; farmers and their labourers, and workmen and tradesmen connected with and dependant upon agriculture. Four-fifths of the whole nation are included under these heads. The System that is now going on, is continually transferring the means from these classes to the Jews and jobbers; the immense standing army in time of peace; the navy uncommonly large and expensive; the half-pay officers, German as well as English, Scotch, and Irish; innumerable tax-gatherers, and the servants and tradesmen, and other dependants of all these. To heap means upon all these, the System strips the landowner, and all the country classes that I have just mentioned.

Now, Sir, one consequence of this transfer of means is, an addition to the consumption of gin, of tobacco, of beer at public-houses, and of many other things; for the country-people, if the means had remained in their hands, would have laid them out to fill their bellies with meat and bread, and to cover their nakedness. No man that sees the miserable skeletons which are called English labourers, can hesitate for one moment to believe, that they have less to eat and to wear than they ought to have. Take a village of a hundred labourers and their families, you will find that it will require fifteen hundred pounds a-year in addition to what the poor creatures now receive; that it would require these fifteen hundred pounds a-year in addition to what they now receive, to make them as well off as their forefathers were. These fifteen hundred pounds, are, then, *taken away from them*. In various unseen ways they are taken away from them, by the tax-gatherers of one sort and another. If the money remain with them, it would be laid out chiefly in meat, bread, clothing, fuel, bedding, household goods, and, as far as drink went, in malt, not beer; but, give the fifteen hundred pounds to soldiers, sailors, Jews, jobbers, footmen, and all the hangers on of those who live in great towns, and a very large portion of it will be laid out in gin, beer, tobacco, and all those things that are heavily taxed.

So that you may have an increasing revenue, and may make certain taxes cease, too, and yet you may have an increase of misery amongst the larger part of the people. *I do not know that your revenue has in-*

creased; for, after all the detections that we have seen, who is to place reliance upon any papers which rest upon the bare word of this Government. But, I see no reason why it should not increase, but plenty of reason why it should, as long as the present System continue. If I see this town increase in size and splendour, while the country at large is perishing, why should not the revenue increase, while in fact the country is growing poorer? There is no one who pretends that the enormous increase of this town is *natural*. No one affects to believe that. The increase of it must arise from the pillage that is going on upon the country at large. That same pillaging brings up the earnings of the country labourer to be laid out in gin (which is half or three-fourths tax), instead of remaining in the village to be laid out in bread or meat, which contain no tax at all.

So much for your increase of revenue, and your decrease of taxation. But, you have a "*Debt gradually growing less.*" It is by very *slow* degrees! You are aware, I suppose, that, at the rate you are going on; or, rather, at the rate that you *say* you are going on, it would require *two hundred and ninety-three* years of peace to clear off this Debt. You do not pay off one single farthing, except in as much as you have reduced the interest which you say was due to the fundholders. However, to say nothing at all about the tricks of the jobbing; allowing all your transactions to be bona fide; still it would take you two hundred and ninety-three years of peace to pay off your Debt. It must be confessed, then, that your reduction of Debt is gradual indeed. Those who are unacquainted with the trickery of stock-jobbing, are surprised to behold the wonders of the Stock Exchange. But this trickery, though it answer the purpose for awhile, must produce a blowing up in the end; and, in the meantime, all that it does for the nation is, to assist in prolonging the misery of the great body of the people. The funds are puffed up by mere trick. It is a gambling concern altogether. The thing called the *Sinking Fund* is now actually extolled, because it affords you the means of *performing operations in the Funds*. How uncertain must be the affairs of that Government, how perilous the state of that country, the Government of which can place any portion of dependence on operations like these! It is a mere game altogether. It is desperate gaming; and the end of it must be like that of all other such gaming.

I now come to your assertions with regard to the power and influence of the nation, considered with respect to other nations. This power and this influence, are, it seems, not to be exercised for purposes of tyranny or of insult. They are not to break out into *blustering dictation and empty boasting*. Most people will be glad to hear this; and, I assure you, Sir, that no man will hear it with more pleasure than I do; for, it has always been a maxim with me, never to bluster, never to boast in our language to any country; but, to give them heavy blows, and to let the blows come before the word. It has fallen to my lot to record the acts of tyranny, the blustering dictation, the more than empty boastings of former days. It has fallen to my lot to put upon record the stopping of American ships upon the high seas, the seizing of native Americans on board those ships, the compelling of those native Americans to fight against the allies of their country, on board of our ships of war; the taking of those same men, after they had long been fighting for us in this way, shutting them up in our gaols as prisoners of war; and, finally, taking them from those gaols and exchanging them against Englishmen made prisoners of

war by those Americans. The transactions in Sicily and Naples I pass over. The keeping of Malta, and the transactions in the Seven Islands, I also pass over.

But, on the score of "*blustering dictation*," how happy must the King of France be, when he heard his declaration from you, and when he recollects the time, when CASTLEREAGH gave him the word of command to *abolish the slave trade*, and to surrender the contents of the Museums at Paris! The King of France will, doubtless, be delighted at this change. Delighted to find that the days of blustering dictation are so completely passed. Let his Majesty not be afraid of those days returning; for, never can they return as long as this Debt hangs about your necks.

You, Gentlemen of Whitehall, appear to have no medium. You are all one way, or all the other. There is no reason; there is nothing to justify "*blustering dictation*;" but there is a great difference between "*blustering dictation*," and not daring to complain or remonstrate: a great difference between "*blustering dictation*," and not daring to utter even a whisper of disapprobation of an invasion that puts the French in possession of what were called the outworks of England: a great difference, indeed, between blustering dictation and not daring to frown while the French take possession of Cadiz. The fact is, however, that, though you did not dare to remonstrate, nor even to complain, you did "*bluster*;" you did menace; but, it was in a manner that left the French *no room* for making you prove your words! You have blustered in Parliament, where you also got your most able opponents to assist you in blustering; you blustered at Liverpool, and your press bawled and squalled like a prostitute at the whipping-post. You called the invasion of the French an *unprovoked aggression*, and your press, in the language of Billingsgate, abused the King of France, his family and his allies. You put up pious *prayers* for the success of your friends the Spaniards; but, Cadiz being in possession of the French, you sent an Ambassador to congratulate the King of Spain on his happy surrender into the hands of those French!

So that, after all, you did bluster; but it was not in direct terms. You talked at the French Government and not *to* it. The execrably vile press of London was let loose upon the French King, his family and army; but, for yourselves, you *bravely* resolved on "*strict neutrality*." There is, as I said before, a wonderful difference between conduct like this, and a resolute pursuit of that which is necessary to maintain the honour of the country. The invasion of Spain put you and your System to the test. You explicitly declared the invasion to be unjust. Its avowed object was to overturn a Government which you had acknowledged. The French had no scruple to declare, that, besides this object, they had in view the augmentation and duration of their power. It was notorious that you had expended a hundred and fifty millions of money, in order to drive the French out of Spain, and upon the express ground that Spain was the great outwork of England. In short, the French knew, and they now know, and all the world knows, that you most anxiously wished for the French not to invade Spain. All the world saw what a cut it was at the power of England, all the world saw her sinking as the French crossed the Pyrenees. You saw it, as well as the rest: you blustered indirectly; but you dared not pronounce the word *war*. You prayed for the success of the Spaniards. You predicted and you earnestly prayed for a *long war in Spain*. You hoped that these two

limbs of the House of Bourbon would tear one another to pieces ; and your partisans openly expressed such hope. Yet, after all this, did you congratulate the King of Spain on the surrender of himself and Cadiz into the hands of the French. A vast deal of difference is there between blustering dictation, and openly praising the Duke d'ANGOULEME for his manner of conducting an enterprise, in which you had besought heaven might overwhelm him with disgrace ! Happy King of France, and happy Duke d'ANGOULEME, to find you so reformed of a sudden : to find you grown so modest : to find modesty, to find an abhorrence of "*blustering dictation*," in the very Government that dictated to him to make laws relative to the Slave Trade, and that assured him that it was for his own good that he called upon him to surrender the Museums of his capital.

Not less pleasure will, doubtless, be produced by your explicit disavowal of all intention to suffer your power and influence to break out, in future, into empty boasting. As to the "*sincerity*" and the "*honesty*;" as to these qualities in you, which you say foreign nations must be convinced you possess ; and as to that "*steadfast friendship*" which you profess to entertain for them all ; as to all these, let them pass to the score of the follies of the speech ; but as to empty boasting—great must be the comfort of the Americans, for instance, to find, that you will have no more battles upon the Serpentine River in Hyde Park. That you will have no more sham fights upon a pond, in the midst of your gaudy and senseless Metropolis, in which fights, you make your own fleet *cover that of America with disgrace*. Great comfort must the Americans derive from a knowledge of your intention no more to be guilty of empty boasting like this ; and that, too, remember, almost on the very day that the Americans were capturing that famous sprig of English nobility, Captain DACRE, who had challenged them out to fight, and whom, after a beating such as Englishmen scarcely ever had to endure before, they towed, a captive, into their ports. I saw the American flag hanging *reversed* under your flag at Spithead, and in the harbour of Portsmouth ; and I read, in a few days afterwards, of a lusty beating that some of your satellites had received from under that very American flag. Nay, I read in this very speech of yours, that we have not even yet dared to bring to account ; not to pay off, for that will never be done ; but that we have not yet dared to bring to account, all the items of charge of this last disgraceful American war. The war has been ended more than ten years. We have been paying, ever since that day, Commissioners appointed in consequence of the treaty. Many a thumping sum have we to pay yet, in consequence of that treaty, one of which you mention in this very speech ; namely, a sum of money to be paid to the United States, for Negro Slaves, carried away by our fleet to the United States during the war ! Here is humiliation ! Here is disgrace to us ! What ! pay down a sum of money as compensation for a capture made by us during the war ! This is kissing the rod, indeed. Either we regarded the Negroes as *freemen* or as *property*. As freemen, they were citizens of the United States coming over to join us. As property, they were booty of war. Take it which way you will, upon what ground is it that we are called upon to pay money for them ? Was ever such a thing heard of before ? Never. They might as well make us pay for the cattle that we took from the shore in America. I know the ground upon which this demand is founded ; it is the conviction of the American

Government that ours has not the courage to resist the demand. Our empty boasting is come to this, then : we submit to receive the law from those whom we insulted on the Serpentine River.

However, thanks to the miraculous powers of poverty, we are to have no more "*empty boasting*." The French will be delighted to hear this. They will certainly look upon it as a matchless miracle. They recollect all the boasting about having *conquered* France. "We have now conquered her a *second time*," said that vile old double-faced knave, who is said to have been hunting for a peerage these thirty years, and who has not got it at last. We have now conquered her, said he, a second time. This double conquest was too much to endure with moderation ; and, cannot you recollect, Sir (I can), when *three millions of pounds sterling* were voted to build triumphal columns and triumphal arches, and in a situation, too, that should cause them to be seen by every Frenchman that came from Dover to London ! The Parliament, whom you so eulogize, has all the "*merit*" of this vote. That modest Parliament ; that sensible, that upright, that pure body of men ! They have all the merit of this vote ; all the merit of intending to place the triumphal arches and columns, so that every Frenchman might see them in his way from Dover to London ! Modest and meritorious body of men ! To *build* columns and arches, however, is not precisely the same as to *vote* them. Accordingly the great House has yet seen no column, no arch erected ; but, instead of these, it has seen the adoption and the baptising of a *bridge*, built on speculation by a parcel of Jews. We have "*Waterloo Bridge*," and Wellington-street, and we have a great, nasty, naked figure, most appropriately made of molten brass ; and, these are all we have to show in the monument way, after a vote of three millions of pounds sterling, which vote was passed eight years ago. Delighted, therefore, must the French be, when they hear that there is to be no more "*empty boasting*."

The truth is, however (and he must be a poor blind creature who does not see it), you are grown modest, when you dare not be impudent. You talk about your power and your influence ; as to foreign nations, you have neither. Why do you talk at all of your intention to abstain from empty boasting ? Why do you disclaim all intention to be tyrannical ? Why do you come forward and obtrude upon the world your promises of a resolution not to attempt "*blustering dictation*" to foreign governments ? There was nothing in the subject before the House that called for this. Nobody had accused you of empty boasting ; and the whole of your recent conduct was the *contrary* of dictation and tyranny towards foreign nations. Here, however, was the true cause of your uncalled-for disclaimers. You could not but feel the disgrace at not having interfered in the case of Spain. You, therefore, indirectly characterized such interference as *tyranny* and *dictation*. This disguise, however, is too flimsy to deceive any body in the world, except those who are under the guidance of the London press. With regard to foreign nations, you have *no power* ; you have *no influence*. All foreign nations know that you cannot *go to war*, without blowing up your own System ; and, what does any nation care for another that cannot go to war ? You acknowledge that you cannot go to war, without overthrowing all your calculations. Your power and your influence, then, are those of the garrison that has marched out and laid down its arms. Talk of "*empty boasting*," indeed ; was there ever a boast so empty as that which is contained in this

speech ; that which is here employed to disguise your weakness and your fears !

Your third assertion is, that we have vilified the Parliament, called its Councils venal, its Members corrupt, and the whole Thing so essentially vicious, that, unless all were turned topsyturvy, the nation never could be relieved from its difficulties and rescued from its dangers.

Now, as to vilifying the Parliament, as to calling our worthy representatives venal, corrupt, and essentially vicious, we never can have done this ; for, if we had, we should have been banished for life. We have, indeed, said, that it was acknowledged in the House itself, that seats were bought and sold by the score. We have talked of PERCEVAL, CASTLE-REAGH, and LOPEZ. We did hear a Member declare, that if he were permitted to bring evidence to the bar of the House, he would *prove the selling of seats in the House*. We did hear the great House *vote that it would not hear the evidence* ! And we afterwards saw this House, this very same House, pass a law to *banish us for life*, if we dared to put forth any thing, having even a *tendency* to bring the House *into contempt* ! We have said all this ; all this we say, and will continue to say ; and we have talked, too, and shall talk, about the divers most curious votings and enactings of this House : but, never did we say ; or, at least, I never did ; or, if I did, I never *printed* it ; never did I put into print that the Councils of the House were *venal*, and its Members *corrupt*. I have said, indeed, that great numbers of them pocket large sums of the public money ; but, as to saying that they got this money by corrupt means, I most solemnly declare before God Almighty, that I never (in *print*, I mean), said such a thing. It must, therefore, have been some other person that *spoke* in this irreverent manner of our representatives. I deny, too, the latter part of this assertion. I totally deny, that we ever called for the turning of things topsyturvy. It was said of *us*, indeed, that we wished to turn everything topsyturvy ; whereas, we wished to turn nothing topsyturvy but the vilest corruption that ever disgraced mankind. We wished, indeed, to turn seat-selling topsyturvy ; and for my part I acknowledge my wish to see seat-sellers brought to condign punishment. I must confess, too, that we might have turned a little tax-gathering topsyturvy ; and a little stock-jobbing together with all the speculators that had come in our way. But it is you and your colleagues and the Parliament, who are the great turners topsyturvy. Our system would have produced all its changes in the course of a month : yours has now been going on for better than ten years. Your system has put a hundred times as many gentlemen and their families out of their houses, as the Radicals *could* have put out of their houses.—They *would* have put nobody out ; except, perhaps, here and there a cruel villain that it would have been impossible to forgive. But, let their inclination have been what it would, they could not have produced a hundredth part of the change of property that has been produced by your change of system, which system is, as I shall presently show, proceeding steadily on to complete what it has begun.

Mr. BARING said, during this debate, that your system had produced a greater revolution in property than had ever been produced in any country in the world. Mr. BARING is pretty good authority, being already the proprietor of estates which formerly belonged to *three peers of the realm* ! This is the sort of revolution that you have been carrying on, and are still carrying on. This is "*topsyturvy*" worth talking of.

It is perfectly well known that the Bank is taking in the title-deeds of great men's estates, and lending money upon these title-deeds! This is "*topsyturvy*," Sir. We Radicals never called for this. Our reform, if it had been granted, would have prevented this. In one county of England, which contains about two hundred pretty considerable gentlemen's mansions, mansions belonging to noblemen or to considerable gentlemen. In this county there are but forty-four of the men (or their descendants) who were owners in possession *thirty years ago*, who are now either owners or in possession; and in four instances, those who were the owners are now actually the tenants of the Jews and jobbers, who are become the real owners of the estates. The havoc has, perhaps, been more unsparing in this county than in some others; but, this cannot be far from being pretty nearly the case all over the country.

So that it is yours, Sir, which is the real "*topsyturvy*" System. The French nobility and gentry are better off than yours, after all. Many of them remained and preserved their estates. If the others are without estates, they have lost them in consequence of a great and tremendous national event. They have lost them from causes that are visible to all the world. They, in some sort, have shared the fate of their King and his family. But, the victims of your System have been driven from their mansions they know not how; and they have seen horrible Jews walk in and take possession, they know not why. Ten years more of perseverance in this system will strip the deluded creatures of their last acre of land; and, when that last acre is gone, they will look back for forty years, and will see that there never has been one single year of the whole forty, in which the annual boastings of the Chancellor of the Exchequer have not represented the country to be in a state more flourishing than at any former period.

But now we come to your fourth, and, as you yourself call it, *bold* assertion; namely, that the "*present state of the country*" affords a practical refutation of our calumnies on the Parliament. In the fifth assertion, we have it, "that the country is in a *joyous* state, smiling in *plenty*, happy, contented, united and grateful." You, doubtless, regretted that you were compelled (only for want of time), to confine yourself to *bare assertion* here. You, doubtless regretted that you had not time to produce proof of the truth of what you say; proof of the joyous state; proof the plenty, happiness, content, harmony and gratitude. This being the case, I will endeavour to supply the important deficiency. Assertions of such importance should not go unsupported by proof. The proofs are so numerous, that I am almost afraid of wearying even you. At a risk, however, so great as this, I shall set about the task, confining myself to notorious facts, and leaving the public to draw the conclusion. To the Parliament, say you, and so say I, be, as is most due, all the merit given. You have mentioned the great merit of the Parliament: the world is on tip-toe to know what the merit is: here are my humble services to satisfy a curiosity so natural and so laudable. You appeal to the *present state of the country*, as a refutation of what you call the calumny on the Parliament. Your description of that state is most enchanting. Let us, then, see the proofs, of the truth of what you say.

Proof the first.—We have a Debt of more (including the dead weight) than *nine hundred and fifty millions of pounds sterling*; a sum far exceeding the worth of all the land, houses, woods and mines in the whole

kingdom ; a Debt that never can be paid ; a Debt that can, in fact, never be lessened, except by a sponge ; the thing called a Sinking Fund being manifestly a delusion.

Proof the second.—The taxes, where they are direct, are collected with great difficulty, and, in many cases, could not be collected at all, especially in Ireland, without the immediate assistance of the army. The “joyousness, the content, and the gratitude” of the people are so reasonably to be expected, that no one can doubt of the truth of your assertions.

Proof the third.—There are constantly about sixty thousand English families residing in some part of the Continent, in order to avoid the payment of taxes in England. These persons can live better in France upon the money that they would pay in taxes in England, than they can live in England upon the whole of their incomes.

Proof the fourth.—An enormous increase of the money raised for the feeding of the poor, and a proportionate augmentation of the number of the poor. The number of miserable and ragged paupers is just about four times as great as it was when PITT first became Minister.

Proof the fifth.—A Report, lately laid before the Parliament, describes the situation of the people of Ireland in these words :—“A large portion of the peasantry live in a state of misery of which the witness (giving evidence to a Committee of the House of Commons) could have formed no conception, not imagining that any human beings could exist in such wretchedness ; their cabins scarcely contain an article that can be called furniture ; in some families there are *no such things as bedclothes*. The peasants showed some *fern*, and a quantity of straw thrown over it, upon which they slept, in their working clothes ; yet, whenever they had a meal of *potatoes*, they were cheerful.” Another witness says, that the peasantry were found “offering to work for the merest subsistence that could be obtained, for *twopence a day*, in short for anything that would purchase food enough to keep them alive for twenty four hours ; that *twenty-six thousand eight hundred and forty-five persons*, in the county of Clare, were supported at an expense of *not quite one penny each per day* !” God Almighty ! God Almighty ! Is this the joyous country smiling in PLENTY, and abounding in happiness, content, harmony, and gratitude ! How shall we describe the audacity of the insolence of this speech, coming, as it does, too, from a Member of that very House of Parliament, upon whose table this very Report was lying at the time that he was making this speech.

Proof the sixth.—Is peculiarly calculated to give us an idea of the union or harmony of which you speak. I allude to the memorable battle of Skibbereen. Here we see a party of armed men sally out by order of the parson of the parish (who is also a Justice of the Peace), to collect the said parson’s tithes from his parishioners. The parishioners assemble to defend their property against the armed men. A battle ensues ; *lives are lost on both sides*. One of the parson’s armed men is knocked off his horse, and there he lies upon his back, with a stone rammed into his mouth. This is a strong specimen of what frequently takes place. This is one of the proofs of the harmony, union, content and gratitude, which so abundantly prevail.

Proof the seventh.—A very considerable portion of the joyous, happy, contented, united, and grateful people of Ireland, are, by law, *shut up in their houses from sunset to sunrise*. If these people be not contented and grateful, who is to be contented and grateful ? If, nevertheless, any of

these grateful people should happen to be out of their houses after sunset, and before sunrise, and should happen to be detected in the commission of the *crime*, the punishment is transportation beyond the seas for seven years, and this, too, *without trial by jury*.

Proof the eighth.—In England, so happy are the labourers; such plenty do they live in, that the magistrates and overseers in Norfolk, have settled on *tenpence* a day, to maintain a labourer, his wife, and his ten children; that is to say, *twopence* or four French sous a-day for each of these *happy beings*.

Proof the ninth.—About one-third of the whole of the prisoners in all the gaols in England are, at this moment, imprisoned for killing or being in pursuit of hares, partridges and pheasants. What; are these wretched men and their wives and children, making, altogether, perhaps, seven or eight thousand persons: are these wretched beings contented and joyous in the gaols; and are their wives and children grateful for the imprisonment of their husbands and their fathers? And is it a proof of *joyousness* in the country, when the landowners, squeezed by the Jews, are reduced to such complete poverty, that they are praying for a law to enable them to *sell game*; to do which has always, until now, been regarded as intolerably mean, if not as *infamous*. A Bill is now before the House of Commons, which Bill extends the list of game to *rabbits, woodcocks, snipes, quails, land-rails, wild ducks, teal and widgeons!* Why not make the *sparrow* and the *goldfinch* game! This Bill, if it pass into a law, will make the once proud nobility and gentry of England, a set of *huckstering poulterers!* “Topsyturvy,” did you say, Sir? It is you, and not the Radicals who have turned things topsyturvy. This piece of meanness and greediness, but, particularly, the *meanness* of it, is strongly characteristic of the *revolution* that you have effected in this country. It is, in such a state of things, impossible that the common people should not despise, from the bottom of their hearts, this race of *snipe and widgeon merchants*. So help me God, I will, as I ride about the country, go up to their houses, and buy, or ask to buy, a *couple of snipes or quails*. I shall write to some of them, when I want snipes! Good God! What degradation! A law, yes a law, to give to the nobility and gentry the exclusive privilege of *pot-hunting!* Let them simplify their heraldry: let a *sack* and *porridge-pot* be in future their only arms; and let them be as *joyous* as they like.

Proof the tenth.—English labourers are now, in several parts of the country, put up to *sale*; or, rather, they are put up at auction, to be let out to work, in precisely the same manner as the negroes are in Virginia or Carolina. And, in some places, they are advertised in newspapers and in placards. In some places they have *harness* put upon them. This harness is made on purpose for them; and they are put to the drawing of wagons and carts, in the same manner that horses are; and have a driver or overseer to see that they work. One whole team of these men came *in their harness* through the streets of the Metropolis, and presented themselves at one of the Police Offices. In short, except the still more wretched Irish, I defy the Chancellor of the Exchequer to find me upon the face of the whole earth, a set of creatures so badly fed, so bare-boned, so ragged, so naked, so every way deplorable and miserable as the main part of the labouring people of England, who were once the best fed, the best clad, the stoutest, the strongest, the happiest labourers in the world.

Proof the eleventh.—There is a Bill now before Parliament, which, if it were to go into effect, would compel the destitute and wretched poor to take upon themselves exclusively the defence of the country. So desperate is the case; so miserable, so every way wretched is the state of this once happy country; so fearful is the increase of poverty and misery, that it is now actually proposed, in order to endeavour to throw the wretched creatures upon means of their own finding out; it is now actually proposed, that *these miserable creatures alone shall be ballotted for the Militia*. It is proposed that, as long as there is a pauper able to serve, no other person shall be liable to be called upon. So that, the defence of the country must necessarily be left to the paupers alone, the rich will all be excused from serving! *A pauper army wherewith to defend the kingdom!* These words are enough. Ten thousand volumes of detail; ten thousand witnesses on their oath, to prove the misery of the people, would not be equal to this proposition, which is already in the shape of a Bill, and may, very soon, become a law. And, at the very moment that this Bill is before the House of Commons, that House is told (and it cheers the saying), that *young noblemen* ought to be induced to go into the army and navy, in order to add to the *respectability of the service!* It will, indeed, be *respectable*, when the Militia shall consist wholly of miserable creatures, who have been *compelled* to be soldiers, as a punishment for having been in want of bread!—Oh! happy militia men! Joyous militia paupers, smiling in plenty, happy, contented, united and *grateful!* Devil is in it, Sir, if these militia paupers are not contented, and, above all things, "*grateful.*"

Proof the twelfth.—The poor-houses, the gaols, the houses for imprisoning and punishing the people, have *increased in size*, within the last thirty years, to *four times their former bigness*. This is notorious. The *floating prisons* now contain as many prisoners as were formerly contained in all the prisons in the kingdom. This is a very striking proof of a *joyous* country, and all the rest of your farago.

Proof the thirteenth.—Mr. PEELE, the Secretary of State for the interior, said, the other evening, in the House of Commons, that the *number of lunatics is now twice as great as it formerly was!* O, *joyous* country, smiling in plenty, happy, contented, and *grateful!* What a joyous thing to see county-asylums for lunatics rise up!—Some have the impudence to pretend, that this increase of prisoners and insane persons arises from an *increase of population*. This is an impudent lie. There is *no increase of population*. True, that you are building *new churches* for the stock-jobbing tribe, who are collected in great towns, and for the manufacturers who have been drawn into masses, instead of remaining dispersed, as formerly; but, while these masses have increased, let this fact be borne in mind, that there are upwards of *two thousand parishes* in England and Wales, the average population of which scarcely exceeds a *hundred persons*, and in each of which parishes there stands a church manifestly built to hold more than a *thousand persons*.—But, at any rate, the most impudent of the population-liars does not pretend that the population has *doubled*; and Mr. PEELE says, that the number of lunatics *has been doubled*; than which a less "*joyous,*" and more melancholy fact, and a fact more clearly proving a state of unparalleled national misery, it is impossible to imagine. It is notorious that the *transfer of property* from the gentry to the Jews has driven thousands mad. There is nobody, in a case like this, to *pity* the sufferer. A

violent revolution leaves hope of change; but this Jewish revolution takes the property quietly away, according to due course of law, and leaves to the loser nothing but eyes to cry with, and hands wherewith to hang himself or cut his throat.

I could proceed to the end of a large volume; but, for the present, here are *proofs* enough of the joyous, happy, contented and grateful state of the people. Those who live upon the taxes are, indeed, *joyous*; the Jews are *joyous*; but, the main body of the people are the worst fed, the worst clothed, the most miserable and deplorable creatures in the whole world. And, if they be *contented* and *grateful*, why do you keep up *barracks* all over the country; why do you keep on foot a standing army greater than Queen Anne had to carry on war against Louis XIV. ? Ah! you well know how things would be if you had not this army! Besides, if the people be *contented*, and, if all be so *grateful* to your Parliament, why has your Parliament a law to *put the people to death*, if they attempt to *seduce a soldier*? Ah! you know well *how it is*; and so did Admiral Sir ISAAC COFFIN, who said, the other evening, in the House of Commons, that if it were not for the marines (*sea soldiers*) the *sailors would all run away from the ships!* What! "gallant tars of old England," go in at one end of the ships and run out at the other! And this acknowledged, too, in the famous House of Commons, and coming from the lips of an admiral! If this be the case, all your boasting is *empty* indeed. If English sailors are to be made to do their duty only by means of a *bayonet at their backs*, you have, it must be confessed, or, rather, your Parliament has, brought us into a most enviable state.

The House did, it seems, *cheer* you, when you were bestowing your praises upon it; but, I remember, that it cheered when the *three millions sterling* were proposed to be voted for the building of columns and arches to commemorate the *conquering of France!*

In 1816, it cheered, when Mr. Western said, that the distress of the country arose from a *surplus of food*.

In 1817, it cheered, when it was stated, that the distress arose from a surplus of mouths.

In 1821, it cheered, when *over-production* was insisted as the cause of distress, and when, at the same time, it voted money to *send away a part of the mouths*.

In 1822, it cheered, when it was asserted, that the evil of England was, *too much food*; at the same time it voted money to save the Irish from starving, while it permitted *Irish food to be brought in immense quantities to England*.

In 1811, it cheered VANSITTART, when he proposed to it to vote that a *pound-note and a shilling were equal in value to a guinea*.

In 1819, it cheered Mr. PEARL, when he called upon it to adopt Resolutions, which implied, that, in 1811, a pound-note and a shilling were *not equal in value to a guinea*.

In 1823, it cheered Mr. CANNING, when he put up prayers for the defeat of the French in Spain.

In 1823, it cheered this same Mr. Canning's eulogium on the Duke d'Angouleme, who had commanded the French and beaten the Spaniards.

In 1819, it cheered (oh! how it cheered!) the Bill for *resuming cash-*

payments, and how it congratulated the Prince Regent on the happy measure for coming back to our *safe* and ancient currency !

In 1822 (ten months before the day that the small notes were to disappear), it cheered a Bill to continue this small paper-money for *eleven years longer*, and which Bill necessarily prevented a return to the "*safe* and ancient currency."

Therefore, Sir, its *cheering* settles nothing. It is this last-mentioned subject of its cheering that forms the main ground of the present delusion. Since May 1823, that is to say, since the day when PEARL'S Bill would have given us a gold and silver currency all over the country : since that day, *paper-money has been put forth to an immense amount*. This, as is always the case, has *raised prices*. It has silenced the land-owners, who hope, that their estates are now safe. But, you play a *desperate game*. You think, that wheat can, upon an average of years, be twice the price here that it is in France, for instance. This delusion must lead you to ruin. It must produce a great shock of some sort : it must produce *another stoppage at the Bank* ; or a *total breaking up of the country bankers*.* Yet, you were compelled to resort to the paper-money. Another year of low prices would have produced the blowing up of the Borough System. But, your danger is still greater on the other side ; for, another stoppage at the Bank *is the end of your affair*. And mind, this stoppage must come, unless you *repeal the paper-money law*, which will soon inundate the country with paper, and, at no very distant day, will send the gold out of the country, as it was sent by the issues of paper-money in 1817.

In the meanwhile, what are you to do, if WAR should arise ? Why, you confess, that you do not know any thing about that. It is, however, a matter that you ought to know something about. Only think of *boasting* of the state of the country ; and, above all things, boasting of "*its power and influence* ;" and, after this, confessing, that all you have said is founded on the *continuance of peace*, and that, if war should arise, *that will overthrow all your calculations* ! Pretty *power and influence*, indeed, that are to exist only in a *state of peace* !

Well ; but, surely, you do not mean to *lie down and die*, if war should come ? No : but, pretty near it ; for your reliance is on the *usual spirit of the people* ! Foolish enough : sufficiently childish for a Chancellor of the Exchequer ! "*Spirit of the people*," indeed ! What spirit *more* are they to have now than they had when they began to fight at the expense of eight hundred millions of Louis d'or ? With all their spirit, they could not get on in war against France alone without borrowing eight hundred millions of Louis d'or. Why should they be able to make war again without more borrowed money ? You should have told us how you would get money, if war were to arise : and not shuffle out of this important part of your business by telling us, that you relied, in case of war, upon the "*spirit of the people*." The warlike *spirit* must be great, indeed, when it is actually now proposed to the Parliament to pass

* This prediction was verified to the letter ; for in December, 1825, and January 1826, there broke no less than 120 country bankers. It was the "*panic*" year, when, as Mr. HUSKISSON expressed it, we had come to within *forty-eight hours of barter*.—Ed.

a law to put the fighting for the country into the hands of those who have no resource but *praying for alms*!

However, this is poor trifling; it is mere childishness. The French have invaded and subjugated Spain, and the "*spirit*" that you talk of was as quiet as a mouse. Let them *invade Belgium* (which, I suppose they will, if you interfere with regard to Mexico), what will your "*spirit*" do for you? Offer it to Russians, Prussians, or Austrians: offer it to the Swiss; and see whether a whole cargo of it will purchase you a single bayonet. It was not "*spirit*" that won the battle of Waterloo: it was *borrowed money*: and you should have told us how you would *borrow money again* in case of another war.

In short, your very smell is that of *impotence*. You have *no power*: you have *no influence*. All the world sees, that the sound of war would blow up your whole concern. You put a *bold face* upon the matter: you talk big: you boast: you, at the same time, carefully disclaim all intention to be *tyrannical* and *grasping*: all these are amongst the sure signs of *conscious impotence*. Your System has run its race; and the whole world sees it. Never again, as long as this sort of Parliament shall exist, will you *dare to attempt to enforce the right of search*; and, without that right, this island must soon cease to be above the contempt of even little nations. The United States are visibly *growing over you*; and you *fawn* upon them; you tender them your "*steadfast friendship*;" and you, doubtless, receive, in return, their unqualified disdain. Oh! pray, do not believe, that you can cajole the nations into forbearance with regard to you! They do not yet, perhaps, see the full extent of your weakness. They will not see it, may be, till events *compel you to stir*. The founder horse looks much as usual, till he is *put in motion*. Pauper soldiers and sailors are as good as any for battles on the Serpentine River. When you come to be put in motion, we shall see how you will get along with your nine hundred millions of Debt, contracted by that eulogized Parliament, who now cheers you, when you will say, that "*joy, happiness, content and gratitude*" fill the hearts of the poorest, worst fed, most ragged, most dejected and degraded people that ever inhabited any country upon the face of the earth: that nonpareil of a Parliament who passed the vote of the *one pound note and the shilling*; that assembly which you are so fit to praise, and of whose cheers you are so eminently worthy.

Every thing that I have said in this letter, ought to have been said to your face; ought to have gone forth to the public with your boasting and bombastical harangue. Well did you know, that, in the House of Commons' sense of words, *Opposition* does not mean the doing of things like this. Thus the public are deceived; thus have they been led along, year after year, a bright prospect always before them, and poverty and disgrace always treading on their heels. The System of delusion is, however, drawing to a close; and the next war, either destroys the System, or sinks the nation for ages.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO SIR FRANCIS BURDETT,

ON THE

PROJECT FOR COLONIZING THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

(Political Register, June, 1824.)

“For this evil, Sir, which is the *greatest of all*, I see but one remedy. The situation of Great Britain is peculiarly favourable for adopting it. This remedy is, *colonization*. We have a *redundant population*; and we have *magnificent colonies*.”—SIR FRANCIS BURDETT'S SPEECH, 7 May, 1824.

LETTER I.

SIR,

Kensington, 23d June, 1824.

I address you upon what I deem to be your *erroneous opinions* with regard to the *causes* of the miseries of Ireland, and with regard to the remedy proper to be adopted. The subject is of very great importance; for, I am thoroughly persuaded, that if no effectual remedy be adopted before the arrival of another *war*, this country will have to struggle, not for the support of her present power, but for her existence as an independent state.

The movements which we have made *downwards* since the war, are pretty visible to all the world. If you put the different assertions of the Ministers together; if you make a summary of their acknowledgments which have come out at different times; if you do this, you will find that they say upon the whole, “As long as we have *peace* we may be able to stand; but if we have *war*, the Lord have mercy upon the country.” They cannot but perceive that there will be a power raised up against us, such as we never had to combat against before. But this is the plain state of the case: the greatness of this country is owing to the almost absolute power which we have so long possessed on the seas. There are dreamers to talk of universal and everlasting peace; but we shall, and in a few years, *be at war again with France*, unless (which is by no means impossible), the Jews and Scotch economists should so far prevail, as to cause the country to purchase peace by an actual bona fide surrender of its independence.

This country cannot carry on war against France with any chance of success, without exercising the *right of search*. This is the only means she has of injuring her enemy, and of repaying herself for her expenses. She is often victorious elsewhere, but she has always been most completely victorious at Doctors' Commons. This has been her grand game for ages; and, whatever fine names we may give to the thing, the rest of the world look upon the English Navy as a great mass of power employed for the purpose of seizing other men's goods. All nations hate this power; but, for a long time past, they have all been compelled to submit to it.

Things have now, however, very materially changed. A *new maritime* power has arisen up, or, rather, has been created by the folly and malignity of the English boroughmongers. That power has, even in its infancy, given us a taste of what it can do. It will, in a very few years of the present goings on, be a complete match for us upon the ocean. The wretches who conduct the stupid and base London press, seem to be proud, that there are now *two great naval powers in the world!* Nay, our Ministers themselves almost express their joy at this. It is, however *very true*; nothing can be more true, though beastly indeed it is in us to boast of it. It is pretended, that our Ministers are keeping a sharp look-out with regard to what is passing in the ports and arsenals of France, in which respect our newspaper patriots appear to be equally vigilant. But, the Congress of America voted, during the present session, an *addition of ten ships of war* to their Navy; and, not the slightest notice is taken of this by the newspaper patriots of England. Oh! no! these ten ships are meant, to be sure, to assist the "mother country," in maintaining the cause of "civil and religious liberty all over the world," and in upholding that most excellent church, which made such a gallant figure at Skibbereen!

Those ten ships, together with the rest of that Navy, are intended, Sir, to enforce the motto of Captain Porter: "*Freedom of the seas and sailors rights.*" The moment we are at war with France, that moment we are at war with America, unless we yield to this motto; and, if we do yield to this motto, we fall down prostrate before our enemy.

It is madness to suppose that America will ever again submit to this right of search, unless we can *beat her into submission*. If we stand, then, how arduous the struggle; and, how are we to maintain this struggle *with the Irish people in the state that they now are?* Look, Sir, into the last Register: see the picture there given by the *Great House* itself, of the state of the Irish people. Think, Sir, of the treatment of that people, whose only crime really is, having adhered, through ages and ages of persecutions, to the ancient religion of their country, to the faith of their forefathers. Think, Sir, of the treatment of that people: think of the battle of Skibbereen; think of the five sheep *seized for tithes*, sold by auction for *five shillings*, and bought in by the parson who had made the seizure! Think, Sir, of a Catholic nation seeing its ancient church laid in ruins, while it is compelled to yield tithes, church-rates, and all manner of services to those who have caused the desolation. But pray think of the law *originating in that very House in which you are speaking*; think of that law, which shuts whole districts of people up in their houses from sunset to sunrise, and which transports them without trial by jury, if they disobey that terrible law! Have you read, Sir; are you in the habit of reading of the numerous instances, in which farmers, farmers' sons, and other respectable persons, are taken by half dozens or dozens, and in this manner tried and punished? Have you read, Sir, of the cries and screams of wives, children, mothers, upon seeing thus snatched from them all of a sudden, husbands, fathers, children, crammed into an iron cage, and whirled off to the hulks at the rate of twelve miles an hour?

Have you read of these things, Sir? yes, and, I am sure, with a bosom swelling with indignation. Ask yourself, then, must not that Minister be mad who can think of another war, leaving Ireland in its present state. CAPTAIN DACRES found on board the American frigate by which he was

beaten and captured, an Irishman sitting and coolly making *buckshot* to fire at the English with. *Captain Dacres was indignant at this*; but he did not tell us whether this Irishman had been at any battle like that of Skibbereen, or whether he was the father, son, or brother of any of those numerous Irishmen, who had been, without trial by jury, *transported for seven years*, for having been found out of their house between sunset and sunrise. Without this information from Captain Dacres, however, is there a man in his senses who does not see how great will be the danger if the next war should find the Irish people in their present state?

It is my opinion, that, in case of war, Ireland would be immediately appealed to by the enemy. If the late war with America had continued another year, I am firmly persuaded, that an attempt would have been made to land some thousands of men and many thousands of stands of arms from New England, or from New York. The American ships, our own people confess, outsail ours; and, indeed, American skill as to naval affairs is perfectly matchless. There are very few secrets belonging to the American Government. They not only talked of; but they were preparing for such a landing as I have spoken of. "Ten thousand Americans" (said Mr. Paine, in one of his letters to Mr. Jefferson written from Paris); "ten thousand Americans, with thirty thousand stand of "spare arms, landed in Ireland, would *speedily settle the affairs of the world.*" It was Paine's plan to get America to join with France. He was always endeavouring to accomplish this, until Bonaparte became an Emperor, when he seems to have cared little about the matter. If the Americans had joined with Bonaparte, the consequences would have been most perilous to England. And, why should it be less perilous if the Americans were to join the Bourbons? The fact is they will join them, unless we surrender the right of search. If we surrender that, we give up our power; if we do not surrender it, and if Ireland remain in her present state, will Mr. Robinson's clever House take upon itself to say, that Ireland will not be the grand theatre of the war? Think of the vile hypocrites, Sir; think of the blaspheming Jews and of the greedy Scotch economists; think of these wretches who are dying in love of the silver and gold of Mexico and Peru; think of these people representing the South Americans as an *oppressed people*, calling upon the Government to tax us (and the Irish amongst the rest) for the purpose of what they call delivering the South Americans from oppression, while they have the infamy to call the Catholics of Ireland insurgents and rebels!

Of great importance, is it, then, to *change the state of Ireland* before another war shall arrive. But there can be no hope of a change for the better, unless we see that those who have the power to make the change have correct notions, or something like correct notions, *of the cause of the evil, and of the proper remedy.* And, what hope can we then have, if, upon mature consideration, we find *men like you* in error with regard to that cause and that remedy. Your speech in the House of Commons on the seventh of May, on the motion of Mr. Hume, convinces me that you are completely in error as to this matter. The newspapers say, that it was a very fine speech. I dare say it was and that we have had in the newspapers merely a sketch of it; but, I am clearly of opinion, that it was calculated to do harm; and, of course, the greater the talent displayed the greater the harm.

I deem this subject to be of the greatest importance: Previous, therefore, to my remarking upon it, I will insert it at full length as I find it

inserted in the Morning Chronicle, though the chief part of my observations will be directed to the part I have chosen for my motto. Doubtless the report is very defective; but we have, I dare say, pretty nearly the substance of the speech. At any rate, this is what *has been published* as your speech: this is what the public have read as coming from you. This, therefore, is what I have to combat. I have divided the speech into paragraphs, which I have numbered for the sake of convenience; but, I have neither added nor subtracted a word.

1. "Sir Francis Burdett then rose and spoke somewhat to the following effect: I do not mean, Sir, at this late hour, to endeavour to do any more than to show briefly the ground on which I shall support my honorable Friend's motion. Indeed, Sir, I am greatly embarrassed, at all times, how to approach any question, deeply interested as I am for Ireland, in which that unfortunate country is concerned; the evils under which it labours are so great and so numerous, as to be unparalleled in the history of the world. These evils, Sir, are so deeply seated, and I have so strong a conviction of the consideration and importance with which it is necessary to come to the examination of a state of things so dangerous to the happiness of both countries, that I cannot but feel great embarrassment, and know not how to confine myself to the single evil which has now been brought before the House; while all parties too admit the existence of these evils, if we advert to them generally—if we embark on that sea of affliction, we are met with the reply, 'We see the evils as well as you, *but there is no wisdom can remedy them*; they are too great to be grappled with; before we can proceed to investigate, we must have *some one specific grievance pointed out, which it is within our means to remove.*'"

2. "If a particular grievance be pointed out, then we are told, 'This is not the grievance from which the woes of Ireland arise—this is *not the cause of the evils.*' To my great astonishment, Sir, the learned Gentleman who has just sat down, has described the Church of Ireland as *not being any grievance, and not being felt by the people as a cause of any evils.* This statement I heard, Sir, with considerable astonishment, for it is the *most extraordinary* statement I ever heard made in this House. Coming from him, it must give a most *melancholy prospect* to all those millions of Irishmen who look up to that gentleman, both from his great talents and his high situation in the State, as the person best calculated to further their views and support their just claims. This statement must, however, blast all their prospects, and make them give up every hope of ever recovering their rights, or of ever getting their grievances redressed."

3. "As to the particular question now before the House, I hardly know how to enter upon it. Sir, the evils of Ireland are so extensive, they are so much beyond the ordinary course of events, that to remedy them recourse must be had to measures far beyond the routine of Parliamentary practice. Unless, Sir, we get out of the track of Parliamentary routine; unless, Sir, we forsake the common path of Government proceedings, we shall never be able to grapple with those evils, nor find courage to apply a remedy. I feel, Sir, that these evils have at length got to such a height, that something must be done, and that must be done effectually; the wounds of that unhappy country must be probed to the bottom if we wish to heal them. [Hear, hear.] In one observation of the learned gentleman I fully agree; I agree with him in that tribute he paid to the talents of the young Member of this side of the House, who spoke second in the debate, and who fully merited what the learned Gentleman had said of his eloquence. But his arguments, Sir, do not give any effectual support to the Ministers, though they seem willing to ride on him out of all the difficulties of the subject, and determined by their silence not to let the people of Ireland know what hopes they might entertain, or what were the opinions of these Ministers on the extent of the mischiefs, or what they have done to remedy them. Till the learned Gentleman got up, I thought the debate was to pass off on the flimsy pretext that the speech of the honourable Member at this side of the House was a full and satisfactory answer to all the statements of my honourable Friend. [Hear, hear.] I do not think this, Sir, a worthy or a proper course. Much has, indeed, been said of the inaccuracy of the statements of the honourable Member for Aberdeen; this is easily said, but is it easily proved? The honourable Gentlemen who have spoken have certainly not proved it. But if

my honourable Friend is inaccurate, the returns and reports made to this House are inaccurate, for all his statements are taken from them, and for their accuracy he will not vouch, because he has known and the House has known, that returns are frequently inaccurate—such sort of accusations are not fair, and they are of no value."

4. "I, Sir, for one, do not believe Church property to be so mischievous to a country as many people; but I do not think it so sacred, or to stand on the same footing, or to be hedged round with the same protections as private property. The property of the Church, Sir, is pay given for public services, and it requires those services to be performed. One portion of it was given for pious uses. As to the donors, who were, according to some gentlemen, to have their gifts set aside by any alteration of Church property, I will ask to what Church did they give this property? Certainly not to that Church which now holds it, but to another from which it was taken by the State, and transferred to this. As to the arguments which have been addressed to the interest of the landed gentlemen, telling them to beware of their own property, if they suffered that of the Church to be touched, I hope, Sir, that the landed gentlemen of this House have too much good sense to adopt any fears of this kind, and too much manliness not to treat such opinions with contempt. [Hear, hear.] If it is shown that the property of the Church is *so distributed as to be a great evil*; if it is shown, that by altering that distribution we shall largely promote the interests and happiness of all the people, that we shall benefit the public; if it is shown that this property is an enormous grievance, will it not be absurd to say, that it is not to be touched—that Parliament cannot alter the destination of the property of the Church, when it is shown, that this destination is an alarming evil, and that the alteration would be productive of great public good? [Hear, hear.] But, Sir, I will admit, for the sake of argument, that Church property is as sacred as private property—is not the principle on which private property is held sacred, that of the public good? If the right of private property is proved to be an evil to the public, to the community at large, private property will no longer be sacred in my estimation; for the sole end of all government, the single reason, why any and every right is held sacred, is the good of the community. When it is argued, that we cannot touch Church property, cannot alter its destination, this seems to me so childish as to be unworthy of an answer, and undeserving even of consideration. As to the Church of Ireland, the single question is, does that Church do good or evil? Is Protestant ascendancy, for that is what is meant by preserving the Church, of so much benefit, that it must at all hazards be preserved, or is it not a curse to the people? Even if it be proved that the Protestant ascendancy is not an evil, it will not follow that the Church should be protected in all its wealth. But if that ascendancy is the cause why all classes have not equal rights; if it prevents the Government from doing justice to all its subjects; if it exposes the majority to the tyranny of a small number, and will not allow the nation to be governed by any other principle than terror; then, Sir, I cannot consider this Protestant ascendancy as so necessary to be preserved; or that it is not of more harm than good. If the Protestant ascendancy in the Church were destroyed, does it follow that the country will be ruined, as the learned Gentleman has stated? I think not, Sir. But unless Catholic Emancipation be carried, Sir, *unless the Irish shall no longer be persecuted for an adherence to that religion which is to them an honour*—for they conscientiously adhere to it, every motive of interest being against their adherence, and they have not sacrificed their conscience to base motives—I am sure, Sir, we shall have *neither tranquillity nor justice in Ireland*. And after such a testimony as this adherence bears to their conduct, shall we be told that they cannot be trusted on their oaths; that no security they can offer is adequate; and that danger would ensue from the measure of Catholic Emancipation? But this is to shut our eyes, for the sake of avoiding an imaginary danger, to the great danger which arises from neglecting to do an act of justice."

5. "Some gentlemen have urged other reasons for the evils of Ireland; one says, they arise from a want of education; another, that they want capital; and another again, that they want the comforts and conveniences possessed by the people of this country, to call into exertion their industry and genius; and a thousand other things beside are said to be wanted in Ireland. These are undoubtedly different causes for the evils of Ireland. But though they want com-

forts, they do not want a relish for them, but have a high taste and strong desire for them; but they want the means of getting them. I believe, indeed, Sir, that they have even a higher relish for these things than many other people. A friend of mine told me of an Irishman he had working, mending a road, and who was left a considerable sum of money. Shortly after the gentleman met Pat, and asked him how it was that he continued working, when he had had a fortune left him? 'O! please your honour,' said Pat, 'that is all gone. I had a mind to see how gentlemen live that have got 200*l.* a year, your honour—so I spent my money like a gentleman.' The Irish, therefore, do not want a taste for comforts."

6. "As to their industry, they are some of the most industrious people in the world, and are scattered all over this country, seeking the means of obtaining those comforts for which they are said to have no taste. Their industry inundates England, and they have greatly contributed to degrade the people of this country to the same level as themselves. I do not wish to prevent this; but it was the mode in which the wretched system we had pursued with regard to Ireland brought its own punishment along with it. So great is the industry of the Irish, and so great their burdens, that it is not uncommon, Sir, I understand, for a man to come to London to earn, by his labour, money to pay his landlord's rent. The industry of the Irish, and their emigration into England, was pushing England into the same state as Ireland. If nothing is done, Sir, to remedy the miseries of Ireland, *they will overflow and destroy England.* Sir, I do not think I am far wrong, when I say that the whole amount of the Poor-rates in England are paid by the landed gentlemen for the poverty of Ireland. The influx of Irish labourers into the *English market*, has done more to degrade the poor of this country, than even the mode in which the Magistrates have administered the Poor-laws. I do not say this harshly, or with any view to cast reflections, but bad as the mode of administering these laws has been, there is such a spirit in the British peasantry—such an aversion to dependance, that they would have borne up against this, had *they not been overwhelmed* by the influx of the Irish."

7. "The honourable Member whose speech had been so much praised by the gentlemen opposite, that they seemed to consider it a God-send [hear, hear, hear], and as very pleasantly taking off the edge of the debate, that honourable Member had read a pamphlet, in which the evils were all ascribed to a redundant population. Certainly, Sir, the redundant population which has grown up in Ireland is a *great evil*; but how has it grown up? *By the Irish gentlemen splitting their land into small portions*, so that there was always a prospect of the people getting one of these many subdivided portions, and the competition for them was perpetual. If they can get potatoes, and live in the very worst way possible, they will give up all the produce of their industry for permission to occupy one of these spots, and cultivate it. For this evil, Sir, which is *the greatest of all*, I see but one remedy. The situation of Great Britain is particularly favourable for adopting it. *This remedy is colonisation.* We have a *redundant population*, and we have *magnificent colonies*, capable of producing *every variety of corn and fruit*, and blessed with the finest climates. Colonization, then, and colonization on a *large scale*, is the *only remedy* for this redundant population. Sir, it must not be conducted on a small scale, like that at the Cape of Good Hope, where it seems as if the people were sent out *only to starve to death*, but on the *old Roman plan*. For such an object no money should be grudged, and all that is necessary is to *take care*, while it is carrying into execution, *that the gentlemen of Ireland alter their plan of managing their land.* The expense cannot be objected to after the profligate vote of 500,000*l.* for churches, and 300,000*l.* for repairing Windsor Castle, which no man knew wanted any repairs. These two sums, amounting to 800,000*l.*, would go a *great way to carry into effect an extensive system of colonization*; a system, too, which after a *short time* will yield an ample return, and will be much more effectual than Mr. Owen's plan, which in a few years would reduce all Ireland to a state of pauperism."

8. "As to the question before the House, I contend, Sir, that no arguments whatever have been urged against my honourable Friend's statements. As far as argument went, nothing has been said which should make the House reject the motion of my honourable Friend. The motion was to be taken separate from the speech of my honourable Friend, but the only argument against it was bor-

rowed from his speech, and from that it was inferred, that the motion was made in a spirit of hostility to Ireland. I hope the Government will adopt the motion of my honourable Friend. His statements are denied, but grant his motion for inquiry, and there will be an opportunity of proving whether they are true or false. The learned Gentleman, indeed, has stated, to my astonishment, that there are only some twenty absentee clergymen, from Ireland; my honourable Friend has made a very different statement; here, then, is a subject for inquiry; let this point be brought to the test. Let dust not always be thrown in the eyes of the people, and let them sometimes see us in earnest in finding out the causes of their misery. If the opponents of the measure vote for the motion, they will have an opportunity of proving their statements, which now rest only on the *ipse dixit* of some unnamed person. According to the statement of the learned Gentlemen, the Irish Church, instead of being careless and negligent of its duty, might be taken as a pattern even for its sister in this country. But if they are negligent it is of little matter. They are sent to teach duties and doctrines the people abhor. The learned Gentleman has reflected on the land-owners, but it would be better to have gentlemen to enjoy the property of the Church, or better have the salaries themselves to reside, than a class of men who can have no community of feeling or interest with their flock, who come, to use emphatic language, to bring a sword, not peace, and who were made by their situation, disliked by the people, who never could amalgamate with them, nor ever come in contact with them but in hostility. Those Members who wish to oppose the motion are put to their shifts, and impute motives instead of finding arguments. The speech of my honourable Friend has nothing to do with the motion that it should be rejected if it be good. It will be wise and honest to enter into the inquiry, and agreeing to go into it; other inquiries may arise out of it, or follow it, still more important, and which will lead to more beneficial results. [The honourable Baronet sat down amidst loud cheers, and we have to regret, that the lateness of the hour has prevented us doing justice to his excellent speech.]”

As I said before, I intend to confine my remarks, principally, to your doctrine relative to redundant population. This redundant population you say (paragraph seven) “*is the greatest evil of all.*” The evil, is, in fact, the suffering of the people; and this redundant population is, as you say, a cause of such suffering. However, let us regard it as the evil itself; and then you say that it is the greatest of all the evils that the Irish people experience. This is a mere theory; it is supported by no proof nor by any attempt at proof. The idea of a redundant population is, in my opinion, fanciful, if not wild.

If this theory remained inactive. If it led to no consequences, it might be passed over like other wild things; but, it leads to very mischievous effects; for, if this redundant population be the *greatest evil of all*, the Ministry and the Parliament stand pretty much acquitted on the score of the sufferings of Ireland; for you do not show, you do not attempt to show, that the Ministers and the Parliament have been the *cause of that redundant population*. Nay, you not only tacitly acquit them of this greatest evil of all; but you positively acquit them by accusing the gentlemen of Ireland (paragraph seven) of having produced this greatest evil of all by splitting their land into small portions! See, Sir, the effects of this theory!

But, by indulging in this fanciful, I must say this whimsical theory, you demolish almost every argument which you used in favour of Mr. Hume’s motion; nay, you answer Mr. Hume much more powerfully than he was answered by Mr. Plunkett, or Mr. Stanley. Your doctrine of redundant population, not only exonerates the Ministers as to the heaviest part of the charge against them by discovering this *greatest evil of all* to proceed from causes with which the Ministers and the Parliament have had

nothing to do ; by making this untimely discovery, you not only take off the weight of Mr. Hume's complaints, and make them appear of apparent insignificance, but you really answer most of the other parts of your own speech.

After hearing you say (in paragraph 7), that a redundant population is the greatest evil of all, we go back to paragraph 1, and think that you are unreasonable in blaming the Ministers for saying "that there is no wisdom that can remedy the evils." For, Sir, how are those Ministers to prevent the Irish from breeding? How are they to prevent the Irish gentlemen from splitting their land into small portions? If they do say that "there is no wisdom that can remedy the evils," and if your theory be true, they are right, and you, in paragraph 1, blame them unjustly.

In paragraph 2, you blame Mr. Plunkett for having described the Church in Ireland as *not being the cause of any evil*. Well, Sir, and surely the Church establishment has not the smallest tendency to produce that which you say is the greatest evil of all; and if we discover that the Church stands completely acquitted of any part of the greatest evil of all, I think we may excuse Mr. Plunkett, who is a sort of official defender of that Church, and who is, perhaps, bound to it by ties almost of consanguinity: if you clearly acquit the Church of producing the greatest evil of all, I think we may excuse Mr. Plunkett for asserting that this same Church is not the cause of *any evil*.

Pray, Sir, mark, then, how your theory worked against Mr. Hume. Here was Mr. Hume with a set of thumping charges against the Church. Those charges were well made by him, too. They left a strong impression on the mind of the reader. The Ministers cheered Mr. Stanley and Mr. Plunkett; but they produced little effect; they left Mr. Hume's charges undiminished in weight. At this moment forward step you, the friend of Mr. Hume's motion; but acknowledging that there was a *much greater* evil than the Church establishment; and, what was more, setting forth the *only* remedy for the evils of Ireland; and that only remedy having nothing at all to do with the property of the Church, or with any measure in the proposition or contemplation of Mr. Hume.

Certainly, Sir, you meant to produce no such effect as this; but it is not less certain, that, to produce such effect was the natural tendency of the uncalled-for promulgation of your theory. Your speech is said to have been very eloquent, and to have produced great impression; but, as I said before, the greater the talent displayed the greater the harm produced. In paragraph 4, speaking of the property of the Church, you observe, hypothetically, that it is "so distributed as to be a great evil." Now, Sir, the church property is not "split into small portions." The distribution of that property is precisely the *contrary* of that which you regard as the greatest of all the evils. One of the great complaints with regard to the Church, is, that its property is in too few hands; and yet you complain of the Church as an evil, while, in another part of your speech, you say, that the greatest evil is a redundant population, produced by splitting the land into small portions. In this same paragraph 4, you say, indeed, that Ireland will never know tranquillity, until the Catholics cease to be persecuted by the Established Church. This is very true, Sir; but, here is another contradiction; for, what has persecution to do with redundant population, and how is colonization to be a cure for persecution, unless you can produce us some security for not persecuting five millions after one million have been sent away?

The main object of my letter was, Sir, to combat your notion respecting *redundant population* and *colonization*. I shall consider those two questions presently; but, first, let me observe on a passage or two in paragraph 6: in that paragraph, you speak of the "*wretched system* that we have pursued with regard to Ireland," and then you observe that it has brought its "*own punishment*." *What system, Sir? System of redundant population!* This is the great evil of all, you will please to observe; and you will also please to observe, that it is nonsense to talk of any body having *pursued* this system. If this be the greatest evil of all, there has been no *pursuing* in the case; and, as to *punishment*, what punishment can men deserve when there has been no offence?

In this same paragraph 6, there is a great error, which you will suffer me to correct. Of the cause of the Irish coming to overflow England, I shall, I hope, find time to speak fully by-and-by, that being an important part of the subject. But, Sir, are you not wholly in the wrong, in supposing that this inundation of Irish emigrants, which lowers the wages of English labour, causes the *landed gentlemen of England to pay for the poverty of Ireland?* Your idea is, they pay for this poverty in *English poor-rates*. Not a farthing, Sir, does Irish poverty cost these gentlemen in that way. In consequence of an influx of Irish labourers, the English farmer pays LESS IN WAGES, and has MORE MONEY TO PAY IN RENT. That is the clear indisputable fact, so far; but, in consequence of the low and miserable pay thus given to the English labourer, he is compelled to come and get more than he otherwise would in the shape of poor-rates. In the end, including the degradation and all its consequences, the English gentleman may, perhaps, gain but little; but, it is the English labourer that is the sufferer.

Let me now come, Sir, to this grand popular delusion of *redundant population*. Let me inquire into the grounds for adopting such a supposition; and, then, supposing such a supposition not to be visionary, let us examine a little into the practicability of that project of colonization, of which (without time for due reflection I am sure) you were pleased to speak in a manner so positive, and in a manner so likely to produce a wrong impression upon the public.

Sir John Doyle, the other day, at a meeting of a Society for bettering the condition of the Irish, thanked his God, that there was in this *free country a power above the laws*. Upon the same occasion the gallant officer spoke of his *hapless* countrymen. Whatever they may be in other parts of the country, Sir John's hapless countrymen, do, I imagine, find, that there is a power above the laws; but, Sir John spoke of the "*power of fashion*;" and it was the fashion he said to be "*charitable*"! Stop a moment, Sir, to look at this, though it be going out of our way. Here is an Irish gentleman standing up in public, in a foreign country, talking of his *hapless* countrymen; and instead of expressions of resentment and indignation coming from his lips, appealing to *charity* for the relief of those countrymen. I will not characterise conduct like this, Sir; but, if conduct like this had not been the fashion, the miseries of Ireland would never have been known.

There is, however, a great deal in fashion. You can remember very well, Sir, my article about Milton, Shakspeare, and potatoes. Having insisted that potatoes were bad things, I had to observe, in answer to my opponents, who asked me why then they were so universally in use, that it was the fashion to use them, and to pretend to like them, just as Addi-

son had made it the fashion to admire Milton, and Garrick to admire Shakspeare, those writers of bombast and far-fetched conceits and miserable puns. It may be observed, that for a lie to be cheerfully and universally swallowed, it must be a lie that common sense, that the first blush rejects. Such a lie, once fairly got down, is pretty sure to prevail for a great while.

Thus it is that Malthus's population lie has become the fashion of the day. It has gained ground, however, on two accounts: it serves to excuse corruption for the mischiefs she has produced, and it forms an apology for contumely and cruelty from the powerful towards the weak. Talk to corruption of the wretchedness of the people that are under her sway, and she instantly tells you, in the words of Malthus, that true parson, that there is a tendency in all nations to produce numbers too great; and that misery is necessary to check this mischievous increase of population. So that this doctrine is, with corruption, the most convenient thing in the world. You, Sir, have taken up the doctrine from *fashion*; though, I beg you to observe, that, as long as you hold this doctrine, you have no right to ascribe to the Government the miseries of Ireland, nor the miseries of anybody else that may suffer under its sway. Were it not for this fashion, for this cry of the crowd of politicians, one would think that the everlasting inconsistencies and absurdities which spring up under your feet every moment, would stop you and compel you to reflect.

I shall not, now, go into a discussion of the population question. Upon this subject I shall content myself with saying, that you have *no proof* of an increase of population either in Ireland or in England; that I have *proved* the Population Returns to be false; that there has never been produced any reason for believing that there are now more human beings existing on these islands than there were five hundred years ago.

The inconsistencies are endless. In England, it was the poor-rates that caused the redundant population. *Take away the poor-rates*, said Malthus and Scarlett, and that will prevent improvident marriages and check population.

In Ireland there are *no poor-rates*, and there they marry earlier than they do in England.

There is a monstrous increase of population in Ireland, where the people are not educated enough.

There is a surprising increase of population in Scotland, where every one is a saint, a moralist, a philosopher.

An overflow of population in England, chiefly on account of the poor-rates, and of the *good living* (what a lie!) of the people.

In Ireland there is a monstrously redundant population, where nakedness stalks abroad like a ghost, and where hunger growls like a wolf.

Great lots of capital causes the population of Scotland to increase.

A total want of capital makes the Irish increase.

Long internal tranquillity has greatly added to the population of England.

A long and bloody revolution has greatly added to the population of France.

Canting Cropper* says, that slavery diminishes the number of people,

* A Quaker Merchant of Liverpool.—Ed.

and that when a people become thick, their state is favourable to freedom.

The Morning Chronicle (a half-brother of Cropper, who inserts Cropper's letter) says, that if the Irish keep on invading Scotland, the Scotch themselves will be reduced to a state of slavery.

However, as to *remedy*, the Morning Chronicle goes far beyond you, Sir; for, it would fain *get back the small-pox*.

It is strange, Sir, that the *novelty* of these notions and schemes do not induce men to hesitate, at least. England and Ireland have been kingdoms for many centuries, and a thought like that of *getting rid* of a part of the population was never entertained by their rulers before. Hitherto, good living and happiness have been looked upon as the cause of an increase of the people, and misery and want a cause of their decrease. When food is abundant, clothing plenty, and every thing smiling, we have always thought that the children that were born would be taken care of. We know well, that the most numerous families are those who have been best fed and best clothed. We see the ill-fated children of the wretched perish with little notice being taken of the matter. And yet, in order to make out an apology for a corrupt and cruel system of sway, we are to join crafty and hard-hearted parasites in affecting to believe that persecution never-ceasing and relentless; that military government; that want of sufficient clothing; that want of beds to lie on; that nakedness; that hunger; that occasional pestilence and famine; have caused the Irish people to swell up into a redundant population.

Did it ever occur to you, Sir, when it was that the work of producing this redundant population *began*, either in England, Ireland, Scotland or France? Did it never occur to you to ask, WHY IT SHOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE NOW ANY MORE THAN FORMERLY? The population returns are, you will be pleased to observe, a proved lie. Much better proved than if fifty credible witnesses had sworn to the fact. Besides, as to Ireland, we have even yet had no return at all. I then ask you once more, did it never occur to you to ask how it happens that this redundancy of population never took place before? WHY IT SHOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE NOW MORE THAN FORMERLY?

I should like very much to have your answer to this question. Well, Sir, but you not only state your belief in the redundant population, but you tell us the cause of it, a circumstance most unfortunate for your theory! the cause is, that the gentlemen of Ireland have split their land up into small pieces.

Now, Sir, mark! it is notorious that the gentlemen of England have done precisely the contrary; that they have put *three, four, five*, and so on to *ten, fifteen, fifty* farms into one! It is equally notorious that they have set their lives against leaseholders; that they have done everything to diminish the number of small proprietors; that they have enclosed every bit of waste fit to be cultivated; that they have driven millions, ay millions of those who had little bits of land, to live in the filth and stink in the outskirts of towns. And yet the returns are the most shocking lies that ever were put upon paper, if there have not been all this time a most monstrous increase of population! so that, admit your theory, and to this conclusion we come, that a redundant population is produced in England, by making ten farms into one; and that a redundant population is produced in Ireland by the making of one farm into ten!

To say another word upon the subject would be an insult to the public

and to you. But, I have proposed to observe on the project for *sending the Irish people away*. I do not wish to insinuate that you would wish to do anything cruel or unjust. I am satisfied that you think that their lot would be bettered by their being sent to some foreign dominion of his Majesty. Now, Sir, have you thought of a hundredth part of the difficulties which would present themselves of carrying this project into execution? I do not believe that you have. However, these difficulties and other matters connected with this important subject will require a second letter. Every one, who has any thought, appears to be now alive to the situation and affairs of ill-treated Ireland. This colonizing project appears, coming forth as it does under your high authority, to be caught at as a lucky discovery. I have no pleasure, Sir, in discouraging the hopes thus excited; but, perfectly convinced that the scheme is a delusion, I should not be satisfied with myself if I neglected to endeavour to produce a similar conviction in your mind, and in the minds of the readers of the Register, by the columns of which so many delusions have been dissipated. In the meanwhile,

I am, Sir,

Your most humble

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO SIR FRANCIS BURDETT,

ON THE

PROJECT FOR COLONIZING THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

(*Political Register*, July, 1824.)

“For this evil, Sir, which is the *greatest of all*, I see but one remedy. The situation of Great Britain is peculiarly favourable for adopting it. This remedy is, *colonization*. We have a *redundant population*; and we have *magnificent colonies*.”—SIR FRANCIS BURDETT'S SPEECH, 7 May, 1824.

LETTER II.

SIR,

Kensington, 31st June, 1824.

I have, I think, shown, in my last, that you have *no proof* of there having been any increase at all of the Irish people. I have shown that you have no proof of this, any more than there exists proof of a similar increase in England, or in *France*; for pray observe, that they have just the same notions of an increase in France! They fall short of us; for, when it is a matter of *tying*, no nation can, for a moment, stand before us. I will be bound to find a couple of Scotch economists, who, on sub-

jects of this sort, shall, by their own individual exertions, outlie the father of lies himself.

But, now, for argument's sake, let us adopt the hypothesis, that there has taken place, of late years, a *great increase* of people in Ireland; that the people of Ireland are much more numerous than they were at the time when her thousands of churches, now heaps of ruins, were standing in all their splendour. Hard as it is to admit, even for a moment, a supposition so monstrous, let us admit it.

And now, Sir, what is the *harm* of such *increase*? Aye, but you will tell me, that there is a "*redundancy*." Redundant, applied to numbers, means TOO MANY. And too many means *more than is good*; a number so great as to be *hurtful*. But, Sir, why are there too many? You gave *no reasons* for this; and I have observed, that the MALTHUS SCHOOL does not deal much in reasons. We gather, however, that you mean, that there are more people than there is *work* for. Indeed! Why, surely, anybody that has land (and somebody must have all the land) would set them to work. Aye, but there is not *money* to pay them for work. Ah! but, Sir, if there be no money to pay them for *working*, where is the money to come from to carry them away, and to set them up in a foreign land? For, I am very sure, that *you* would not scuttle the ships, and send the poor souls to the bottom, though, as I shall show by-and-by, there are people that would.

However, I am anticipating here. I shall return to these matters hereafter, having just given you a glimpse at the difficulties with which your theory is surrounded. I am now (proceeding upon the supposition that there *are* too many people) to inquire into the feasibility of the scheme of colonization.

What colony, Sir, would you send these people to? There are *seven millions* of people in Ireland, or, at least, they say that there are. It is a thumping lie, I believe. But, we must take it along with our own English lies. Lying is as fair for one as it is for the other. The Irish lie is sauce for ours, as the man's *oyster*, which stopped a ship at sea, was sauce for the other man's *turkey*, that required eight horses to draw it from Norfolk to London. The whole number being, then, *seven millions*, and six of these being, *under the laws of Mr. Robinson's House*, become as naked as half-fledged sparrows, you can hardly intend to send away less than *one million*? It is to be lamented, that you were not more specific upon this head. Perhaps you were, and that the Report is defective. However, it is not to be supposed, that you could think of sending away less than *one-seventh* of this "*redundant*" mass of human nakedness and degradation.

Pray, Sir, what colony will you send them to? You say that we have magnificent colonies; but, you did not name any particular one. You say that these colonies are capable of producing every variety of fruit and of corn, and that they are blessed with fine climates. Alas! Sir, new countries, as they are called, are, I can assure you from some experience, much finer upon paper than they are in any other way. We have no colony, Sir, half so fine as that unhappy island, from which you would send her inhabitants, and which has been rendered unhappy only by those laws which can be changed at no expense at all.

What colony, then, will you send the Irish to? Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia? One province of Ireland is worth the whole of them put together. Do you look to that magnificent country commonly

called Botany Bay? The climate may be fine; the soil may be good; but can either be *better than that of Ireland*? However, granting that there is no obstacle in the soil or the climate, have you counted *the cost* of transporting a million of persons across the seas? To Botany Bay, the average voyage is *five months*. To our American colonies, *two months*. The average voyage would be three months and a half; but put it at a hundred days.

Would this voyage, reckoning, observe, all the delays of preparation; reckoning the expense of collecting the miserable creatures together; the expense of carrying them to the sea coast; the expense of preparing bedding and water for ship-board; the expense of fitting up the ship with berths and other indispensable conveniences: would the conveyance of the unfortunate creatures to the colony; would the bare conveyance of them cost less than five pounds a-head?

But, I had like to have forgotten one very necessary preliminary expense, namely the expense of *covering the nakedness* of those who have had the happiness to inhabit the joyous country, which is under the laws of Mr. Frederick Robinson's House. Their nakedness must be covered. Colonel Trench told the House (during the debate on Captain Maberly's motion), that a lady of high rank had assured him, that the Irish peasants were in such a state, that *even the females were perfectly naked*. Now, Sir, allowing this to be rather an exaggeration, I do not know that it is much of an exaggeration; for I see them come by scores, more than half-naked, through Kensington. I see children carried upon the backs of their mothers with not a bit more of clothing upon them than the clout of the *negress* in Jamaica; and yet, Sir, the canting crew and the Scotch economists, go to the West Indies to find out objects of compassion!

Those who come through Kensington make part of the Irish who are best off in their own country. The perfectly naked and the half-naked are left behind. Clothe them, then, you must, before you can put them on shipboard. They will be clothed to a certainty, or they will not stir. They may be shot like rats in their cabins; and, indeed, the soldiers might drive them along with their bayonets down to the sea-coast; but, there will be a *million* of them, observe. Now, what would it cost to clothe them? To put shoes on their feet, anything of a covering for the head, and anything of a covering for the carcass, though you were still to leave them without shirts and smocks, to give them not a second rag to change with, and set the ships swarming with lice; even this much of clothing would cost ten shillings a head. There is half a million of money, slap.

Well, you have them landed at last; and what will you do with them then? They have every thing to *create*, mind; or you must *carry out everything for them*. There are no people there before them, mind, to furnish them with lodgings, or to sell them victuals and drink, even if they had the money to buy it. They go, let what colony may be their destination, they go into a wilderness. I wish you had no, God forbid I should wish you to have the conducting of them in this wilderness. You know what a plague Moscs had with his twelve tribes. He was so weary of the job at last, that he prayed to the Lord to take it into his own hands; and that, I can assure you was mere child's play to what this would be.

You will please to observe, Sir, that these people go to a wilderness; and, though the soil may be capable of producing all varieties of fruit and

corn, it will not produce them without *labour and time*. But, stop a bit : there are some things to be thought of even before you begin to think about eating. The moment the people are landed they will want *utensils to cook with*. You remember the precaution that the honest Jews took in that respect when they left Egypt ! Your people must have pots and kettles, at the least. Then, they must have houses or sheds of some sort or other to cover them from the rains and the dews. They must have some sort of utensils to wash their rags in. Have you thought, Sir, about how they are to get soap and candles before the colony produces fat to make them with.

Once more, I pray you to recollect, that they *must go to a wilderness* ; for, if they be to go to a country where they are to buy in shops the things that they want, would it not be better to give them the money at once, and let them lay it out in Ireland ? Oh ! no, it is a wilderness that they must go to. They must build themselves houses, you will say. I heard a methodist parson telling the girls at BENNEDEN last summer, to look out for houses built without hands. The houses for your colonists must be of a different kind ; they will not only require hands, but nails and hinges and various other things. Locks and bolts, may, indeed, be unnecessary until, at least, there be something to take care of. Buildings cannot be made without *tools*, there must be chopping of trees down, sawing them into boards, and there must, at least, be barking of trees for the covering of a roof. Mr. Birkbeck settled in a country full of fine trees ; but, you may have read of his sending fifteen miles to get a deal board, and of his sending *forty miles* (I think it was) to get some wheat ground !

In short, every necessary of life must be wanted, and all must, for the first year, at least, be *carried from England*. But the best way, perhaps, of showing what must be done in such a case, is to show what actually WAS DONE when this Government colonized NEW BRUNSWICK, which country, it is my opinion, is one of the best colonies for a purpose of this sort, that belonged to his Majesty's dominions.

At the close of the American rebel war, our Government sent a parcel of old soldiers, who, during the war, had married Yankee girls, and a parcel of native American royalists, who thought it inconvenient to remain amongst the rebels ; these they sent to settle a district, which in honour of that glorious family of which Mr. Charles Yorke talks so much in answer to the slanders of the wicked Mrs. Clarke, is called NEW BRUNSWICK. This district begins, in fact, at the northern end of the Atlantic coast of the United States ; and it extends northward, about eight or nine hundred miles, perhaps. The main settlement was at the mouth of a very fine river called the River St. John, which comes down nearly from Quebec, and empts itself into the Bay of Fundy.

I was in that province not long after the colonising began. " *Commissioners*" were sent out into the province, after I had been in it about six or seven years. Their business was to make a survey of the province, they did make the survey. Their mass of rude materials (and more rude I never saw) were put into my hands, and I, who was a *Serjeant-Major*, drew up their Report, which they sent to the Government ! That was about *thirty-five years ago*, and I dare say those " *COMMISSIONERS*" have, if they be alive, pensions to this day.

I know, therefore, something about the manner, in which a Government colonises. The distance which the people had to go was a mere

trifle. The expense of this was very little. Then the settlers were far from being poor. They were rather *picked* people. They were soldiers, who had gone through a war, or they were able *Yankee farmers*. They were to settle on a spot not distant from their own homes. Yet, it was necessary to provide for them in the following manner:—They had *provisions* (*pork, flour, butter, pease, and rice*) found them for *four years*. They had blankets found them to a liberal extent. They were supplied with *tools, nails, and some other things*. And, observe, though they were but a mere handful; not more, I should suppose, than *twenty thousand*, the suffering amongst them (after the four years had expired) was very great: and many of them had further assistance after the expiration of the four years.

Is it likely, that each settler cost the Government less than *fifty pounds*? There was a *provision store for them*, which served, afterwards, as a barrack for four hundred men! There were *commissaries and clerks* a plenty; and, indeed, they were necessary. What, then, Sir, must be the cost of sending *across the seas*, and settling, a *million of people*? There must, observe, *be cattle sent out*; there must be food even for the cattle at first. Ploughs, harrows, spades, every thing. *Clothing for two or three years*! In short, the thing could never be done for forty pounds a-head, if it could for twice forty. However, let the conveyance and the keep and all together cost but *forty pounds a-head*, where are we to look for the forty millions of money?

Your talk is of *eight hundred thousand pounds* going a great way to put into execution an *extensive system of colonization*! This shows, Sir, that there is no close looking into the matter; that all is loose remark; that men talk, in short, on the affairs of Ireland, without thinking. This sum would not put a million of people on board of ship. It would do nothing for such a body; and, to remove less than a million must, according to your own notion, be doing nothing of any use.

But, Sir, does not this question sound in your ears at every sentence: “WHY NOT FEED AND CLOTHE THE PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE?” Food is plenty, observe. There is an *overstock of food*. Food is sent out of the country by endless ship-loads. All London, and a large part of England, are eating Irish bacon and butter. Well, then, there is plenty of food in Ireland. Why not purchase it for the people, and let them eat it there, instead of sending them across the seas to be fed?

Alas for poor Ireland, indeed, if such notions prevail in the *best* of the heads in Mr. Robinson’s House! The settlers in New Brunswick were fed on pork and butter *from Ireland*. Curious! And you would send the Irish across the sea, there to be fed upon the provisions raised in Ireland! For, provisions from Europe they must have; and, of course, from Ireland. Why not, again, I say, *feed and clothe the people where they are*, if you can first carry them across the sea, and then feed and clothe them?

Besides, Sir, have you settled on any plan for *selecting* the colonists? Are they to be taken by *lottery*? Are the *able* only to go? Or is there to be a mixture? If you take the helpless, what is to become of your colony? If the able, what a people will you leave behind? Never will you move them *without force*. And, will you force them from their *native* country, and not absolve them from their *allegiance*? Endless are the difficulties of this scheme, endless the absurdities springing out of the idea of a “redundant population.”

This affair of Ireland is a puzzler for PARSON MALTHUS and his school. It was plain sailing with the hardened fellow, when he had only to assail English labourers. When he had merely to assert, that a "redundant population" sprang out of the *poor-rates*. He could dispose of those who took poor-rates. He could even *draw up an Act of Parliament* for putting a stop to the evil of a redundant population, which proceeded from a people that bred too fast because they got relief and were made somewhat comfortable. But the Parson does not know what to do with those who breed too fast from *an exactly opposite cause*. He does not know what the devil to do with those who breed too fast because they are half naked and half starved! Poor Parson! Nothing can be more complete than this. The Parson, this great founder of this great philosophical school, insists upon it, that a greatly increasing population is an evil; that population (these are his very words) *treads close upon the heels of subsistence*; that population ought to be *checked*; that the way to check it is to pinch the bellies of the people; and that, in order to pinch their bellies in England, parish relief ought not to be given. All went swimmingly on with the school; nothing could be more logically proved than its doctrine. But, as if fate had determined to blow up the whole system at once, forth she brings these perverse Irish, who breed too fast because they are naked and starving. What, Parson, do precisely the same effects now-a-days come from precisely opposite causes? You should pray heartily, Parson, that these Irish may all go to the devil; for thither, to a certainty, they have blown your system.

And now, Sir, supposing a seventh part of this redundant population busily engaged in ousting the bears of New Brunswick, or the snakes of Botany Bay, how are you to prevent the same evil arising again? Why should the people not increase again? O! say you, This redundant population has been caused by the Irish gentlemen splitting their land into small portions. We saw how the contrary practice had (according to the famous population returns) produced this effect. We saw this in the last letter. But, no matter. How are you to make the Irish gentlemen alter the size of their farms? You say, that "all that is necessary is to take care, while the colonising scheme is going on, that the gentlemen of Ireland alter their plan of managing their land." Now, suppose this to be all that is necessary, how will you do this? Will you pass a law to compel men not to let their land except in certain quantities? Will you interfere directly in the management of men's estates? Will you adopt the monstrous maxim, that the poor man shall not be suffered to rent a bit of land? Will you do that which no aristocracy, no despot, ever talked of doing before?

No! you would do none of these. You talk thus at random about the thing; but if you were to hear it seriously proposed, if you were to see its details put upon paper; if you were to see your own proposition moulded into the form of an Act of Parliament, you would start back from it with affright. The thing that you speak of cannot be accomplished. That which you assert to be the cause of redundant population would still continue; and, of course, if you were to get rid of your million of people, the evil would return.

The Scotch economists, and especially one who writes a good deal in the *Morning Chronicle*, perceiving this grand difficulty, and having a great dislike to all *unnecessary expenses*, seem to have in view a much shorter way of going to work. They seem to be coming very near to

what I always said must be their last resort. The economist in the *Chronicle* had, the other day, a long and plaintive article on the subject of redundant population. In the course of that article, he has the following remarks: "Ever since the *introduction of potatoes*, the *small-pox inoculation*, and since the *cessation of the districtal wars* and "feuds, between the different clans, the population of these Isles has "increased, in a degree and proportion, superior to that of any other "part of our country. Some of these Isles, North Uist, Tyree, and "Eigg, for instance, have more than doubled their population within the "last sixty years."

Bravo! This is coming very near to the point. If this article have any sense, it expresses the *sorrow* of this Scotch economist, that human life has been spared by the means of *inoculation* and of *peace*! There may have been men, before these days, that entertained thoughts as horrible as these; but, I believe, that there never were men to express them before; and to express them, too, in a public newspaper, and without any disguise. This is, however, fair dealing. Here is no cant; no hypocrisy.

This is, too, the natural result of the doctrines of Malthus. It is impossible to adopt those doctrines without looking upon inoculation as a most mischievous discovery; without lamenting the absence of civil wars, without cursing that *Doctor Jenner* that got twenty thousand pounds from us. Jenner was not a Scotchman, I believe. A pretty Parliament it must have been to give this man twenty thousand pounds for a discovery which that same Parliament has almost now voted to be a scourge to the human race. To cry out against redundant population is the fashion in both Houses; and if the opinion be true; if it be true that there is a redundant population, and this has been by implication voted by both Houses; if this be true, and if this be the scourge that it is represented to be, what a pretty Parliament it must have been to give Doctor Jenner twenty thousand pounds for his discovery!

Now, do you not perceive, Sir, that, at every step, something or other arises to make us suspect the soundness of these new opinions? The moment we look at the matter with a sober and steady eye, we see that there *can* be no "*redundant population*;" and that the sufferings of the Irish people, and all the dangers that we have to apprehend from those sufferings, originate elsewhere.

I have always a particular dislike to hear men talk of national calamities, with regard to which the Government has *no control*, and for which, of course, it is not answerable. I, for my part, know of no public calamity, that can happen in our country, for which the Government (I mean to include the Parliament, of course), is not fully answerable. To be sure, calamities arising from thunder and lightning, from floods, from earthquakes; the Parliament, though it calls itself omnipotent, may be suffered to get out of a responsibility for these; but, for every other calamity, little or great, it is as much responsible as a jailor is for the custody of his prisoner, or as man is for his sins against God.

What! ram its hand into our pockets as deeply and as often as it pleases; make laws to banish us for life, if we utter words having even a tendency to bring it into contempt; mortgage the labour of the child in the cradle, and even of the child yet unborn; order us to be shut up in our houses from sunset to sunrise, and, if we disobey the orders, snatch us from our families, and transport us without trial by jury. What!

able to do all these things, and numerous other things of nearly the same nature, which would require a large volume merely to describe. Do all these things. Power to do all these without the slightest hesitation; but no power to prevent national calamities! No power to prevent a people being ruined by taxes and loans and jobs, and changing of the value of money, and surrendering the estates of the landlords and the wages of the labourer into the hands of Jews and jobbers!

I know of nothing more convenient to a Government than to be praised to-day for what is called prosperity of the country, and to hear it said to-morrow, that the calamities of the country arise from causes not under its control. This is, as I said before, one great objection to these new and whimsical notions. But, there is great mischief in their preventing us from taking a plain and straightforward view of the subject. If we ask ourselves, what is the matter in Ireland? The answer is, the people are *half-naked and half-starved*. This is the matter in Ireland: this is, in fact, the sum-total of the evil in that country. The cause of this evil is, that the Government, by means of its taxes and its church, aided by its army, draws away so much of the fruit of the people's labour *as not to leave them enough for food and raiment*.

This, Sir, is the real cause of Irish nakedness and famine and "extreme unktion;" and, as long as this cause exist, the trembling Jews and jobbers, who, with all their hearts, would cut the throats of the Irish for making them afraid; as long as this cause exist, those Jews and jobbers will subscribe and cant in vain.

Now, Sir, let me ask what evidence you have of a redundant population. I mean, what proof have you, not about the *increase* of population; but, what proof have you that there are *too many* people in Ireland? Pray, observe, if you please, that I am not now talking at all about the population lie: I am, for argument's sake, admitting it to be true, though I know it to be a lie. I am supposing that there are a great many more people in Ireland than there used to be; but, there may be many more than there used to be, and yet not *too many*; and, what I should like to have from you is, some fact or some argument to show that there is that *too many*. There are *too many* people in a country, when the country does not produce a sufficiency of food for them; but, you know as well as I do, that the *spare food of Ireland goes a great way towards feeding the people of England*. What, then, is meant by *too many* people in Ireland? The more there are of them, the more food their labour will produce. The increase of produce must keep pace with the increase of mouths; for mouths never come without hands, except, if we are to believe Dryden, in the case of soldiers. I need not say that this is the case, because all the world knows that it must be the case. It is, however, a notorious fact, as evinced in the case of Ireland herself. Is it not then, Sir, sorrowful to hear a man like you, seriously asserting, in your place in Parliament, that there are *too many* people in Ireland?

This is not, you will tell me, a positive, but a relative proposition. You have not qualified, but others have; and it is but fair to understand you in their sense. Captain Maberly, for instance, insisted that there were too many people in proportion to the employment that they had. This gentleman had a curious reason for the increase of population in Ireland; namely, that the Catholic priests got the people to marry, in order to get the MARRIAGE FEES. because these priests, he said, have no stipends.

Why, how the devil is this, noble Captain? Our parsons have plenty of good fixed income; and yet Malthus and Scarlett complain of improvident marriages here; the population returns say that the increase of people is enormous; and such is the want of employment, that in many places, men are harnessed and set to draw gravel like horses.

So much in the way of defence of the Catholic priests; but, now, Sir Francis Burdett, with regard to there being too many people in *proportion to the employment*. It is not, Sir, employment that there is lack of, but of money to pay for employment. And what is the cause of this lack of money? The cause is, that the Government, by its taxes and its church, with the aid of its army, draws the money away. This is what is meant by a *want of capital*. Capital is a slang Scotch word, meaning money. What else does it mean, I should be very glad if Mr. Peter M'Culloch would tell me. Captain Maberly, with true change-like mind, would *lend* them some money. I mean, he would have the Parliament lend them their own and the rest of the people's money. Lend them money! The very causes of their want of money prove to demonstration that they can never repay. Mr. Maberly observed, that the people in Ireland were a great deal better off where there had been *public works going on*. To be sure! only these should not be called public works; they should be called excuses for sending back to the Irish, when they were come to the verge of starvation, and when we on this side of the water were afraid of there being an open rebellion; excuses for sending them a small part of the money that had been taken away from them. To be sure they would be the better off.

With respect to this want of employment in Ireland. There were some of the strangest of notions brought forth, by the strange motion of Captain Maberly. Lord Althorp is represented to have observed, that "Every mode of introducing capital into Ireland ought to be adopted: that Ireland might be compared to a rich farm out of condition, upon which a tenant had just entered, and who thought it would answer his purpose to lay out a large sum with a view to ultimate profit (hear, hear, hear); so with Ireland at present, it might appear that the money expended upon her was lost, but here after she would return it with interest."

Strange comparison! "a rich farm out of condition," my Lord! And who has put it out of condition, my Lord? And what tenant has taken possession of it? If it be a rich farm out of condition, why is there not somebody to call the steward to account? And what hope is there of any amendment, while the steward and his understrappers keep drawing the substance of the farm away? Mr. Monck, who seems to have been very sharply bitten by Malthus, wanted to give employment on different principles from those of Captain Maberly; and (it was cruel in him) not to tell us what his own principles were. Indeed, more complete mental confusion I never witnessed than that which is perceivable in the speech of Mr. Monck. Lord Althorp hit upon the right way of giving employment, namely, to *take off all the indirect taxes*; but, Mr. Monck could not agree to this, though he would not tell us his own way of getting employment.

The truth is, the granting of money for the sake of causing employment to be given in Ireland, is a most shocking delusion. There is plenty of employment; the Government, by its taxes, its church, aided by its

army, take away the means of paying for that employment; and the money voted to create employment, and all the money raised, in subscriptions by the Jews and jobbers, is only so much tossed back again to keep the wretches quiet. But, Sir, at any rate, this mode of employing the money is less extravagant than the mode proposed by you; for you propose to send the poor wretches across the sea to have that employment for which you are to pay five hundred fold. Give them the money that it would require to colonise a million of them, and you will see what a flourishing people they will be.

I observed before (in my former letter), on that passage in your speech, where you speak of the Irish labourers overflowing England. Now Sir, is it not impossible to look at the ragged bands, which, every morning, pass through Kensington, and plunge into the fathomless recesses of the WEN; is it not impossible to look at these groups without perceiving that they are brought here almost by instinct? What do they come here for? They come in pursuit of the taxes, tithes, church-property, and rents too, which have all been carried out of their country, and which have left them so little in the shape of wages, that they have been unable to cover their nakedness and to fill their bellies. Their backs and bellies are more profound political economists than Mr. Maberly and Mr. Monck. The poor creatures seem to smell these proceeds which have been carried away from their country; and they come, poor souls, to get a share of them, if they can. They flock to England for precisely the same reason that the poor, starving, ragged, dejected, trodden-down countrymen of England are now flocking to London. These poor, ragged, smock-frocked creatures are crowding to the Wen by thousands. During this spring, I have had about two acres of ground to trench at Kensington. I kept something of an account, till I got to pretty nearly two hundred wretched creatures from the country, *who had never been in London before* but came to ask me for work. This flock of miserable wretches; these thousands of them that come flocking up, come to help build the *twenty-two thousand new houses*, which the taxes are at this moment adding to the WEN, to the great delight of PETER M'CULLOCH, who reads lectures in honour of a system that enables a hook-nosed round-eyed Jew to bag half a million of money, and to exchange his orange-basket for two or three parks and mansions, "by watching the turn of the market."

Yes, Sir, there is certainly a redundant population *in the Wen*; but not a word do we ever hear in the wise House, about this redundancy? No, never one single word about it. The Members must see what is going on; they must see the elements of misery and havoc assembling together. Strange perverseness! They are full of alarm at the redundant population, of which they have no proof, and in their talks relative to which they can produce no argument; you are all of you full of alarm at this imaginary redundancy; while the redundancy of the population of the Wen, with the existence of which every man of you is acquainted, seems to excite in you not the smallest attention.

Our poor starving wretches come up from the country to snap up the orts of the Jews, loan-jobbers, sinecure and pension men, women and children. This, too, is the object of the half-naked Irish that come. These leave less orts for our hungry creatures; but can we blame them for coming? If they had their proportion of Jews, jobbers, and tax-

eaters at Dublin, or at Irish watering-places, they would not come here. Between Folkestone and Sandgate, I met, last summer, eight Irishmen, with three hats and two pair of shoes amongst them. I had met their advance guard before, namely, two women, each with a child tied upon her back. I pitched the fellows up in a gossip. They said they wanted work: "O! no;" said I, "you are a *tax-hunting*; and if you look sharp, you will find some taxes in this little town a-head." The Irish are always quick. These fellows soon understood me. We talked about BISHOP JOCELYN and the *Irish tax-eaters*. I had provided for the women before, and I gave the fellows just as much as I thought would make them forget their troubles for one night, at any rate. As I was coming home I met with fifteen just such fellows cooking their breakfast by the way-side between Westerham and Chittingstone. These men had had a whole month of reaping. They had saved almost the whole of their money, which, they told me they intended to carry home. This certainly lowers the wages of English labourers; but are these people to be blamed? Is there no cure for their sufferings but sending them out of their country?

I am well aware, Sir, that, if it came to the pinch, you would be amongst the last men in the world to put such a project into execution. But, Sir, in the meanwhile, your erroneous opinions do harm by drawing off the attention of the people from the real cause of the suffering and the legitimate object of their censure. Directly, as visibly and as clearly as the stream to the spring, we trace the whole mass of unspeakable calamity to that House, to which you were addressing this speech. It has called itself omnipotent; but, at any rate, it has done just what it pleased with this kingdom, its wealth and its people. It was it that contracted the Debt; it was it that made the dead-weight; it was it that changed, backward and forward, the value of money. Nay, its professed eulogist, claims for it "*all the merit* of having brought the country *into its present state*." To it, therefore, as is most due, be given all the praise, or all the execration.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL,

ON THE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO THE PRACTICE OF PAYING THE WAGES OF LABOUR OUT OF THE POOR-RATES; AND TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY, AND WHAT MEASURES CAN BE CARRIED INTO EXECUTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALTERING THE PRACTICE.

(Political Register, August, 1824.)

LETTER I.

MY LORD,

Ryegate, August 11th, 1824.

When your Lordship, who, as the Morning Chronicle tells us, drew up this Report (the whole of which I inserted in the Register* of the 31st

* We have inserted this Report in a note, because the comments on it require that the reader should be able to refer to it; and, also, because it is a document that ought not to perish.—ED.

REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into the practice which prevails in some parts of the Country, of paying the Wages of Labour out of the Poor-Rates, and to consider whether any, and what Measures can be carried into execution, for the purpose of altering that practice, and to report their Observations thereupon to the House;—HAVE, pursuant to the Order of the House, examined into the Matter to them referred; and have agreed upon the following REPORT:

From the evidence, and other information collected by your Committee, it appears that, in some districts of the country, able-bodied labourers are sent round to the farmers, and receive a part, and in some instances the whole of their subsistence from the parish, while working upon the land of individuals. This practice was, doubtless, introduced at first as a means of employing the surplus labourers of a parish; but by an abuse, which is almost inevitable, it has been converted into a means of obliging the parish to pay for labour, which ought to have been hired and paid for by private persons. This abuse frequently follows immediately the practice of sending the unemployed labourers upon the farms in the parish. The farmer, finding himself charged for a greater quantity of labour than he requires, naturally endeavours to economize, by discharging those labourers of whom he has the least need, and relying upon the supply furnished by the parish for work, hitherto performed entirely at his own cost. An instance has been quoted, of a farmer's team standing still, because the farmer had not received the number of roundsmen he expected. Thus the evil of this practice augments itself; and the steady hard-working labourer, employed by agreement with his master, is converted into the degraded and inefficient pensioner of the parish.

of July); when your Lordship *moved* for this Committee (of which, it seems, you were Chairman), I said, in the Register, that, as to any *inquiry* into the practice in question, it was as useless as it would be to in-

In other parts of the country this practice has been carried to a very great extent, for the sake of diminishing the income of the clergyman of the parish, and paying for the expenses of one class of men out of the revenue of another. In the parish of Hurstmonceaux, in Sussex, it appears, that the wages of labour were reduced in this manner to sixpence a day; and a clergyman of a neighbouring parish has been threatened with the adoption of a similar practice.

This practice is the natural result of another, which is far more common, namely, that of paying an allowance to labourers for the maintenance of their children. In some counties, as in Bedfordshire, this payment usually begins when the labourer has a single child, wages being kept so low, that it is utterly impossible for him to support a wife and child without parish assistance.

The evils which follow from the system above described, may be thus enumerated:—

1st.—The employer does not obtain efficient labour from the labourer whom he hires. In parts of Norfolk, for instance, a labourer is quite certain of obtaining an allowance from the parish, sufficient to support his family; it consequently becomes a matter of indifference to him, whether he earns a small sum or a large one. It is obvious, indeed, that a disinclination to work must be the consequence of so vicious a system. He, whose subsistence is secure without work, and who cannot obtain more than a mere sufficiency by the hardest work, will naturally be an idle and careless labourer. Frequently the work done by four or five such labourers, does not amount to what might easily be performed by a single labourer working at task-work. Instances of this fact are to be found in the evidence, and in the statements of all persons conversant with the subject.

2dly.—Persons who have no need of farm-labour are obliged to contribute to the payment of work done for others. This must be the case wherever the labourers necessarily employed by the farmers receive from the parish any part of the wages which, if not so paid, would be paid by the farmers themselves.

3dly.—A surplus population is encouraged; men who receive but a small pittance know that they have only to marry, and that pittance will be augmented in proportion to the number of their children. Hence the supply of labour is by no means regulated by the demand, and parishes are burthened with thirty, forty, and fifty labourers, for whom they can find no employment, and who serve to depress the situation of all their fellow-labourers in the same parish. An intelligent witness, who is much in the habit of employing labourers, states, that when complaining of their allowance, they frequently say to him, "We will marry, and you must maintain us."

4thly.—By far the worst consequence of the system is, the degradation of the character of the labouring class.

There are but two motives by which men are induced to work: the one, the hope of improving the condition of themselves and their families; the other, the fear of punishment. The one is the principle of free labour, the other the principle of slave labour. The one produces industry, frugality, sobriety, family affection, and puts the labouring class in a friendly relation with the rest of the community; the other causes, as certainly, idleness, imprudence, vice, dissension, and places the master and the labourer in a perpetual state of jealousy and mistrust. Unfortunately, it is the tendency of the system of which we speak, to supersede the former of these principles, and introduce the latter. Substenance is secured to all; to the idle as well as the industrious; to the profligate as well as the sober; and, as far as human interests are concerned, all inducement to obtain a good character is taken away. The effects have corresponded with the cause. Able-bodied men are found slovenly at their work, and dissolute in their hours of relaxation; a father is negligent of his children; the children do not think it necessary to contribute to the support of their parents; the employers and the employed are engaged in perpetual quarrels, and the pauper, always relieved, is always discontented; crime advances with increasing boldness, and the parts of the country where this system prevails are, in spite of our gaols and our laws, filled with poachers and thieves.

quires, whether it were the practice of horses to eat grass; the one fact being just as notorious and as common as the other: and that, as to a remedy, there was none (that you could propose) that could possibly pro-

The evil of this state of things has often induced individuals to desire further means of punishing labourers who refuse or neglect to work, and the Legislature has sometimes listened with favour to such proposals; but we are persuaded, that any attempt to make the penalties of this kind more efficacious, would either be so repugnant to the national character as to be totally inoperative, or, if acted upon, would tend still further to degrade the labouring classes of the kingdom.

The effects of this system very clearly show the mistake of imagining that indiscriminate relief is the best method of providing for the happiness of the labouring classes. Employers, burdened with the support of a surplus population, endeavour to reduce the wages of labour to the lowest possible price. Hence, where the system to which we allude has gained ground, the labourers are found to live chiefly on bread, or even potatoes, scarcely ever tasting meat or beer, or being able even to buy milk; while in other parts of the country, where high wages are still prevalent, the food and whole manner of living of the labourer are on a greatly better scale. This difference is, doubtless, to be attributed to the excess of population in particular parts of the country; but that excess is in great part to be attributed to the mal-administration of the Poor-laws during the latter years of the late war.

Without assigning any precise period when the system of paying part of the wages of labour out of the Poor-rate commenced, we are of opinion, that although perhaps it began earlier in some districts, it has generally been introduced during the great fluctuation of the price of provisions which have occurred in the last thirty years. In the year 1795, especially, a year of scarcity, parishes, finding that employers could not afford to pay their labourers a sufficient sum to support their families, even on the most stinted scale, added a contribution out of the Poor-rate to healthy labourers in full employment.

We are happy to be able to say, that the evil of which we complain is partial, and that many counties in England are nearly, if not totally, exempt from the grievance. In Northumberland, wages are twelve shillings a week; and labourers, having families, do not usually receive assistance from the Poor-rate. In Cumberland, wages vary from twelve shillings to fifteen shillings a week, and the report is equally satisfactory. In Lincolnshire, the wages are generally twelve shillings per week, and the labourers live in comfort and independence. At Wigan, in Lancashire, wages are seven or eight shillings a week, and relief is afforded to a man with three children; in the division of Oldham, in the same county, a great manufacturing district, wages are from twelve shillings to eighteen shillings a week, and no such practice is known. In Yorkshire, wages are generally twelve shillings a week; but in some parts of that extensive county, the practice of giving married labourers assistance from the parish appears very prevalent. In Staffordshire, wages are about ten shillings; and labourers, having families, only occasionally receive relief from the Poor-rate. In the divisions of Oswaldslow, in the county of Worcester, the practice of paying part of the wages of labour out of the Poor-rate, has been entirely put a stop to by the vigilance of the Magistrates. If we turn to the midland, southern, and western parts of the country, we find a great variety in the rate of wages. In the Wingham division, in Kent alone, it appears, that the lowest wages paid were, in one parish, sixpence; in four, eightpence; in eleven, one shilling and sixpence; in four, two shillings; and, in the greater number, one shilling a day. In Suffolk, Sussex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, the plan of paying wages out of the Poor-rate, has been carried to the greatest extent. Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, and Devonshire, are likewise afflicted by it. In some of these counties wages are eight shillings or nine shillings; in others, five shillings; and in some parts they have been and are so low as three shillings a week for a single man; four shillings and sixpence for a man and his wife.

A great number of Returns on this subject have been collected, of which an Abstract, when made, will be presented to your Honourable House.

With respect to the remedy for the evils pointed out, it is obvious to remark, that a great, if not the greater part, arises from the mal-administration of the

duce any good effect. We have now the result before us: no light, but a little darkness, has been thrown on the subject of inquiry; and no remedy has been proposed.

laws. Yet when this remark is made, it does not appear how, under the present system, the laws which regard the poor should be otherwise than ill administered. Where no select vestry or assistant overseer has been appointed, the poor are consigned to the care of a person named only for one year, and in general anxious chiefly to get rid of his office with as little trouble to himself as possible; or, if he endeavours, in spite of clamour and vexation, to improve the practice, his designs are liable to be overset by the orders of Magistrates, who, with excellent intentions, are often not conversant with the details of the management of the parish in whose concerns they interfere.

The great object to be aimed at, is, if possible, to separate the maintenance of the unemployed from the wages of the employed labourer; to divide two classes, which have been confounded; to leave the employed labourer in possession of wages sufficient to maintain his family, and to oblige the rest to work for the parish in the way most likely to prevent idleness.

In order to effect the purpose of separating the wages of employed labourers from the Poor-rate, it appears to us, that much might be done by affording to appellants against the yearly accounts, the easiest remedy of which the law admits. The Act of 50 Geo. III. c. 49, directs, that the yearly accounts, to be made out according to previous Acts of Parliament, shall be submitted to two or more Justices, at a special sessions; and the Act empowers the Justices, "if they shall so think fit," to examine into the matter of every such account, and to "disallow and strike out of every such account, all such charges and payments as they shall deem to be unfounded, and to reduce such as they shall deem exorbitant; and they are to specify the cause for which any charge is disallowed or reduced."

Notwithstanding this provision, it appears, that at present, even when a complaint is made, that the sums levied on the parish have not been applied according to the intention of the law; a practice has, in some places, prevailed, of directing the complainant to appeal to the quarter sessions. This proceeding entails the employment of counsel, and an expense both of money and time, which is both unnecessary and oppressive. There is some ambiguity certainly in the word "unfounded" contained in the Act just quoted; but there cannot well exist a doubt that it is intended to apply to charges or payments which do not come within the scope and intention of the Poor-laws.

On this, and on almost every part of the subject, we may observe, that if the payers of the rates do not complain, and thereby enable the neighbouring Justices to execute the law at present existing, it is needless to attempt, by any new Act, to prevent abuses permitted or connived at by those who have the clearest interest in repressing them. Above all, the farmers themselves ought to perceive, that any practice which tends to degrade the character of the labourer, tends, in the same degree, to diminish the value of his labour, and to render agricultural property less secure, and less desirable.

By the Act of the 43d of Elizabeth, it is ordered, that the "Churchwardens and Overseers" shall take order, from time to time, with the consent of two or more Justices, for setting to work the children of all such who shall not be thought able to keep and maintain their children. This provision, while it clearly shows that the framers of that Act never had it in contemplation to raise a fund for the support of all the children of all labourers, affords the means of remedying, in some degree, the existing evil of adding to the wages of labour from the Poor-rate. Wherever, from disinclination to work, parents earn less than they might do, in order to draw from the parish fund, it might be found highly useful that the parish-officers, with the consent of the Magistrates, should, instead of giving money to the parents, set to work their children, who would, at the same time, be removed from the example of idle or dissolute parents. But this remedy must be used with caution, and might be inexpedient, if applied in cases where the best labourers, with their utmost exertions, cannot earn sufficient to bring up their children without parish assistance.

According to the system at present pursued in many counties, a scale of allowance is drawn up by the Magistrates, fixing, in money, the sums which a labourer

Nevertheless, some good may arise out of this *Report*; for, in the first place, it contains no bad answer to the braggings of Mr. Frederick Robinson. We all knew the dismal facts before; but, here they are *confessed*

is to receive, in proportion to the size of his family, and the current price of flour or meal. On this allowance, whether idle or industrious, the labourer relies as a right; and when he receives less, he makes an angry appeal to a Magistrate, not as a petitioner for charity, but as a claimant for justice. Without questioning the fitness of the scale upon which these tables have been framed, we cannot but regret that the Magistrates should promulgate general regulations, the obvious tendency of which is, to reduce the rate of wages, and create dissatisfaction between the labourer and his employer.

It has been thrown out, that the practice of giving relief to able-bodied labourers on account of their impotent children, ought to be positively forbidden by legislative enactment. Your Committee are not prepared to go this length; but they venture to suggest, that where wages have been reduced, with a view to supply the deficiency from the parish rates, relief might be refused to any person actually in the employment of an individual. The consequence might certainly be to throw, at first, some married labourers entirely upon the parish, but in a short time it is probable, a more wholesome system of paying the wages of labour would be permanently adopted.

Much good has been effected in some parts of the country, by the adoption of what has been called the Cropedy or Oundle plan, or labour-rate; and a Bill has been introduced into the House, for giving to such a plan, adopted under certain regulations, the force of law. It appears to us quite impossible to frame any Act on this subject which shall meet every case, but a general sanction might be extremely beneficial; and the following form, which has been suggested, appears as unexceptionable as any. Indeed it is very similar to one contained in a Bill brought into the House in an early part of the Session:—

“The parishioners in vestry shall, if they think fit, draw up rules and regulations for the maintenance of the old and impotent and other poor unable to work, as also for the employment of the able poor; and the same, signed or agreed to by a majority in value, shall be presented to the Justices, to be by them amended, approved, or rejected, or sent back for alterations, and when adjusted to the satisfaction of the Justices and parishioners, to be parochial law for one year.”

With respect to the second object, the mode of finding employment for those who profess themselves unable to obtain it, it appears to your Committee, that the parish should, if it be possible, provide them with labour less acceptable in its nature than ordinary labour, and at lower wages than the average rate of the neighbourhood. Your Committee can add, that this method has been found practically beneficial in all places where it has been carried into effect.

It must never be forgotten, in considering this subject, that the evils produced by the Poor-laws are different in different places; that all the good effects hitherto produced have been accomplished by improved management; and that, if those effects have not been more general, it is because the management of the poor has in the greater part of the country improved very little.

For the purpose of hastening and ensuring such improvement, Your Committee feel inclined to recommend to more general adoption the appointment of select vestries, and of assistant-overseers receiving a salary. The greatest evils arise from intrusting a business, so complicated, to inexperienced and inefficient officers; and much benefit has been produced by taking advantage of the provisions of the 59 Geo. III. c. 12, on this subject. The greatest amendment may likewise be made by a judicious attention to that part of the Act, wherein a select vestry is required to “inquire into, and determine upon, the proper objects of relief, and the nature and amount of the relief to be given: and in each case shall take into consideration the character and conduct of the poor person to be relieved, and shall be at liberty to distinguish, in the relief to be granted, between the deserving and the idle, extravagant or profligate poor.”

In a Bill introduced into the House in the early part of the session, there is a clause, imposing on the quarter sessions the duty of controlling the parish accounts, which are ordered to be laid before them, and enabling them to appoint an examiner, to look into the expenditure of each parish. Whether, in the shape

by yourselves. It is necessary, that the *world*, that *other nations*, know the state in which we are; and these confessions of your own, of the big House itself, are, in this respect, of the greatest consequence. I propose to make some remarks upon this Report, and on the evidence attached to it. I propose to show how little, how very, very little, your Lordship and your colleagues of the Committee appear to know relative to the causes, the workings, or the effects of the evil you were inquiring about. And, before I have done, I will endeavour to show that this evil has its origin in the very same source as that which is producing such terrific effects in Ireland.

But, first of all, let me insist on my right to almost implicit confidence in what I may say with regard to this subject. For *seventeen years* I have been complaining of the calumnies heaped on the labourers by those who talked of the increase of the Poor-rates. In answer to MALTHUS, to STURGES BOURNE and the HAMPSHIRE PARSONS, to SCARLETT; to all who reviled the poor as the robbers of the land, and who ascribe the increase in the amount of the Poor-rates to idleness in the labourers, to want of care, to dissolute habits, and the like; in answer to all these, I said, for years and years, "it is not, in fact, an increase in Poor-rates; it is money " raised under the name of Poor-rates, to be paid to the labourers in the " *shape of wages*; and this, because it is the most effectual way of grinding down the labourer; a desire to do which has been created by the " difficulties of the occupiers of the land, owing to the Debt and taxes." This was my answer to the whole of these revilers.

At last, at the end of about seventeen years, your Lordship and your Committee have found out, that it is not *Poor-rates*, but that it is *miserable wages*, that the poor creatures get. And whose *fault* is this? What says your Report as to this question? What has been the *cause* of this standard of human misery? Your Report is not very distinct upon this head; but, there runs throughout this Report a sort of *complaint* against the *farmers*, as if they *gained* by this practice.

This is, perhaps (for I do not speak *positively*), as childish an idea, something as shallow as ever found its way into Parliamentary Report.

in which it at present stands, this provision is fit to be adopted, we will not decide; but, in the opinion of many persons, it might be useful that the quarter sessions should appoint an inspector of parish accounts, whose duty it should be to report to the Magistrates the state of the poor, and to point out any flagrant instance of negligence or abuse. A more regular and distinct method of keeping the parish accounts might likewise prove highly advantageous.

At the same time we cannot too strongly express our opinion, that, even as the law at present stands, much might be done by the vigilant and enlightened attention of the Magistrates. If they would point out to the farmers the mischievous consequences of placing their labourers upon the public fund; if they would discountenance the abuses which prevail, and give every support to those who endeavour to reform the present system, there can be no doubt that great good might be effected. The farmers themselves have adopted it unwillingly, and must be fully aware of its mischievous effects. The distress which has so long restrained the application of agricultural capital is now happily disappearing, and there never was a more favourable moment for reforming an abuse, which in very few places is as yet of thirty years' growth. Let the Magistrates, and, generally, all charged with the administration of the Poor-laws, observe, that if these laws have been retained, with the humane purpose of preserving honest indigence from starving, and remedying any sudden want of employment, yet, that if misapplied, they may become a greater evil to the country than any partial misfortune, or temporary calamity, could inflict.

4th June, 1824.

The *farmers the gainers* by this oppression of the labourers ! Why, the very thought seems to discover a want of capacity to know why a stool falls when its legs are knocked from under it. And yet this very idea, this worse than whimsical thought, appears to be looked upon as the brilliant star that gives light and character to the whole Report.

Let me strip the thing of its useless trappings, and place it naked before the reader. The Report says that this practice of paying wages out of Poor-rates, is used "as a means of obliging the *parish* to pay for labour, which ought to be paid for by *private persons*." — It says, that, by this practice, "persons who have no need of farm-labour, are obliged to contribute to the payment of work done for others." The meaning of which is this : that the farmers, by going to the poor-book for the wages, or part of the wages, of their labourers, make the gentlemen, the parsons, the traders, and all others, help to pay for the work done for the farmers only.

If this were so : if this were not a childish thought ; if this had one single particle of common sense in it, what an admirable cure your Lordship and the Committee have provided ! It is nothing short of this ; that the Magistrates should "point out to the farmers the *mischievous consequences* of placing their labourers upon the public fund !" Good God ! "*Mischievous consequences* ?" And, to whom, pray ? Not to the farmers ; for, your dislike of the practice, consists, in part, of the gain which arises to the farmers at the expense of the rest of the parish. Who, then, feels the "*mischievous consequences* ?" The rest of the parish, to be sure ; but not the farmers. To suppose, then, that the farmers will give up the practice, merely upon being told, that it is injurious to other persons, and that it tends to degrade the labourers ; to suppose such a thing, really seems to be little short of a proof of downright childishness.

However, what sort of mind must that be, which can entertain this idea of *gain* to the farmers from such a cause ? Is it not clear, that, upon an average, the farmers cannot be *gainers* (any more than other people) by this oppression of the labourers ? If, by means of paying wages out of Poor-rates, the farmer (farmer Jobson, for instance) gets his labour done for a *hundred pounds a-year*, instead of *two hundred pounds a-year* : if Jobson do this, is not his farm worth a *hundred a-year more* ? And will not Jobson's landlord take care to have that additional hundred a-year ? What, then, does Jobson get by the paying of wages out of Poor-rates ? When a man goes to take a farm, he calculates the amount of labour amongst other things ; and, if Jobson find, that the labour is made cheap by this resort to the poor-book, he will give so much more for the farm. It is nonsense to talk of men's *dispositions*, in a case like this : the landlord will, of course, let his farm to the highest bidder ; and, if Jobson will not give a rent in due consideration of the payment of labour out of the Poor-rates, some other farmer will. It is a matter of *open market* ; a matter of *fair competition*. Suppose that, in the parish of Ryegate, things were so situated as to cause Jobson's labour (for a year) to be done, by means of Poor-rate payments, for *fifty pounds a-year*. Then suppose that, in the parish of Betchworth, adjoining the other, Honez, who has precisely such a farm as Jobson, is compelled to pay a *hundred and fifty pounds a-year for his labour*. Does your lordship and your Committee of the Collective sup-

pose, that HODGE and JOBSON would give the *same amount of rent*? No: you will hardly suppose this; and yet, this is what you must suppose, and must prove too, unless you give up, as whimsical, as nonsensical, as childish in the extreme, the idea, that the *farmers* are the *gainers* by this oppressive practice.

If there were a particular class who gained by this practice, it would be *the landlords*. But, even this is taking a much too confined view of the matter. The *gain* is divided amongst all those who do not labour: it is a system of pure oppression, arising out of the taxes: all gain, in some sort; all who eat taxes; all gain from the labourer. The intermediate classes do not suffer so much. When pressed, they press those below them: and, at last, when the pressure reaches the labourer, he is all but squeezed out of existence. Nothing can be more childish than to suppose, that those who own, or who occupy, the land, gain (unless they be tax-eaters) by this oppression of the labourers. Is it not clear, that, in whatever proportion the farm-labour is paid for by the community at large, *in that same proportion* farm produce must be *lower in price*? If a law were passed to cause the whole of the farm-labour to be paid by others than the farmers, is it not clear that farm produce would *sell for a great deal less* in consequence of this? A farmer would then be no better off than he is now. He would gain nothing by the change. His out-goings would be diminished; but, his prices (or in-comings) must diminish in the same proportion; or, he would soon find that competition would destroy him.

Thus, then, my Lord JOHN, away goes this pretty dream! The *cause* of this curious mode of oppressing the labourers is not to be found in the *disposition* nor in the *interest* of the farmers. It is to be found in that enormous load of taxes, which presses the several classes down upon each other: it is to be found in the Debt, in the Dead-weight, in the enormous amount of sinecures and pensions and grants: it is to be found in all these, and in that standing army in time of peace, which is now costing more than our army ought to cost in time of war. In short, the cause of this horrid effect is to be found in *Acts of Parliament*, to some one or other of which, or to some collections of them, every evil, now complained of, can be directly traced.

You decline to say precisely *when this practice began*, but say, that it was generally introduced, during "*the great fluctuation of the price of provisions which occurred during the last thirty years.*" Well, then, my Lord John, what was the cause of that great fluctuation in the price of provisions? Pitt's villainous paper-money. That came forth. It raised the price of provisions; but it did not raise the price of labour. From the time that the accursed funding system began, the English labourer began to be robbed. Every million that was added to the Debt, took a something from the meal of the labourer. The curse came into England with a Whig Revolution. If you look back at prices of food and of raiment, compared with the prices of labour; if you do this from the hour of the arrival of the Dutch King, to the present day, you will find, that the lot of the labourer has been growing worse and worse. The late King had not been long upon the throne, before the labourer began to taste of what might be called misery. The Butes and the Norths made the English labourer acquainted with degradation that his forefathers had never dreamed of. Pitt and his followers were destined

to bring him down to the dirt itself, where he now is, prostrate, and the most wretched, dejected, and almost loathsome animal to be found upon the face of the earth.

The last thirty years have, indeed, done more against him than the thirty years before. A new sort of money was put forth, by which the labourer is as clearly robbed as a man is robbed upon the highway. It is surprising that your Lordship and your colleagues should not, in this case, have adverted to the evidence of the Agricultural Report of 1821. In that Report you would have found, in the evidence of Mr. ELLMAN the elder, all the means of stating to the House, the real and only cause of this ruin and degradation of the labouring classes. In that evidence, you have the price of provisions year after year, and you have the price of labour year after year. Here is the cause of the evil that you have been reporting about. Yet, of this cause you take not the smallest notice; but talk about the fluctuations in the price of provisions: just as if such fluctuations would have been of any consequence, if the price of labour had kept pace with the price of provisions. But, it is curious to observe how carefully, upon all these occasions, the real cause of the mischief is kept out of view, the motive of which is much too obvious to need to be stated.

It would have been surprising, indeed, to me, if a Report coming from such a quarter had forborne entirely from harping upon the string of "*surplus population.*" This monstrous idea is not so current as it was: people seem to be a little ashamed of repeating the ridiculous outcry. Still, you must have a little touch of it. One of the consequences, you say, of thus half starving the labouring people, is, to "*encourage a surplus population.*" Strange idea! That an increase of the people should be caused by keeping them in a state of half starvation! Now, you tell us, that, by this practice, the single man is made to work for *three shillings* a week; and a man and his wife for *four and sixpence*. This is fine *encouragement* to marry, to be sure! But, upon what ground do you assert that this practice encourages an increase of the people? You say: "Men who receive but a small pittance, know that they have *only to marry*, and that pittance will be augmented *in proportion to the number of their children.*" What, then, getting but little from the parish, and wanting to get more, they marry in order to have a parcel of children! What, then, is your notion about this matter, my Lord John? Your Lordship, to the misfortune of the fair sex, is a bachelor, I believe; if you had been a married man, you would have known that children EAT. You would, indeed, my Lord John. They have all of them got mouths, not only to eat with, but to make a devilish noise with, if the eating do not come in proper time and quantity. So, that these labourers of yours, who marry in order to augment their own meal, must be fellows destitute of all calculation; and yet you tell us, that an intelligent witness, Mr. JOHN DAWKS, assures you that the labourers say, "*we will marry, and then you must maintain us.*" I do not believe this witness; and I am surprised why you should have believed him, in preference to two other of your witnesses. The Reverend PHILIP HUNT, and HENRY DAUMMOND, Esq. The former tells you, that "*very few labourers marry voluntarily.*" And the latter tells you this: "I believe nothing is *more erroneous*, than the assertion, that Poor-laws tend to improvident marriages: I never knew an instance of a girl being married till she was

"with child; nor ever knew of a marriage taking place through a calculation for future support." Strange, indeed, my Lord John, that your Report should be directly in the teeth of this evidence! Especially the evidence of Mr. DRUMMOND, who, besides being an active Justice of the Peace, is well known to have taken uncommon pains in order to promote the well-being of the labouring classes. However, it is against nature to suppose, that a system which necessarily reduces people to a state of half starvation, should tend to the increase of that people.

This idea of a redundant population, can serve no other purpose than that of taking from the shoulders of the Government the charge of having produced such a state of misery. The thing is an absurdity upon the face of it; but, like all other wild notions, it makes its partisans zealous in proportion to its wildness. The Morning Chronicle, a few weeks ago, speaking of the impolicy of Russia in excluding our manufactures, observed, with all the coolness imaginable, as if the proposition were a thing of course: it observed, "when, indeed, the population of Russia shall have become more dense, it may be good policy to prohibit the entrance of our manufactures." So that here we are to learn that the Russians, too, are necessarily going on increasing in number! What an intolerable piece of folly! To speak of it as a fact; as of an admitted fact; as a matter of course thing; as an universally acknowledged truth, that the people in every country on earth are regularly going on increasing in number! When was there before an idea like this existing in the world. Why do not the conceited asses apply their doctrine to the fowls of the air? Why should we be surprised, if the Morning Chronicle were, one of these days, to talk about something to be done, when the population of the rookeries shall become more dense?

A little while ago, this same writer, puzzled very much by a question that I put: "How comes it that a surplus population was never talked of UNTIL NOW?" The Chronicle, in answer to this, observed, that the complaint of surplus population was not entirely a novelty; for that, a similar complaint was made in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and that an Act was passed to prevent the building of cottages; because it was thought that the number of cottages encouraged the people to marry, and thus increased the population.

Perhaps, my Lord John, a better fact for me, and a worse fact for my opponents, could not possibly have been discovered. It is very true, that in the reign of this cunning and clever and cruel woman, this complaint of surplus population was made, and this Act of Parliament was passed. But why did this famous virago complain of her having too many subjects? Because the poorer part of those subjects stunned her with clamours on account of their miseries. She, unambitious and modest as she was, had still no objection to have numerous subjects. It was the clamours of those subjects, for food and raiment, that she did not like. And whence those clamours, my Lord John? Whence the strange idea that the people were increasing too fast? It was not, alas! the people that had increased: it was their miseries that had increased. They had, just before that, been robbed of that means of relief, which the law of nature and the law of the land had appointed for them. The people; the common, the labouring people; those who produce every thing that everybody eats, drinks and wears, have always had a perfect right to support out of the land of their country, in case of inability to obtain a main-

tenance by their labour. How reasonable, how obviously just is this ! The performance of labour, I mean heavy bodily labour, is absolutely necessary to the carrying on of the affairs of mankind. The far greater part of labourers must, *of necessity*, be only just able to obtain a sufficiency of food and of raiment, in the days of their health and vigour. This must of necessity be the case : of absolute necessity, mind ; for, otherwise, the necessary labour would not be performed. This being the case, there must always of necessity, be a considerable portion of the labouring class to receive, in one shape or another, assistance from the richer class.

Hence the necessity of a provision made by law for indigent labourers. Just previous to the reign of Elizabeth, this provision in England, had been taken away. The provision was, a certain part of the revenue of the Catholic Church. There were *no magistrates* with power to regulate the portion of relief. There were *no overseers* of the poor. There were *no collections* expressly for the poor. But, there was the custom, practised for ages and ages, of looking upon the poor and destitute, of looking upon all those who could not maintain themselves, as persons to be maintained out of the revenues of the Church. Those revenues passed through the hands of men, who could have no families of their own ; of men who could possess no private property ; of men whose office made them personally and particularly acquainted with all the affairs of every poor person ; of men who must of necessity have had a disposition to do that which was right with regard to relieving of the poor ; because, to have done that which was wrong must, of necessity, have produced inconvenience and evil to themselves.

Such was the state of things with regard to the poor but a little while previous to the reign of Elizabeth. While this state of things remained ; while such was the amiable mode of administering relief to the necessitous part of the labouring classes ; while such was the state of things in England, no complaints were made about a "*surplus population* : " the Sovereign did not complain that he was getting too many subjects, and he called for no Acts to be passed to *prevent the building of cottages* ; a thing so monstrous, so ruffianly tyrannical ; so ruthless, and ferocious, that the thing ought now to be expunged from the Statute-book, with some signal mark of national execration ; for, cottages are continually *wearing out*, and, to enact that there shall be no new ones, is to enact that a part of the nation shall perish.

This monstrous act was produced by the taking away of that provision for the poor, which existed previously to the plundering of them by the ruffian HAL, the wife-killing HAL, and his band of greedy and merciless courtiers. The poor, or, rather, the indigent part of the labourers, had been left wholly destitute. They clamoured for food. They cried out for *employment* ! Curious thing ! What ! *too many people*, then ! Just the same complaint that we hear now. The indigent labourers had been stripped of all relief. The selfish and villanous courtiers, who had got possession of the means of relief, took care to keep those means to themselves. This gave rise to the cry of surplus population then. At last, Poor-laws were enacted in the reign of that Queen. A compulsory assessment, and distribution by the hands of the overseers came to supply the place of the natural and amiable mode of relief which existed before. Mark the injustice of this. The public property, out of which the poor had been relieved, had been seized on and distributed amongst the hungry courtiers ; or transferred to priests having wives and families to maintain.

The sole gainers were the courtiers, and this new race of priests; and all the land proprietors of this whole nation became loaded with a poor-tax for ever!

As soon, however, as that poor-tax was well established, there were no more complaints about a *surplus population*. On the contrary, from that time up to within these seven years, or thereabouts, an increase of population has always been held forth as an infallible sign of prosperity, and as a proof of excellently good Government.* Strange! Now, all at once, it is discovered that an increase in the number of the people is an evil! Opinions so strange; doctrines so new and so monstrous, are a proof of a disordered state of things. They are a proof, that those who have the management of our affairs know not which way to turn themselves! and, how are we to hope for anything like a remedy being applied, when notions so childish come forth to the public in printed reports, made to the House of Commons itself?

There is one fact, my Lord John, stated in the evidence, which is of so much importance, that I wonder your Lordships should have omitted it in your Report: it is this, that from one parish, the parish of Ewhurst, near Northiam in Sussex, there have been about twenty-eight persons, men, women, and children, "SENT TO NORTH-AMERICA, mostly, if not wholly, *at the expense of the parish!*" This is so disgraceful a fact, that it deserved particular notice and particular reprobation. It is the first time in the history of the world, that we have heard of anything so unfeeling and so unjust, as a nation sending its indigent labourers into a foreign nation, there to find food or to perish. While this has been going on, *sixteen hundred thousand pounds*, partly collected from these very miserable labourers, have been voted by that very House of Commons to whom you were making your Report, to be given for the *relief* of the "*poor Clergy of the Church of England;*" in which Church there are several Bishops, the neat income of each of whom exceeds thirty thousand pounds sterling a-year.

But, my Lord John, matter like this must be reserved for my next Letter. I shall conclude the present Letter with observing, that your inquiry has been wholly fruitless. You trace the evil to no cause: you give us a most deplorable picture of the state of this once happy people. It is manifest, that the thing to be desired is, higher wages to the labourer; but, as far as your recommendations go, they have not the smallest tendency to produce that effect. You talk, at the close of your Report, of the magistrates, observing, that the Poor-laws, if misapplied, "may become "a greater evil to the country than any partial misfortune or temporary "calamity could inflict." About misfortunes and calamities *inflicting evils*, I, of course, can know little, the idea being above my cut; but, this I know, that let the magistrates "*observe*" as long as they please, they will never be able to make an amendment in this state of things, until the burden of taxation shall have been reduced more than one-half in weight. All the struggles to get rid of Poor-rates will be in vain. There will always be great numbers of indigent persons in the class of labourers. There is a natural cause for this. It arises out of the nature of the affairs

* Mr. BURKE, in his "Thoughts on the French Revolution," argues that the old Government of France could not have been a bad one, because the people were increasing under it.—ED.

of men ; and if the employers of the labourers be so severely pressed upon by the State, they must, in their turn, press upon the labourers. The labourers thus pressed upon must become more indigent. They have been so pressed upon as for all to become paupers ; and it is absurdity in the extreme to suppose, that the farmers who are so hard pressed themselves for the means of paying wages, will not, if they possibly can, draw part of that wages from the public fund. You hint, in your Report, that the impotent children of ablebodied labourers may be refused relief by positive enactment. You say, indeed, that you are not prepared to go this length ; but that you venture to suggest, that where wages have been reduced with a view to supply the deficiency from the parish-rates, "*relief might be refused to any person actually in the employment of an individual.*" You seem aware that this would throw maimed labourers out of employment, but think it probable that it would lead, in a short time, to a more wholesome system of paying the wages of labour.

Your reasons for this opinion you keep to yourselves. According to every view that I can take of the matter, nothing more visionary ever entered the mind of man. Not a single married labourer would be employed, if such positive enactments were to pass. Another hint is, that the OUNDLE PLAN may be adopted, and enforced by law. And what is this plan ? Why, to compel every land occupier to give employment to a *certain amount*. Here no regard is had, or can be had, to the pecuniary means of the occupier ; no regard to the nature of his farm or his crops ; no regard whatever to his means of any kind. He is to be compelled to expend so much in labour every month, or to pay so much money to the parish. Why, my Lord John, to talk of property in a country where such a law could be in existence is madness. A man is no longer the master of anything that he has hitherto called his own. It would be a system of downright slavery ; and the farmer would be neither more nor less than the slave driver.

In my next Letter I propose to lay aside all the little frivolities, and to take such a view of the subject as becomes a man who is sincerely desirous of seeing the labourers of England, once more, what they formerly were, and of seeing the kingdom placed in a situation to enable it to meet those shocks, which it will inevitably have to encounter.

In the meanwhile, I remain,

Your Lordship's most obedient and
Most humble servant,
WM. COBBETT.

TO LORD JOHN RUSSELL,

ON THE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO THE PRACTICE OF PAYING THE WAGES OF LABOUR OUT OF THE POOR-RATES; AND TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY, AND WHAT MEASURES CAN BE CARRIED INTO EXECUTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALTERING THE PRACTICE.

(*Political Register*, August, 1824.)

LETTER II.

MY LORD,

Kensington, Aug. 18, 1824.

In returning to this subject, I have no apology to offer to your Lordship, you having brought it before the Public, and it being a subject of the greatest possible importance. Our situation is of a very singular character. We make a figure of brilliancy that astonishes the world; and we have, at the same time, the most miserable people that ever saw the light of the sun. We have a Metropolis which receives annually an *addition* in houses, in population, and in riches, equal to the Metropolis of an ordinary State; and we have a country, the great mass of the people of which are clad in miserable rags, and are, almost literally, constantly crying for food. One of the Italians who came over to this country about the time of the trial of the poor Queen, exclaimed, in a letter written to a friend at Milan: "O, grandeur! O, wonder!" He, alas! did not see the unhappy labourers, *put up to auction* by the overseer, to be let out to draw gravel, and to be almost literally under the lash, like the labourers in the West Indies. A gentleman, not many weeks arrived in England from the MILANESE, where he has resided several years, expressed to me, only a few days ago, the shame, the sorrow, the astonishment, which he experienced at seeing Englishmen *harnessed* and drawing gravel upon the highway, in the neighbourhood of Canterbury, as he came up to London. The Abbé REYNAL, long ago, predicted our fate.* He said, that we should be puffed up by the commercial and borrowing system, till our people would become the most miserable upon the face of the earth; till the nation would become a painted sepulchre, till it would be all grandeur, and all feebleness at the same time.

It is now about twenty-one years since I began (for I have kept on ever since) to warn the country of the danger that must ultimately arise

* *Histoire Philosophique*, &c. vol. 10. TITLE, "Manufactures," "Commerce," "Public Credit."—ED.

from this system. The first time that I published observations of this sort, I was commenting on one of the delusive pamphlets of the shallow and impudent GEORGE ROSE. He produced as proofs of the wisdom of the system of PITT, an account of the number of new enclosure bills; an account of increased imports and exports; an account of new turnpike-roads and new canals. I charged the hoary placeman and public money receiver: I charged him with having omitted to mention the increase of paupers. You have got the *show*, said I; but you have also got a ruined, a beggared, a dejected, a trodden-down people. You have got the *show*; but you have laid a foundation for the certain pulling down of this nation.

It is now discovered, that thus it is. You now know not which way to turn yourselves. There is nothing fixed and certain in the state of our affairs. We have a people, about six-sevenths of whom cannot possibly be rendered more miserable by any thing that can happen to their country. One-third part of the population are acknowledged to be so wretched, that a just description of their wretchedness is beyond the reach of language. In short, it is on record in a Report to the House of Commons, that throughout a whole district in Ireland, "the people were DETECTED in taking FOR FOOD the sea-weed, which had been laid out upon the land for MANURE."—"O, wonder! O, grandeur!" This Italian little dreamed that such was the food of a people of a country, which showed off with a Metropolis so brilliant.* He little suspected that he was in a country where the people were detected in the stealing of manure for food! This is a fact so shameful; so truly horrible, that one wonders how the House of Commons could hear it stated to them by their Committee, without seeing some one man rise, to express his indignation and rage at those who had been the cause of such a state of things, and without calling upon God to send swift destruction on his head, if he ever ceased to endeavour to remove that cause.

All appears now to be smooth as a summer's sea. All we are told is *prosperity*; but there always lurks behind the ultimate consequence of this matchless mass of human misery. This misery must, in the end, produce fatal effects. The newspapers, and almost all those periodical publications, the increase of which your Lordship was pleased to look upon as a great blessing to the country: these vehicles are pleased to tell us, that there is *no danger of the peace of Europe being disturbed*. But, is there a man of sense who must not see that it may be disturbed at any hour? Yet, if it be disturbed, what are you to do in that case? It seems to be a settled point amongst you, that we shall have everlasting peace. If the question were put to the whole body of you, how you would be able to meet a war, not a man of you would know what to say. What is the result, then, of the pretended improvements? What the result of your pretended increase of *national wealth*? National wealth, to have sense in it, must mean national ease and happiness, and, can there be national ease and happiness while six-sevenths of the people are half naked and half starved?

There is no doubt but we may be suffered to live in what is called peace for several years to come; but, it must be in virtue of a series of submissions and humiliations unparalleled. We are even now tasting of

* See the splendour of Paris amidst the ruin of France, described by MADAME DE POMPADOUR: *Memoires*, vol. i. p. 126.—Ed.

those humiliations. The cabinets of Paris, Vienna, St. Petersburg and Washington, know our situation much better than your Lordship and your colleagues appear to know it. They know that you *cannot go to war*; and that is all that I, if I were a Minister of France, should want to know.

Let me beg leave to call your Lordship's attention to a little article in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 13th inst. It contains very curious and very interesting matter, and is strongly illustrative of the opinions which I am now offering to your Lordship.

"Orders were received this day to suspend the loading in the Thames of two transports with stores for Cape Coast Castle, from which it is *suspected that Government has determined to bid a final farewell to that deadly British possession.* It is currently rumoured that the Dutch have been the *real cause of the resistance* which has been made to, and of the calamities which have fallen on, the English settlement at this station, for *its existence was incompatible with the valuable Slave Trade* which is prosecuted on that coast by *all those Sovereigns whom England placed on their thrones*, and who yearly promise to abate the iniquity of a traffic in human flesh. *Poor England*, however, must now submit not only to the *indignity of having her benevolent views thwarted*, and her *commercial and colonial interests injured* by those whom she has loaded with benefits, but even her garrisons on the coast of Africa are assaulted by the natives, *at the instigation of Dutch slave-dealers*, and no *satisfaction* is obtained, nor any *apology* made to her, for the insult offered to her *feelings*. French, Spanish, Dutch, and, in short, all European nations possessed of West India settlements, are permitted to import from Africa slaves into their colonies, and *thereby to extend their cultivation, and bring it cheaper to market.* Hence arises no small portion of the *distress which is at present experienced by the British West India interest*, and to this *injustice* is added the insult of instigating the Ashantees to attack the British settlement of Cape Coast Castle. It is, however, the interest of the Holy Alliance and of the Bourbons that it should be so, and *England must submit to the indignity.*"

This is in the genuine London newspaper style and manner. Full of arrogance; full of unjustifiable conclusion; full of fair and showy pretensions, but without ability to mask the hypocrisy of those pretensions. First, it is said that it is currently rumoured that the Dutch have been the real cause of the resistance; next, the rumour is taken for a proved fact, and the Dutch are unequivocally accused of an act of instigation. It is to our folly, to our mismanagement, which we owe our defeat; and, availing ourselves of our privilege to speak ill of all the world when we please, we impute the calamity to the Dutch. If there had been no Dutch, there must have been somebody else; for we, this wise and always-right Government, never could be to blame.

But, as to the main point here, the cessation of the Slave Trade by foreign nations, why do we complain, unless we be prepared to enforce our complaint by arms? The manner in which the promise to cause the Slave Trade to cease; the manner in which this promise was extorted from the King of France, is absolutely without a parallel in the history of the intercourse between governments. It is pretty safely recorded in the new edition of my English Grammar. It has been held, and is held, and, I think fairly held, that no king or prince or governor is bound to abide by engagements which he makes to any portion of his subjects, while he himself is in such a state of constraint, as to refuse, if he refuse at all, at his peril. The promise was extorted from the King of France, while an English army was at Paris, into which it had obtained entrance in consequence of being its *ally*. Could such a promise be binding?

Could such a promise be expected to be performed? But now it slips out most indiscreetly, that we want other nations to abolish the Slave Trade, *lest those nations should be able to sell sugar and coffee and rum cheaper than we!* "Poor England must now submit to the indignity of having her benevolent views thwarted." A strange idea enough, to be sure; but, out it comes at last, that these foreign nations, "import from Africa slaves into their colonies, and thereby extend their cultivation, and bring it to market cheaper than ours"! And, now, mark, my Lord, if you please: "*hence arises no small portion of the distress which is at present experienced by the West India interest!*"

Thus are blown to air all the fine professions about *humanity*. Away go all the "*benevolent views,*" to add to that immense mass of baffled hypocrisy which we are now holding up for the amusement of the world. We say, in fact, to foreign nations: Cease your cruel importation of blacks; cease to carry the natives of Africa to America; cease to carry on this traffic in human blood; cease to be so utterly inhuman; and thereby cease, we beg of you, to make your colonies as productive as ours, and to be our rivals in the European market for sugar, rum, and coffee.

To beg, however, is all that we can do. "*England must submit to the indignity,*" says this writer. And why does he make the observation? Is he sincere? Is he in earnest? Does he believe that England must submit? If he do, let him cease to talk of our increase of *national wealth*. If he means to taunt the Ministers with their tameness, let him cease his incessant exertions about the necessity for a *continuance of peace*; unquestionably, if foreign nations suspected that we were ready for war, they would pay a little more attention to our remonstrances upon this subject. They know well that we are not ready for war. They know our situation as well as we ourselves know it. It is in vain to put forth lamentations like those contained in this article. Foreign nations know well the history of our motives as well as of our conduct, in what the Chronicle calls, *placing Sovereigns on their thrones*. But, the main thing is, they see our Government beset by a beggared people. They see our starving millions. They see us a great showy thing, which has no longer any fight in it; and they disregard our remonstrances accordingly. This, then, after all, is the result of all these vast "*improvements,*" and all this pretended addition of national wealth. We have gone on drawing the people's means into great masses; we have gone on begging the millions to enrich the thousands; till at last even projects of extermination have been broached, in order to get rid of part of the millions. In no country upon earth but this was it ever seriously proposed to benefit that country by getting rid of a part of its people. But, now my Lord John, let me speak to you of a paper, in the shape of a hand-bill, without the printer's name, circulated in the thickly-settled parts of the country, *addressed to married women*, telling them how they may AVOID HAVING CHILDREN, minutely describing the means, and earnestly exhorting them to adopt those means! I dare say no more in the way of description. An act so infamous, so every way dishonourable to human nature, was never before committed by mortal man; and yet, I have been told that several persons, who were instigators to this act, belong to a certain body which must be nameless for me. To what lengths must men have gone; how great must their alarm be at the existence of the people, before they could commit an act of in-

famy like this. In short, what have we not heard and seen? Complaints of a surplus population; projects for getting rid of them by emigration; projects for causing them to die for the want of sustenance; lamentations that the ravages of the small-pox have ceased; and, finally, this horrid, this damnable paper industriously, though clandestinely, circulated. The labouring classes have been beggared by the taxing and funding system; they have had their food taken away, and have been stripped by this system; reduced at last to come actually crying for food to preserve their lives, they excite anger where they ought to excite compassion; and to destroy them seems to be thought no more of than to destroy so many flies or wasps. No man ever points out any remedy that includes a *bettering of the lot of the labourer*. The remedies all consist of modes of punishment in one way or another. Refusal of relief, transportation, harnessing him like a horse, the tread-mill, and that notable scheme of Mr. NOLAN, for compelling those who take relief to perform the whole duties of the Militia, and to make even the child punishable in this way (when he is grown up), for receiving relief through the hands of his unfortunate parents. Every where we hear punishment of him talked of in some shape or other. He wants a little food in return for his labour. He wants enough to sustain him while he is working; and this is his crime!

What I eagerly looked for in your Report was, the cause clearly stated of the misery of the labouring classes; the cause why this is now a land of paupers. Even if we were to allow that the population of the country has increased, that would be no reason for this dreadful misery. Mouths do not come without hands; and an increase in the demand for food, would have caused an increase of employment. Let me, however, since so much has been said about these Poor-laws, go back to their origin, which is the more necessary at this time, as it is connected with that *Catholic religion*, which has been so much abused, and which has been made the pretence of such enormous persecution and cruelty in Ireland.

In my last Letter, I describe the nature and mode of relief of the poor before that event which is called the Reformation. I have long been of opinion that that Reformation was a great evil. I speak always as a politician. I meddle not with matters of FAITH. I speak of the institutions as affecting men in their affairs of this world: as tending to make them happy or miserable. Far from me, and far from your Lordship also, I hope, the foolish, the hypocritical, and the insolent opinion, that all our forefathers, for seven hundred years, *went to hell when they died*. Far from me the insolent thought, that that religion which was good enough for my forefathers for seven hundred years, would not have been good enough for me. Let us leave to the "muddy Methodists," the pert Deists, called Unitarians; let us leave to the endless mongrel sects that spring up out of the "*Reformation*," to say that all the churchyards in England contain the bones of our forefathers who are gone to hell. Let us leave to these impudent hypocrites, these worse than beasts in the shape of men; let us leave it to them to damn all our forefathers; and let us, my Lord John, like men of sense, view religious institutions in no other light than as affecting the rights, liberties, ease and happiness of a people.

Viewing them in this light, I have no scruple to say, that the event called the "*Reformation*" was the most unfortunate event that this country ever saw. There was something, nor was that something a trifle,

in keeping people of one mind as to religion ; in preventing those quarrellings and wranglings, those doubts and fears ; those angry disputations between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, between man and wife : it was no trifle to prevent a state of things like the present, when the husband frequently sets down the wife that he sleeps with as a soul destined to everlasting perdition ; when nothing is more frequent than to hear the newly-lighted son condemn his parents to hell flames ; when, in short, all is strife as far as men come in contact with each other as to their religion ; and when there is scarcely a neighbourhood of ten houses which does not contain two or three sects condemning each other to everlasting fire. You see the at once wretched and conceited creatures, moping backward and forward in dismal platoons to what they call their places of worship. Nothing can be more painful to contemplate. Men are really bereaved of their senses, by what they call religion. It was no trifling matter to prevent evils like these. It was no trifling matter to prevent such masses of mental misery as have been created by these contending sects. In less than the space of four hundred yards, I can find ten of these things called places of worship, and ten impudent vagabonds in them, each of whom boldly proclaims that all sects but his own must be damned. It was no trifling thing effectually to prevent evils like these ; but the *Morning Chronicle* Editor, who, while he affects to wish for justice to be done to the Catholics of Ireland, takes every opportunity to decry their religion ; this gentleman seems to think, not only that this variety of creeds is an advantage that " *Protestantism* " possesses ; but he positively says that Protestantism has a great advantage in the " *improvements* " which each sect is continually making in its own creed ! What a farce is it, then, my Lord John, altogether ! And to pretend at the same time to believe in the Scriptures and to be guided by them !

I come back, then, to the conclusion, that it is to be impudent, perverse, insolent, every thing that is hateful and detestable, for you or I to affect to believe that there was any thing mischievous in the *faith*, in which, for so many hundreds of years, our forefathers lived and died. Now, then, for the effects of the " *Reformation*," as it is called, upon the temporal condition of the people. The *Morning Chronicle*, in observing upon a part of my last Letter to your Lordship, observes, that " Mr. COBBETT seems to think that the labouring classes in England " never experienced any seasons of distress before the Reformation." Mr. COBBETT seemed to think no such a thing. He never said it, and he never thought it. But, this is what I say, and what I am able to prove, that the Catholic Church, by being, not only by law, but naturally and necessarily, the protector and feeder of the indigent, prevented that general and permanent misery, which has at last grown out of the destruction of the Catholic Institutions. It is very well for DAVID HUME, who was at once a romance writer and an Atheist, to talk of the indolence and beggary produced by the Catholic Church ; to talk about the people being kept in idleness by being fed at the doors of convents. Just as if the priests and the monks would find it their interest to encourage idleness amongst the people. It is very well for this romance writer thus to talk, and even if we were to believe him, we might go to his grave and bid him get up and tell us whether it were not as good that the people should lounge about the doors of convents, as about the doors of overseers, who send them to Bridewell on account of their poverty ; whether it were not as good that there should be a little idleness going

on, as that men should be harnessed like horses drawing gravel upon the highway, with bits of old sacks to cover their shoulders, and with hay-bands twisted round their legs instead of stockings.

I will, with your lordship's permission, draw a contrast between the situation of Englishmen now, and their situation before the Reformation. Their present situation we will take a description of from the man who appears to have been your *favourite witness*, before your Committee. This is a Mr. JOHN DAWES of Little Stukely, near Huntingdon. This man your Lordship represents "as an intelligent witness," who is much in the habit of employing labourers. This man was asked whether nine shillings a week were not *more than sufficient* for the support of a single man. His answer, his damnable answer was this: "Most certainly, he might SAVE HALF OF IT; and if he cannot save half that, what is the labourer with a family to do, who has four children to maintain with that?" You state, in your Report, that in some parts *three shillings* a week only are allowed for a single man. However, let us take it according to the standard of your intelligent witness Mr. DAWES. Mr. DAWES says, that four and sixpence a week is enough for a hardworking labouring man. I think I may call it your standard as well as that of Mr. DAWES. For, this answer of DAWES seems to have excited *no surprise* in you and the Committee; on the contrary, you proceed thus with the witness: "You do not find many instances of labourers laying by part of those earnings in a Savings Bank?" The intelligent Mr. DAWES answers, "I should think *not one*." Then comes the following pretty question: "Do you account for that from the circumstance of their knowledge, that in moments of difficulty they can *fall upon the parish for relief*?" DAWES answers, "*There is not a doubt of it*." And now I call upon the public to mark the conclusion, to mark the grand point to which all this tends. DAWES is now asked, "Then your belief is, that the certainty of parish relief is very *prejudicial to habits of industry*!" The intelligent DAWES answers, "*I am sure of it*."

Now, my Lord John, laying aside for the present this grand point about parish relief at all; let me return to your standard for the support of a hardworking labouring young man. Nobody can deny that you adopt the opinion of DAWES, that you look upon four and sixpence a week as sufficient to maintain a single labouring man. Now, then, my Lord John, let me put some questions to you.

Do you think that this labouring man ought never to drink any thing but water?

Do you think that this labouring Englishman ought to go as naked as the blacks in Jamaica?

Do you think that he ought to creep in the night time in amongst the pigs or the dogs?

Do you think, my Lord John, that he ought to live, through the winter, naked and without fire?

Grant it all - answer all these questions in the affirmative: say *yes* to every one of them: pronounce that horrid *yes* at the end of every one of my questions; leave the wretched being stark naked; send him to sleep with the dogs or the hogs, or in the open air; let him have nothing but water to drink; and even then your *four and sixpence*, will give him but *half a pound of meat*, including the bone, and a *pound and a half of bread*, for each day of his laborious life. Well, my Lord, what do we want more than the picture which you yourself give us? What do we

want more than this Report and evidence of yours, to convince us that this is the most wretched people that ever inhabited God's earth.

Supposing you to put a negative upon my questions. Suppose you to say that you do not think that the miserable creature; that you do not think that the hardworking labouring man ought to drink water alone; suppose you to think that he ought not to go naked like a beast, and even that he ought not to be covered by bits of old sacks and hay-bands, but that he ought to have something like human clothing, and a clean shirt once in a week, that he may appear at the Church without people seeing the lice crawl over him. Suppose you to think that he ought not to nestle in with the hogs or the dogs; that he ought to have something of a bed to sleep upon, and some little fire to keep him from perishing in winter. Well, then, you will here play the very devil with the four and sixpence. Is one pot of beer too much for the whole week? Is a *quarter of a pint of beer* too much per day for this labouring man? There, then, is *sixpence* in the week. Nowhere can he have the worst of lodging, and the worst of washing of one single coarse shirt, for less than a *shilling* a week. His shoes, take what care of them he will, will cost him more than twenty shillings a year. The most miserable rags of clothing will make the remainder of his dress, including the shoes, amount to *eighteen pence* a week. Thus furnished forth, he can have no Sunday clothes: in dress he must be a miserable beggar. Yet, here we have *three shillings* out of the four and sixpence per week, leaving only *eighteen pence* for the wretched being to furnish himself with food!

There is no getting out of this, my Lord John. It proceeds from a Report laid before the House of Commons, and, while the wretched labourer is thus destined to live, he is to be punished with transportation if he pursue a wild animal by night; and one third part of the prisoners in all the gaols of England, consist of men whose crime is that of seeking to allay the cravings of their hunger by pursuing those animals which God has given to all mankind. Such, my Lord, is the state of Englishmen now; such is their state since the famous Reformation. Now, then, let us see what was their state before the Reformation. With regard to which we have as good evidence as we have of the opinion of the Committee, and that of Mr. DAWES. This evidence I have several times inserted in the Register; but I never can insert it too often. It is the evidence of FORTESCUE. FORTESCUE'S book, as your Lordship well knows, is a Law-book. Though written so many years ago, it is still a book of authority in our Courts to this day. FORTESCUE was a Chancellor of England. His book is in the form of letters to the Prince, who was expected to become King. He describes to the Prince the nature of the laws of England. His object is to cause the Prince strictly to adhere to those laws when he shall become King; and, in order to convince him of the excellence of the laws, he describes the effects which they produce upon the people. His ever-memorable words are these: "Hence it is, that the inhabitants are rich in gold, silver, and in all the necessaries and conveniences of life. *They drink no water, unless at certain times upon a religious score, and by way of doing penance. They are fed, in great abundance, with all sorts of flesh and fish, of which they have plenty everywhere; they are clothed throughout in good woollens; their bedding and other furniture in their houses are of wool, and that in great store: they are also well provided with all other sorts of household goods, and necessary imple-*

"ments for husbandry : every one, according to his rank, hath *all things* which conduce to make life easy and happy."*

What a contrast, my Lord, with the wretched creature destined to perish upon four and sixpence a week ! The goodness of this evidence is unquestionable. It would be perverseness worthy of blows ; actually worthy of rude kicks and cuffs, to affect to question the truth of this evidence. It is a Lord Chancellor who writes. It is a Prince to whom he writes. He mentions the facts quite incidentally, and he speaks of things notorious to all the world. His word is worth the word of ten thousand *historians*. In short, that England is, is a fact not better established, than that this was the happy state of the people of England during the existence of the ancient religion. And, observe, that FORTESCUE wrote no very great while before the *wife-killer* began that Reformation which has been so much vaunted, and which has, at last, led to the *four-and-sixpenny Bill of Fare* ; to the harnessing of Englishmen to draw like horses ; to the covering their shoulders with old sacks, and their legs with hay-bands. When the Judges of the Court of King's Bench observed, but a little while ago, that the common food of the labouring classes was bread alone, or something beneath bread alone ; † when their Lordships made this observation, in answer to a complaint against some Magistrates in Yorkshire, when they made this observation, how would they have looked, if the lawyer who was making the complaint had opened FORTESCUE, and said, " Alas ! my Lords, if it be thus, *how is England changed* since the days of FORTESCUE ! " Then he might have read to them the passage which I have had the honour to quote to your Lordship ; and I ask again, how the Judges would have looked ?

If we wanted evidence in addition to that of FORTESCUE, we might take the Statutes of the Priory of Selbourne in Hampshire, which allot as a *punishment* for certain offences, the *fasting upon bread and beer for a fortnight* ! How happy would the poor labourers of England be, all to fast upon bread and beer, all the year round ! This one little fact, upon such authority, is worth a thousand volumes of what is called "*History*." Every thing of tradition ; all the old sayings of the country, which come down from father to son, show, that England was, in all former times, a country singularly happy ; that its people were better off than those of any other country known to it. The words, "*English hospitality*," had not their origin in nothing. The capaciousness of the cellars in ancient houses ; the capaciousness of the kitchens ; the old songs, whenever they treat or allude to matters of this sort ; all show that good living was a great characteristic of the nation. But, the remark of Fortescue with regard to the food and the dress, can leave no doubt in the mind of any impartial man.

However, the thing which I wish to point out to your Lordship and to my reader is this, that, before the Reformation, such a thing as a pauper was unknown in England. I wish, especially as a large portion of our

* The above is quoted from FORTESCUE, *de laudibus legum Angliæ* ; but see also FORTESCUE's book, "The Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy ;" in Chapter III. of which the author describes more particularly the difference between the English and the French mode of living.—Ed.

† See the Statute 24 Henry VIII., c. 3, for the "*food of the poorer sort*" in those days. See also HALLAM'S *Middle Ages*, vol. 3, p. 453, on this subject.—Ed.

fellow subjects are Catholics, to show to the country at large, that that religion never suffered misery to exist, any thing approaching to that which we experience in our day. Let it be observed, too, that the mass of the people always knew their own interest, and were always against the change of religion. The fact is, they were against being starved; they were against having their patrimony taken from them; they were against being robbed of their last resource in case of distress. The lying Atheist, HUME, tells us, that they were discontented with the "*Reformation*," because it put an end to their living in idleness, and being fed at the convent doors. Just as if, as I observed before, priests and monks would wish the people to live in idleness. No: instinct was sufficient to tell the mass of the labourers, that to give the property, the public property, of which the Church had the management, and of which the indigent had their share; little more than instinct was necessary to tell them, that, to take this public property and give it all to private persons, or to bishops and priests having troops of wives and children at their heels, was to leave no resource at all to that indigence which must always be found amongst the labouring classes.

It is very curious, that the same charges which HUME brought against the people of England, our newspapers, and particularly the Scotch ones, are now making against the people of Spain. What lamentations have we not heard of the shocking bigotry of the *lower orders* of the people in Spain! What sad lamentations, that these lower orders hated the Cortes, and liked the convents! What lamentations that they were so *stupid* as not to approve of selling their only resource, in case of indigence; shocking stupid creatures not to approve of being left to starve, while the Jews of London received those rents of which they had hitherto enjoyed so large a share! It is, my Lord, a matter of great curiosity, that, in Spain, as well as in England, the labouring classes should always have clung to the Catholic Church, and that they should have been cured of their attachment by nothing short of the bayonet, the rope, and the axe. We have been a thousand times assured by the *Morning Chronicle* and other publications, that all the *enlightened* classes; all the literary men, all the merchants and traders in great towns, and great numbers of the nobility and gentry, were for the Cortes and confiscation of Church property; nothing is more likely; but we find, that every where, the peasantry, that is to say, the people whose lot it is to perform the labour, were against the Cortes. If they could have known the situation of the labourers in Ireland and in England, they would have been ten thousand times more furious against the Cortes than they were. All travellers through Spain say, that the peasantry there are amongst the happiest in the world; and doubtless they owe a great part of their happiness to the permanent and sure provision which is made to supply their wants in times of indigence. They saw this provision passing away from them for ever, and they were so "*bigoted*" as to rejoice that the French came and prevented the accomplishment of the transfer.

And now, my Lord, let me put this question to you: Do you think, that, if the present generation in England were to awake some morning, and to find all the convents and all the treatment of the poor which existed before the wife-killing religious reformer began his works; and, if they were to live a month in this state, do you think that it would be very safe for any one to propose to brink them back to Messieurs the *OVERSEERS*, and to the *OUNDLE-PLAN*? I would not be the man that

should propose it to them. It is not masses and images that they think about; it is about good treatment, good victuals, good drink, good clothing, and all those things that make life easy and happy.

I may be told, and truly told, that the people of England have been very happy, very well off, since the days of the wife-killing confiscator. And, as long as the Government is moderate with its hand of taxation, the Poor-laws are a sufficient security to the poor. But, when the Government presses with so heavy a hand; when it takes such immense sums from the labouring classes, and gives them to the idlers; when it creates a dead-weight of six millions a year, and makes such immense swarms of men and women to be kept without labour, and to breed a whole host to be kept without labour; when it keeps up even in time of peace an army too large for a time of war; when this is the case, the Poor-laws must be perverted from their purpose; the landlord will press upon the farmer; the farmer, in his turn, will press upon the labourer; kept down by force or terror on the one side, and compelled to submit to half starvation on the other side, the labouring classes must become the most miserable of beings. No Poor-laws can supply the place of that natural, that amiable, that permanent mode of relief, which existed before the days of the *wife-killing* confiscator. Things are only in the state in which they naturally must be. If the present state of things had been *intended* to be produced, no means could have been more wise than those that have been adopted. In addition to the ever-increasing taxation, the value of money has been arbitrarily changed backwards and forwards. At every change the labourer has suffered. Fifty years ago his weekly pay amounted to the price of two bushels of wheat. It does not now amount, on an average, to three quarters of a bushel of wheat; and, according to Mr. DAWKS' standard, it ought to amount to only half a bushel of wheat.

With a degree of perverseness, almost without a parallel, there are persons still to contend that the *increase of the population* is the cause of all this mischief. Your Report would seem to aim at making it out, that paying wages out of the Poor-rates, is the cause of the increase of the population; but is it not singularly unfortunate, that the very same persons who maintain this proposition, declare that the increase of population has been much greater in Ireland than in England; and it is well known that in Ireland there are no Poor-rates. This doctrine about a surplus population, is extremely convenient to the taxers and tax-eaters. You never hear them talk about there being a surplus population of dead-weight and their children; never hear them talk about a surplus population of itinerant knaves who prowl about the country under the name of Ministers of the Gospel; never hear them talk about a surplus population of sinecure placemen and pensioners: it is a surplus population of those who labour, that runs in their heads; and this is only because that class have been reduced to misery.

However, the question is, if this doctrine about population be any thing other than nonsense, *How are you to reduce the population?* You hint that something must be done; but you say not what. The *Morning Chronicle*, the great advocate for reducing of the population and not the taxes, tells us that we must change our system. The change of system which it has in view, is the refusal of relief to married people. It affects to say that the labourers ought to have more wages; but, how are they to get more wages? Will the landlord go to the farmer and

order him to give his labourer more wages? Who else can have any influence with him? The landlord knows well that that which goes in wages he cannot have in rent. There can be no positive law made upon the subject. Your Lordship's Report would seem to express a desire to get some of the labourers *out of the market*, as you call it. But how are they to be got out of the market without putting them out of the world? Is it not strange, that this cry about a surplus population should never have been made *till the corn fell in price*, and until the farmers became poor? When wheat was fifteen shillings a bushel, there was no fault found of the number of labourers; enough could not be had. But when corn fell in price, and the taxes were, in effect, doubled, then began the cry that we had too many people; and, observe, even while this cry is going on, the landlords, even in a Parliamentary Report, are encouraged to rely upon an increased demand for their produce, *arising out of an increase in the population!* So that, here are all sorts of contradictions. There is no one opinion that is not met by a counter opinion proceeding from the same parties. All seems to be madness. No one appears to know what to do; but every one sees that the evil goes on increasing in magnitude.

Your Lordship had a labouring man before you as a witness. This labouring man told you, that the tax being taken off the salt was a great easement to him. He said that a man was able to salt a pig now, that could not salt one before. Now, my Lord, suppose the tax were taken off his malt, his candles, his soap, his shoes, do you not perceive that he would have still greater easement, as he calls it? This man told you, that he used to be allowed a faggot to carry home when he cut timber, but that he was not allowed that now, nor was he allowed money instead of it. This shows what a pretty change there has been. But if this man find relief from a partial taking off of the Salt Tax, would he not find further relief if the other taxes were taken off? This seems to me to have been very worthy of insertion in your Report. It seems to me to have been worthy of particular notice. The inference was, that the taxes were one great cause, at any rate, of the misery of this man and his fellow labourers. It must surely make some difference whether a man, if he have any beer, must pay sixpence a pot for it, or whether he can get it for a penny.

Here is the cause, after all. The place and pension list, the thundering standing army in time of profound peace, the intolerable dead-weight, kept up for the breeding of Gentlemen and Ladies, the Military and Naval Academies, the enormous pay to Ambassadors and Envoys, the Debt, the Taxes, that drain away all the substance of the people who labour: here is the cause, and the sole cause of all the misery; and until this cause be removed, the misery will continue to increase. It is of terrific magnitude already; but it is nothing to what it will be, in the course of a few years. It will go creeping on, till, at last, the Government will become so encumbered by it, that it will be able to stir neither hand nor foot.

This labouring man told you another thing very well worthy of notice in your Report. He told you that he did better when his wife and children used to work at platting and at lace making, but that now those were gone. And did not all the labourers do better when their wives and children were employed in making those preparations for the loom, which are all now made by those masses of poor creatures, which the infernal system of funding has drawn together, to be the slaves of a new

race of lords, whom I call the Lords of the Loom. At every turn we behold the evils of this showy system. It is a system that can go a certain length, but which can go no further; and ours is got nearly to its end.

However, there is no remedy but in reducing the amount of taxes to less than one-half of what it now is; and that this remedy will never be adopted with the sort of Parliament that we now have, I am very certain. That Parliament has adopted measures which have produced the whole of the evil, and it is too much to expect that it will ever adopt a cure. From your Committee, my Lord, I said, when it was appointed, that nothing efficient was to be expected. It has done nothing. It has not elicited one single new fact. It has not suggested an idea that can tend to a remedy; but, it has done this; it has shown to the country, that, with this greatest of all matters, you know not what to do.

I am, your Lordship's

Most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE LANDOWNERS,

ON THE

EVILS OF COLLECTING MANUFACTURERS INTO GREAT MASSES.

(*Political Register*, November, 1824.)

Kensington, 17th November, 1824.

GENTLEMEN,

For many years past, it has been matter of *boast* with our Government, and, indeed, with the people in general, that our manufacturers are the most numerous in the world. It is not long since Mr. CANNING said, and exultingly said, that the time appeared to be arrived, when we were to *depend chiefly upon the profit of supplying goods to our neighbours*. In short, it is matter of perfect notoriety, that it has been, with all the people in power, with the talkers in Parliament, and, in short, with the people, the subject of *boast*, that there are now so many *great* manufactories, *so many thousands* employed on this spot, *so many thousands* on that spot.

It was, no great while ago, matter of *boast*, that our population was increasing so fast. That increase is, to the very same boasters, now become matter of alarm. I can remember the time when *potatoes* were such favourites with the Collective Wisdom, that a proposition was made in the House, to enact a *premium for the raising of the greatest quantity of potatoes*. I have lived to hear, in the same House of Commons,

potatoes represented as one of the great causes of the misery and degradation of the people of Ireland.

So that, our having boasted of a thing, by no means proves that that thing is good ; and we are beginning to doubt, pretty seriously, whether great manufactories be so good a thing as we thought them. For my own part, I have long been satisfied of their mischievous consequences. I have long regarded them as a very great evil ; and I now address myself to you, who are so deeply interested in the matter, on the subject ; not with any hope that you will be able to remove this evil ; but in order that you may see how you are affected by these establishments.

It is the natural tendency of a system of loans and funds to draw money into great masses ; to rob the most numerous class, and still to keep heaping riches upon the few. The devil of funding covers the country with his imps, the tax-gatherers. These latter draw away the substance of the people, and bring it to be deposited in great parcels. Thus collected into great parcels, it is made the means of commanding the common people to stoop in abject submission to the few.

Before this infernal system was known in England ; before this system, which has corrupted every thing, was known in this country, there were none of those places called *manufactories*. To speak of these places with any degree of patience is impossible. It is to be a despicable hypocrite, to pretend to believe that the slaves in the West Indies are not better off than the slaves in these manufactories.* However, I have first to speak of the great injury which these factories, as they are called, have done to the land.

The occupations of the people of a country consist, in a great part, of the rearing of *food* and of *raiment*. Everything of which food and raiment are composed, is produced by *agriculture*. To the carrying on of agriculture a great part of the labour of the whole of the people is necessary. The *men* and the stout boys are, and must be, the principal workers upon the land. At particular seasons, women and girls do something in the fields, and also the little boys. But, during the far greater part of the year, there is no work in the fields for the women and girls. When things are in their proper state, they are employed, at these times of the year, in *preparing materials for the making of raiment* ; and, in some instances, actually making articles of raiment. In the "*dark ages*," when I was a boy, country labourers' wives used to spin the wool, and knit the stockings and gloves that were wanted in the family. My grandmother knit stockings for me after she was blind. In those "*dark ages*," the farmers' wives and daughters and servant maids, were spinning, reeling, carding, knitting or at something or other of that sort, whenever the work of the farmhouse did not demand them.

The manufacturing which was thus divided amongst the millions of labourers' wives and children, while it was a great blessing to the labouring people themselves, was, also, a great benefit to the landowner. Agriculture cannot be carried on without men and boys. But, to have these men and boys, you must have *women* and *girls* ; and if you have these without their having profitable employment, you must have them a burden upon the land. They must be kept by the parish-rates, instead of being kept by their own labour.

* See the evidence of Dr. FARRE, a physician who had practised in Barbadoes, before Mr. SADLER'S Committee, 1832.—ED.

The lords of the loom enabled by the funding system, and encouraged and assisted by this foolish Government in all sorts of ways, have drawn away from the land all this profitable and suitable employment for the women and girls. Some will say, that the women and girls may follow the employment to the factories. That is impossible. They cannot do that. They must remain with the men and boys, or there will be nobody at all to carry on the labours of agriculture.

This change, as to the mode of making the raiment of the people, has been attended with consequences extremely injurious. The girls have had nothing to do, or, at least, nothing suitable to their sex and their age. They have contracted habits of carelessness and idleness. It used to be the pride of a country girl to say that she made, with her own hands, all the clothes upon her back. Now the poor creatures, drawn off now and then in tawdry cottons, hardly know whence their clothing comes: hardly know that linen is made of flax, and cloth of wool. In all my hundreds of miles of rides about England, I have seen but one single instance of a piece of linen made in a cottage. That was in Sussex, between Horsham and Petworth.

This is one great cause of pauperism, and of the degradation of the people. The women and girls must be where the men and boys are; and a wise Government would have taken care that they should not lose their employment. This is, however, only to say, that a wise Government would not have made a funding system, and that it would have done none of those things, by which the country has been brought into its present state. The man who invented the funding-system should have been burnt alive the moment he opened his lips upon the subject. It has totally eradicated happiness in this country; and it must, at last, bring dreadful punishment upon somebody; upon some of its upholders and abettors.

When MALTHUS and his crew are talking of an increase in the population, they have their eye upon the masses which their greedy upstart lords of the loom have drawn together; and the horrible condition of which masses I shall more particularly mention by-and-by.* They overlook the depopulation which has taken place in order to create this abominable crew of upstarts, who, in order to support their injustice and tyranny, which are wholly without a parallel, except, perhaps, in the cases connected with the game, procured laws to be passed, called *combination laws*, such as never were heard of before in any country in the world.

MALTHUS and his crew of hard-hearted ruffians; those cool calculators of how much "*national wealth*" can be made to arise out of the misery of millions, wholly overlook the frightful *depopulation* which has taken place in consequence of the destruction of *seven-eighths*, at least, of the farm-houses, and a similar destruction of cottages, in consequence of the inclosure of wastes. This destruction has, in part, arisen from the total ruin of the agricultural manufactories. These profitable labours having been taken from the women, girls, and little boys, it became hardly possible for a large family to live upon a small farm. The profit of the small farm received a great addition from the fruit of the labours of spinning, knitting, and the like; but, when these were taken away by

* See RAYNAL, *Hist. Philosophique*. Vol. 10. Tit. "Population."

the lords of the loom ; when flagrant impolicy had thrown all these profits into the hands of a very few persons, who had converted the manufacturing labourers into the slaves that we shall presently see them, the little farm itself did not afford a sufficiency of means to maintain a considerable family. The occupiers of such farms became poor ; became unable to pay their rents, and, in a short time, were driven from their healthy habitations ; were huddled into sheds and holes, became mere labourers, and a large part of them paupers.* MALTHUS and his crew never look at this cause of depopulation. The landowner naturally sought to get rent for his land, and he could now get it from nobody but one who had money sufficient to hold nine or ten farms. The women, girls and little children having now lost their natural employment for the greater part of the year, became a mere burden upon the land ; and the farmer and landowner resorted to all sorts of expedients to diminish that burden. To diminish the burden, there were no means but that of reducing the number of the labouring class of country people as much as possible. The man and the boy were necessary to agriculture, agriculture could not have them without the women and the girls ; it became necessary, therefore, to do without the men and the boys as much as possible.

To do without them, all sorts of schemes were resorted to. To make horses perform that which was before performed by men, was one of the methods pursued, and with most destructive success. So that, at last, the agricultural parts of the country have been stripped of a very large part of their population. Every scheme that the ingenuity of greediness could devise has been put in practice ; but, after all, there remains a mass of pauperism and of misery which the law-makers themselves declare is frightful to behold ; and, whatever else their reports may contain ; however widely they may differ from one another ; and however completely each may be at variance with itself, every one declares that the *evil is constantly increasing*.

While this is the case, and while the country is going on becoming more and more depopulated, and more and more miserable, the great towns, and particularly the manufacturing districts, are daily increasing in numbers. If the people, thus drawn together in masses, were happily situated, there might be the less ground for lamentation ; but, so far from this being the case, these masses are still more miserable than the wretches left behind them in the agricultural districts.†

* In the evidence of Mr. JOHN STAPLEY, of South Birsted, in Sussex, before the Committee of Poor-law Inquiry, in 1837, that gentleman was asked to point out the cause of an apparent surplus population in his parish, and his answer contains this, among other reasons: "We have now to keep persons, who were originally farmers, as paupers; and their sons, who would have been kept as farmers, are now taking bailiff's places, and prevent our labourers from getting those places, so that it keeps still a surplus of labour in the market in our neighbourhood; there are nearly or quite forty farm-houses, that used to be occupied, and brought up respectable families, now converted into labourers and bailiff's houses; it is very clear where the surplus labour comes from. Another cause why there is a surplus labour is, that we farmers make labourers do more work now than they used formerly to do. I can get four men to do as much as five used to do."—Ed.

† See our note to p. 351 of this volume, and, in addition to the documents which we there refer to, see Debates in the House of Commons, 6 June, 1815, and 3rd April, 1816, *Hansard*. The reader will learn, in these various sources, that a domestic slavery and slave-traffic has been carried on in England, quite

Some of these lords of the loom have in their employ thousands of miserable creatures. In the cotton-spinning work, these creatures are kept, fourteen hours in each day, locked up, summer and winter, in a heat of from EIGHTY TO EIGHTY-FOUR DEGREES. The rules which they are subjected to are such as no negroes were ever subjected to. I once before noticed a statement made on the part of these poor creatures, relative to their treatment in the factories of Lancashire. This statement is dated on 15th of February, 1823, and was published at Manchester, by J. PHENIX, No. 12, Bow-street, in that blood-stained town. This statement says, that the heat of the factories is from *eighty to eighty-four degrees*. A base agent of the Cotton-Lords, who publishes a newspaper at Stockport, has lately accused me of exaggeration in having stated the heat at *eighty-four degrees*.

Now, the statement of which I am speaking was published at Manchester; and does any man believe that such a statement would have been published there, if it had not been founded in fact? There was a controversy going on at the time of the publishing of this statement. I read very carefully the answer to this statement; but this answer contained no denial of the heat being from *eighty to eighty-four degrees*.*

Now, then, do you duly consider what a heat of *eighty-two* is? Very seldom do we feel such a heat as this in England. The 31st of last August, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of last September, were very hot days. The newspapers told us that men had dropped down dead in the harvest fields, and that many horses had fallen dead upon the road; and yet the heat during those days never exceeded eighty-four degrees in the *hottest part of the day*. We were retreating to the coolest rooms in our houses; we were pulling off our coats, wiping the sweat off our faces, puffing, blowing and panting; and yet we were living in a heat nothing like eighty degrees. What, then, must be the situation of the poor creatures who are doomed to toil, day after day, for three hundred and thirteen days in the year, fourteen hours in each day, in an average heat of eighty-two degrees? Can any man, with a heart in his body, and a tongue in his head, refrain from cursing a system that produces such slavery and such cruelty?

Observe, too, that these poor creatures have no cool room to retreat to, not a moment to wipe off the sweat, and not a breath of air to come and interpose itself between them and infection. The "door of the place" wherein they work, is *locked*, except *half an hour*, at tea-time; the "workpeople are not allowed to send for water to drink, in the hot factory; even the *rain-water is locked up*, by the master's order, "otherwise they would be happy to drink even that. If any spinner be "found with his *window open*, he is to pay a fine of a shilling"! Mr. MARTIN of Galway has procured Acts of Parliament to be passed to pre-

as revolting, in all circumstances, as any negro slavery that has been heard of; he will learn that *white men* in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and other counties, have been in the habit of bargaining for *white children* in the workhouses of the south of England, and, in their conditions of sale and purchase, have agreed to take ONE IDIOT CHILD for every SCORE OF SANE CHILDREN! He will learn how these unfortunate creatures have been stunted and maimed and killed by their work; he will see, in short, that the "friends of humanity" need not go out of England for objects worthy of their zeal. — En.

* See the evidence given before Mr. Sadler's Committee in 1832, which establishes this fact.—Ed.

vent cruelty to animals. If horses or dogs were shut up in a place like this, they would certainly be thought worthy of Mr. MARTIN'S attention.

Not only is there not a breath of sweet air in these truly infernal scenes; but, for a large part of the time, there is the abominable and pernicious stink of the GAS to assist in the murderous effects of the heat. In addition to the heat and the gas; in addition to the noxious effluvia of the gas, mixed with the steam, there are the dust, and what is called the *cotton-flyings* or *fuz*, which the unfortunate creatures have to inhale: and, the fact is, the notorious fact is, that well-constituted men are rendered old and past labour at forty years of age, and that children are rendered decrepid and deformed, and thousands upon thousands of them slaughtered by consumptions, before they arrive at the age of sixteen. And, are these establishments to boast of? If we were to admit the fact, that they compose an addition to the population of the country; if we were further to admit, that they caused an addition to the pecuniary resources of the Government, ought not a government to be ashamed to derive resources from such means?

If we wanted any proof of the *object slavery* of these poor creatures, what proof do we want more than the following list of fines?

Any Spinner found with his window open	1s.
Any Spinner found washing himself	1s.
Any Spinner leaving his oil-can out of its place	6d.
Any Spinner putting his gas out too soon	1s.
Any Spinner spinning with his gas-light too long in the morning	2s.
Any Spinner heard whistling	1s.
Any Spinner being five minutes after the last bell rings.....	2s.
Any Spinner being sick, and cannot find another Spinner to give satisfaction, to pay for steam, per day	6d

There are many other of these pecuniary punishments, one of which I shall mention by-and-by; and, observe, the canting scoundrels of Methodists, who are making such a clamour about the slavery of the blacks, are amongst the most efficient tools of the Cotton-Lords in the upholding of this abominable slavery. They preach content and patience to these suffering mortals; they bid them be *grateful* that they have the comforts of what these rascals call the Gospel. They tell them they will be damned to all eternity if they listen to those who would take them out of eighty-four degrees of heat and the cotton-fuz.

When the pay, the miserable pittance of pay, gets into the hands of these poor creatures, it has to be laid out at a SHOP. That shop is, generally, directly or indirectly, the master's. At this shop the poor creatures must lay out their money, or they are very soon turned off. The statement that I have just mentioned relates an instance, where, "If any workman's wife purchase but a trifling matter at another shop, the shopkeeper tells the bookkeeper, and the latter says to the workmen, "that the master will not allow of such work, and that they must tell their wives neither to go to another shop nor give saucy language to the shopkeeper"!

It must be manifest to every one, that, under such circumstances, the pay is nearly nominal. The greedy master takes back again as much of it as he pleases. Another mode of despoiling the poor creatures is this: The master is the owner of cottages, or, rather, holes, which the work-people have to rent. The statement says, "That cottages of exceedingly small dimensions are let to the workmen at NINE POUNDS A-YEAR. "But, though the rent is by the year, it is stopped from them at the end

“ of every fortnight. A cellar is *two shillings and sixpence a-week* ;
 “ and if a house or cellar be empty, and a workman come to work, and
 “ have another house or cellar already, he must *pay rent for the empty*
 “ *one*, whether he occupy it or not.”

Nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the people of England have not the most distant idea that such things are carried on, in a country calling itself free ; in a country whose Minister for Foreign Affairs is everlastingly teasing and bothering other Powers to emulate England in “ *her humanity*,” in abolishing the slave trade in the blacks. The blacks, when carried to the West Indies, are put into a paradise compared with the situation of these poor white creatures in Lancashire, and other factories of the North. And, yet, the Editor of the Morning Chronicle is incessantly singing forth the blessings of the manufacturing districts. Bad as is the situation of the labourers in the agricultural counties, it is heaven itself compared with that of these poor creatures. In Norfolk and Suffolk, and particularly in the latter county, the labourers have been greatly subdued ; but, I am quite satisfied that the Cotton-Lords, if they had to do with the people from Surrey, from Kent, from Sussex, from Hampshire, from Berkshire, or from any of the Western counties, would be obliged to content themselves with a much lower degree of heat, and much smaller profits.

Then, the immoralities engendered in these pestiferous scenes are notorious. They were very well described by TIMOTHÆUS, in a letter first published in a Manchester paper, and re-published in the Register, in August last. “ Here,” as that writer observes, “ the sexes are huddled together, while man is separated from wife, and child from father, for “ full three-fifths of the waking hours of their lives.”* All experience proves, that the congregating of people together in great masses, is sure to be productive of impurity of thought and of manners. The country lad, who becomes a soldier, has a new soul in him by the time that he has passed a year in a barrack-room. Even in great schools, all experience tells us how difficult it is to prevent contagious immoralities. This is universally acknowledged. What, then, must be the consequences of heaping these poor creatures together in the cotton-factories ? But, what more do we want ; what other proof of the corrupting influence of these assemblages ; what more than the following regulation, which I take from the list of fines, imposed at the factory of TYLDESLEY, in Lancashire ?

Any two Spinners, *found together* in the necessary, each man 1s.

I challenge the world to produce me so complete a proof of familiarity with the most shocking immorality. One is almost ashamed to put the thing upon paper, though for the necessary purpose of exposing it to just indignation. To what a pitch must things have come ; how familiar people must have become with infamy, before a master manufacturer could put such a thing into writing, and stick it up in his factory ! What hotbeds of vice and corruption ! Here we have, in the heart of England, hatched the heat of the East, and hatched all its loathsome and infamous vices along with it : and yet these manufactories are to be *our boast*, and we are to applaud the Government for having upheld and cherished them !

The Rev. ANTHONY COLLETT, and several other persons of the same

* See this more fully in the Evidence given before SADLER'S Committee.—ED.

trampe, as the French call it, who have appeared before Committees of the House of Commons, when those Committees have been sitting, upon the subject of agricultural distress, seem to have taken particular pains to describe the *immoralities* of the country people, or *peasantry*, as the Scotch Economists call them. It is very curious that not a man of them all has ever dropped a word about these abominations in Lancashire; about this intolerable tyranny, and these most shameful immoralities. These perverse fellows complain of the *surplus population* of the fields and woods, where human beings have been growing thinner and thinner for the last hundred years; but say not a word about surplus population in these hellish stews of eighty-four degrees of heat, crammed with wretched creatures, from whom even the *rain-water is locked up*; who, in gaping for air, swallow cotton-fuz; and who are visibly perishing by inches under the eye of the slave-holder, who has no interest in the life of the poor creatures, who cares not how soon they die, so that he profit by their labour to the end of their lives.

Not a word do we ever hear from all these famous witnesses brought before Committees, about the immoralities of those monstrous heaps of human bodies. Nay, the Scotch Economists are everlastingly singing forth the praises of these horrible establishments, which they are pleased to look upon as so many proofs of "*national wealth*." RICARDO, who got half a million of money by "*watching the turn of the market*,"* very frequently had the impudence to say, even in the House of Commons, that it was no matter to the country how small a portion of its food it raised from its own land, and that if it could buy all its food from foreign countries, and give them manufactures in exchange, it would be as well for England. So say all the Scotch Economists. They seem to care about nothing but the *money*. Their vulgar, huckstering notion is, that *money is to be got from other nations*. They care nothing about the means. They always look upon the labouring classes as they do upon sheep, or pigs, or any other "useful animals."

The poor cotton-slave is held in bondage as complete as that of the negro. Our histories contain accounts of *vassals* and *villains* of old times, and affect to *pity* them. Nothing but the basest hypocrisy, or the grossest ignorance, can place those *villains* beneath the miserable creatures in the North. The *villains* belonged to the estate on which they were born. If the estate were transferred, they were transferred along with it. They could not go away and live where they liked. The fruit of their labour belonged to their lords. Their lords could do almost what they liked with them. Now, supposing all this to be literally true, are not the cotton-slaves fast bound to the spot where they are? Can they quit that spot to go and live where they like? Are they not transferred with the factory?† Do not their lords take to themselves the fruit of their labour, leaving them the bare means of the most sorry existence?

* "*Watching the turn of the Market*" is a phrase used by the *Morning Chronicle*, in describing the means by which Mr. RICARDO made his immense fortune; but the *Chronicle* used it in a complimentary sense, and in an article on the death of Mr. RICARDO, in 1824.—ED.

† In the debate on this question, on the 6th June, 1816, Mr. HORNER stated that a "*gang*" of Factory children had been put up to sale by auction with the effects of a bankrupt manufacturer!—ED.

The *villains* were not, at any rate, shut up in a heat of *eighty-four degrees*. If they were ill, or crippled, the interest of their lords necessarily induced them to take care of them; and they were not packed off to be dealt with by an "Overseer," to be lugged away in a cart, upon a bundle of straw, and frequently dying on the road.

And cannot the lords of the loom do almost what they like with these poor creatures? Let us see a little what they can do with them. We have seen how they heat them in their hellish factories. We have seen the treatment that falls to the lot of all, and, as it were, without even any complaint being heard of. Let us, in the following article, which I take from the Morning Chronicle of the 30th of August last, see how the law operates upon these poor creatures, the numbers of whom the Scottish Economists are so anxious to see augmented.

Manchester Magistrates: Masters and Workmen.—At the New Bailey, on Saturday se'nnight, THOMAS SHAW, a journeyman dyer, was brought before Mr. HIBBERT, on a charge preferred by his late master, Mr. LEECH, of leaving his service prior to the end of a week, that being the term for which it was alleged he had contracted to serve. The charge was met on two grounds; first, that Mr. LEECH was in the *habit of dismissing his men in the middle of a week*, and therefore the latter had a right to leave him in the same manner, if they thought proper; and, secondly, that, on the day in question, Mr. LEECH *actually told them to go about their business*, after they had finished the work they had in hand, which they did finish. Mr. LEECH said, *he could discharge his men when he thought proper*: he had only to say that he had no work for them, or that they had misconducted themselves, and he could then send them away on any day in the week, *and on any hour of the day, when he thought fit to do so*; and *he only paid them wages for the time they worked!*—The main defence was, that Mr. LEECH had himself given permission to the men to go, as soon as they had finished the work in their tubs. This was *distinctly sworn to by four witnesses*, who perfectly agreed in their testimony; and several other persons were in attendance to prove the same fact; *but the magistrates refused to hear them, and convicted the defendant* (whom he sentenced to a *month's imprisonment and hard labour*), *on the unsupported testimony of Mr. Leech*. Five more of Mr. LEECH's men have been *convicted under the same circumstances*; and one of these, a man who had been in Mr. LEECH's employ as a foreman, for three-and-twenty years, was sent to the *Tread-mill for three months*!

Now, I do not *know* that this account is true; but here are *names and dates*; and I have seen no contradiction of this account. Suppose it, then, to be true, who will be shameless enough to pretend that these poor creatures are not infinitely worse off than were the *villains* of old. No man is so base and detestable as the cool hypocrite who, while he sees things like this going on, can look you in the face without blushing, and call this a country of *freedom*.

But, only think of the impudence of these very Cotton-Lords, who, only the other day, petitioned the Parliament to take measures for giving *freedom* to the people of South America! Audacious, shameless, obdurate hypocrites! They have so long lived surrounded by slaves, that they have forgotten that there is any part of us who retain the liberty of speech or of motion. They seem to think that we all belong to the factory, and are all subject to the *eighty-four degrees*,

Is it possible for any man, not dead to all the feelings of real humanity, to wish for the prolonging of such a state of things? It argues tyranny in a man's nature, not to wish to see this hellish system put an end to. Nevertheless, there are persons to set up a lamentation at anything which seems to afford us a chance of seeing this mass of misery diminished. Not

long ago there was an alarm about the failures at Manchester. I will insert the article from the London paper, in order to show the degree of perverseness that exists with regard to this matter, and I request the attention of the public to its contents.

“The advices from Manchester this morning are by no means of a favourable nature. *They announce one heavy failure, by which hundreds will be thrown out of their daily bread, and much more extensive mischief is anticipated. This calamity is the natural effect of the very liberal speeches delivered last Session, before the congregated wisdom of the nation, by his Majesty's Foreign Secretary, on the relations betwixt Great Britain and the new American Republics. No argument was then omitted by the eloquent orator to induce the British nation to repose confidence in the solidity of the independence of the American Continent, and from the conviction of the substantiality of the intentions of the Right Honourable Gentleman, large obligations, both pecuniary and mercantile, have been incurred by individuals, which, under different representations, never would have had an existence. It is useless to inquire into the reasons which have produced conduct, on the part of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, so different from what was universally anticipated from the nature of his public declarations, for to the sufferers it will be of little avail, whether Mr. Canning has actually altered his opinion, respecting the benefits which England would reap from the independence of the former American Colonies, or whether he has surrendered his beneficent and liberal sentiments to those of his political colleagues, and trucked to superior authority. The capital which at the present moment has been sacrificed by contracts for American Loans, grounded on the publicly declared intentions of the British Foreign Secretary soon to acknowledge the sovereignty and independence of the new American Republics, is of small value, when compared with the enormous injury which these public speeches have produced, and must continue to produce, on the property of the manufacturing classes of British society. Depending on the liberal opinions so repeatedly, both in public and in private, promulgated by His Majesty's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and knowing that it was in the power of His Majesty's Government to open vast and extensive markets for the consumption of British manufactures, employment has for many months been given to British artizans, immense manufactories have been erected, and much capital embarked in them. The delay which has occurred in acknowledging the freedom of the new States has caused a similar delay in forwarding the labour of British artizans to American markets, and now, when it is understood, or rather felt, that Great Britain hesitates in performing the promises of Mr. Canning, ruin is the consequence to those who have founded their operations on the performance of Ministerial promises. Why Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham, should be sacrificed to the exploded principles of legitimacy, is indeed unintelligible, and why the productive labours of his Britannic Majesty's subjects should be ruined in deference to the claims on America, of the adored Ferdinand, is a problem beyond the solution of modern philosophy.”*

This is a pretty fair specimen of the general run of the opinions of public writers upon this subject. This writer is *alarmed* that hundreds are about to be *thrown out* of the happiness of living in eighty-four degrees, and swallowing the cotton-fuz! For my part, I sincerely rejoice at every such occurrence. I wish that a failure would take place in every one of the factories. I once wished for the independence of South America, in order to favour these factories. This was seven years ago; and I then knew nothing at all about this heat of eighty-four degrees; and about the *finés* and other horrible things that I have stated above. I now see that a free intercourse with the Spanish Colonies, and that the independence of those colonies, would have a tendency to perpetuate and augment the sufferings of the slaves in Lancashire and other Northern Counties, including a considerable part of Scotland. I see, also, that they would have a tendency to perpetuate the causes that starve and degrade the whole of the labouring classes of Great Britain and Ireland, while

they would, at the same time, be productive of infinite mischief to the South Americans themselves. I, therefore, do not wish for the independence of those countries.

I will here step a little aside from my subject, to remark upon the charges which are, in this article, preferred so boldly against Mr. CANNING. These charges are *wholly false*. Mr. CANNING made use of no argument to induce the British nation to repose confidence in the "*solidity*" of the independence of the American Continent. But this writer says, that Mr. CANNING made certain *promises* which he now hesitates to perform. No *promise* did he ever make upon the subject. He said, indeed, that the colonies were *de facto* independent; but he never made any promise to *acknowledge* the independence officially; and, when urged to do it, he was most particular in warning the country against relying upon any such acknowledgment. The Ministry have done many foolish things; but, such acknowledgment would have surpassed all their former follies. War they must have, first or last; but such acknowledgment would have given them war immediately; and, was this whole kingdom to be plunged into war, in order to force the sale of cottons in South America?

Mr. CANNING is accused of causing loan-jobbers to lose their money, by declaring his intention "*soon to acknowledge*" the "*sovereignty of the American Republic.*" Again I say, this is a false charge. He not only never made such declaration; but he said every thing that he could say to discourage such loans. But these loans, it seems, are of "*small value*" compared to the "*property of the manufacturing classes of British society.*" Depending on the liberal opinions of the Foreign Secretary, "*and knowing that it was in the power of Government to open vast and extensive markets for British manufactures, immense manufactories have been erected, and much capital embarked in them.*" And then the writer asks, why "*Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham, should be sacrificed to the exploded principles of legitimacy.*"

This is all falsehood and folly. It is the railing of disappointed greediness. What, then, do these impudent lords of the loom and of the anvil mean; do they "*know that it was in the power of the Government to open the markets in South America*"? If they do know this, they must know that it was in the power of the Government to go to *war*; to fit out a fleet of fifty ships of the line, and send out an army across the seas of fifty thousand men. O! they had erected immense new manufactories, had they? They had made preparations for shutting up many more thousands of creatures in their factories, to enjoy the blessings of heat at eighty-four degrees. Thank God! they have been disappointed, and, I trust, that these receptacles for slaves, these intended scenes of indescribable misery, will be suffered to crumble into dust, and, while they stand, be pointed to as monuments of disappointed greediness and cruelty.

And now, Gentlemen, owners of the land in England, what is the remedy for these things? Putting an end to the funding-system is the remedy for all the evils, and this amongst the rest. This remedy will certainly be applied by events; but, in the meanwhile, you may do something for the labouring classes and for yourselves. For, observe, you cannot, in the end, prosper yourselves, surrounded by a half-naked and half-starved set of labourers. If they were wholly destroyed and swept from the face of the earth, your estates would not be worth a straw. Without them you are *nothing*; and you have seen enough already to convince you, that you shrink into *littleness* and contempt in the exact

proportion that they become wretched. After all the talk about independence, we must still be dependant upon one another. You do not call the labourers of your parishes; you do not actually call them members of your family: but, in fact, from the very nature of things, the connexion between you is little less strict than if they were related to you by the ties of kindred. Base flatterers are continually endeavouring to persuade you that you can flourish surrounded by a starving common people. You must be blind and callous, indeed, if experience have not already convinced you of the falsehood of this doctrine. To say the truth, you seem sensible of your danger: you seem to see clearly, at last, that the shocking degradation of the labouring classes cannot proceed much further without pulling down yourselves. Hence all your *inquiries*; all your *Reports*; all your efforts to discover the means of checking the growth of the frightful misery that has fallen upon the labouring people. But never do you touch upon the true causes. One of those causes I have now been developing: and that cause, it is my opinion, that you have it in your power partly to remove.

I have before clearly shown what loss, what injury you sustain from the transfer of the manufactories to the land of the Lords of the Loom. Nature and reason says, that a large part, at least, of the raiment of the people ought to be provided by the families of labourers in agriculture. In America (except in the Slave States), the raiment is chiefly furnished in this way. In all country families, except the most miserable, the blankets, the sheets, the bed-ticking, the coverlids, the body linen, the stockings, the woollen gloves, the trousers, the waistcoats, and in one-half of the cases, the coats are made from the raw material *grown upon the land where the family resides*. Go to any shop, called a store in America, and you will find that more than three-fourths of the materials for raiment are supplied even for sale by private families. The linens of Ireland, the cottons of Lancashire; and almost every article of dress and of bed-furniture sent from England, are to be bought at almost as low a price in America as they are here; nay, I believe, at a lower price; yet, the HOMESPUN, as they call it in America, is always bought in preference by those who seek durability and utility. There is a ready sale for all these articles. This domestic manufacturing, which took place from the earliest settlement in America, is one of the great causes of the happiness of the people of that country. The women and children living upon farms and in cottages, are thus profitably employed. The whole of the bed-furniture at a farm-house has, nine times out of ten, been made in that house. The yarn for weaving, if not weaved in the house, which is frequently the case, is sent to the weaver, several persons of whose business are living in almost every township.

My son JAMES tells us, that, during his Ride of eight hundred miles in France—now this must not be called a *puff*; seeing that the last EDINBURGH REVIEW has quoted this little book as to a point of fact, relative to the effect of the abolition of the law of entail; and, as I will swear for the truth of the facts stated by my Son, I may quote the book as well as those Gentlemen.—My Son tells us, that he observed, in all parts of the country, the country women engaged in dressing flax or hemp; out at the front of their houses, spinning, knitting, or making lace. This is the natural state of society. If these women and girls were not thus employed, how differently would be their situation! Accordingly my Son observed, that the women and children in the country were never seen in

rags, nor the men either; and that none of them had that look of poorness and of misery that the unfortunate people of England now have.

This domestic manufacturing was, in the "*dark ages*," when I was a boy, carried on to a similar extent. I have seen from a dozen to fifty women and girls, with their spinning-wheels and knitting-needles, at work before their doors in a summer afternoon; and can YOU, instead of inventing "*Oundle plans*," and Tread-mills; can you, instead of enlarging jails and poor-houses, not make some little effort to restore this blessing of domestic manufacturing to your estates! What is to prevent you from causing the spinning-wheel and the knitting-needle to come back again, and to enable me, once more in my lifetime, to get a pair of worsted stockings that will not be out at the toes at the end of the first week? The paltry glazed, *pasted*, sized stuff that the poor women purchase for gowns, is the cause of just so much money being thrown away. The frauds committed by the cotton factories, upon the negro wenches, and other people in America and elsewhere, are committed, in an equal degree, upon the poor people of England. These cottons are no very inadequate type of the whole system. A glaring show, a tawdry show; but, at the bottom, weakness and worthlessness.

I should not be afraid to undertake to bring about a complete change on any large estate of which I might be the owner. A due mixture of gentleness and resolution, where the interest of the parties would so manifestly and so powerfully come to my assistance, would very soon accomplish my purpose. We have, God knows, seen Committees enough sitting to deliberate upon this unhappy state of the labouring classes. We have paid for the printing of hundreds and thousands of volumes of Reports upon this subject, the whole of which have had not the smallest effect. Let a Committee set about a serious and honest inquiry into this matter; let them suggest the well-digested means of restoring the domestic manufacturing to the land, and of breaking up the hells of slavery in the North; let them do this; and let them themselves earnestly set about giving the example, and a great deal will be done towards making your estates once more worth possessing; for, worth possessing they are not, burdened as they are, with a half-naked and half-starved set of labourers, with the terrific consideration that their lot is becoming daily worse and worse, and that tranquillity cannot be preserved; that even safety to your own persons cannot be preserved, without keeping up, in time of peace, a standing army far more expensive than was ever before necessary in time of war.

In conclusion, let me once more press upon you the fact, that you cannot separate your fate from that of your labourers. Without them your lands are not worth a straw. Without them you have no estates. You may suffer them to be oppressed to a very great degree; but, at last, you will find that you yourselves must suffer in consequence of their sufferings.

WM. COBBETT.

TO MR. FREDERICK ROBINSON,

ON HIS

BRAGGING SPEECH OF LAST YEAR, ON THE PROPOSED CORN-BILL; ON THE "OLD ROMAN PLAN"; AND ON THE STATE OF THE GOLD AND THE PAPER.

(Political Register, April, 1825.)

Kensington, 20th April, 1825.

SIR,

When you made your bragging speech, a speech at the same time so outrageously insulting to the country at large, and particularly to the advocates of Parliamentary Reform; when you, on the 23rd of February, 1824, made that at once ignorant and insolent speech, I pledged myself to stick to you, with regard to the subjects comprised in that speech, or alluded to on that occasion.* On the 5th of March of last year; or, rather, in the Register of that date, I exposed the speech to the just indignation of the country. I answered all its assertions; I showed them all to be silly in the extreme. But, an occasion has now arisen for returning to that memorable speech. Events are now approaching us; and, they appear, indeed, to be nearly at hand, when everything that I said will be verified, and when everything which you asserted, will, I am thoroughly convinced, be completely falsified.

The speech is a thing never to be forgotten. We ought to have it constantly before us; and I shall, therefore, insert here, that part of it which I inserted in the afore-mentioned Register; observing, however, that I merely take the thing as I found it in the *Morning Chronicle* newspaper, not being certain that you uttered the words; and, at the same time, never have seen the words disowned by you or by anybody on your behalf. Here, then, is a copy of the speech to which I have alluded.

"It must be highly satisfactory to know, that the country is at this moment in such a state of cheerful prosperity—with an increasing revenue, decreasing taxation, and a debt in a course of gradual and certain reduction. (Hear, hear.) We behold our country daily growing in *wealth*, augmenting in power, and increasing in influence:—in *wealth*, the result of sound policy and considerate legislation; in *power* not to be abused for the *purposes of tyranny or aggrandizement*; in influence, not to be employed in *blustering dictation and empty boasting*, but to produce a firm conviction among surrounding nations of the sincerity of our professions, and of the honesty of our conduct. (Much cheering.) That sincerity and honesty must have the inevitable effect of producing in their minds a lasting persuasion that the *wealth, power, and influence of which we are justly proud, are the tests of steadfast friendship, and not the menacing instruments of hostility or rivalry.* (Hear, hear.) I have not, of course, the arrogance to

* See Letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, p. 367 of this Volume.—Ed.

attribute these happy results to any exertions of my own, nor does His Majesty's Government *claim the merit* of having brought the country to *this state of content and prosperity*; many others, they are satisfied, have at least an equal right to the applause and gratitude of the nation: I claim them not for individuals; I claim them for Parliament—for that *calumniated, that vilified* Parliament, which we have been told by some is so *essentially vicious* in its nature and in its construction, that it was utterly impossible for it to extricate the kingdom from that condition of *distress and depression* in which it was *recently placed*. (Hear, hear.) They contended, indeed, how truly the result has shown, that in Parliament there was *nothing good*—that its councils were *venal, its Members corrupt*, and, in short, that unless everything were at once *turned topsy-turvy*, and a new system of representation established, the nation could *never be relieved from its difficulties, and rescued from its dangers*. (Continued cheers.) I say, and I say it boldly, that the *present state of the country* affords the best, because the practical refutation of what I maintain to be a calumny upon the Constitution. (Hear.) Parliament, the *true source of such general happiness*, may enjoy the proud, the delightful satisfaction of looking round upon the *face of a joyous country, smiling in plenty*, and animated with what I hope to see—unrestricted industry, content, comfort, prosperity and order, hand in hand, dispense, from the *ancient portals of a Constitutional monarchy*, their inestimable blessings among a happy, united, and, let it never be forgotten, a *grateful people*. (Loud cheers from all sides of the House.)"

I commented upon every proposition in this extract, I proved the falsehood and the silliness of the whole of them. But circumstances have now arisen; events are coming, which serve to illustrate and to make good what I then said. There is a clamour for a CORN-BILL: that is to say, for a measure to make corn sell at a *lower price* in England than it now sells at. The prosperity of which you bragged, arose from causes which have now produced the necessity for a *Corn-Bill*. You had, by sending forth the paper-money in bales again, raised the price of corn and raised rents. But, alas! the happiness of a Right Honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer is not to be quite complete any more than that of other men. That which made the landlords laugh, had a tendency to make other classes cry. This high price of corn with a gold circulation, was utterly impossible to continue for any length of time. Your revenue augmented *in name*, but it is in fact decreased in reality. The fundholder and the dead-weight, together with the cotton-lords and their slaves, could not live under this *agricultural prosperity*. Therefore, there is now a talk of a *Corn-Bill*. You have found out, that you cannot keep corn at a high price without ruin falling upon other classes of society.

This Corn Bill is a matter that touches you to the quick. You cannot well do without it; and yet, you dare not boldly come forward and propose it. The jolterheads and the chuckleheads (who laughed at "Cobbett" last year) are themselves in a state of uncertainty, whether a Corn Bill be necessary for themselves or not; for, some of them have the sense to see, that, as the law now stands, and with a paper-money continuing to go forth, the ports will be open before this day twelvemonth. Either way, the jolterheads are half ruined; and the chuckleheads will begin to say, "Cobbett was right after all!" If the price of corn be materially lowered; and the measure is of no use unless it do materially lower the price, the landlords and farmers are again placed at the feet of the fundholders. Rents will fall; or, rather, they will not be to be collected at all. The last blow very nearly felled these classes; and one more brings them completely down. Wheat can now be purchased in the Baltic at about 25s. the Winchester quarter. Put on a duty of 15s. a quarter, and

that brings English wheat down to about 5s. a bushel, instead of the 9s. 6d. at which it is now sold. Nay, put on a duty of 20s. the Winchester quarter; and even then the English landlord and farmer are slaughtered.

Yet, not to admit foreign corn even at a duty of 20s. a quarter, would be a pretty illustration of your "liberal system." You are resorting to all sorts of schemes to attract commerce to the country. That wise man, your Right Honourable Colleague, Mr. Huskisson, is so liberal in his schemes as to enable any man that has a mind to do it, to print English books at Paris, and import them and sell them in England much cheaper than he could have them printed in England; he is so very liberal that he is bartering away that great sinew of our strength, the navigation of England, merely for the sake of promoting the interests of low and dirty traffic; but, what a monstrous thing would it be to talk of a liberal system of commerce; to talk of measures to promote the export of manufactures; and, at the same time, to prohibit food from being brought in for the use of the manufacturers, by which prohibition the articles produced by them, must be so much enhanced in price as to render it impossible that foreigners should purchase them to anything like the extent which they otherwise would do!

Yet, if you lower the price of food to the manufacturers, you ruin the farmers and the landlords; for, as your liberal colleague said, in 1814, "Englishmen must continue to eat dear bread as long as her present debt shall continue to exist; or the owners of the land or the cultivators of the land must be ruined."

The interest of this debt is not to be paid while bread is cheap. There were two ways of getting rid of this difficulty: an "equitable adjustment," which would have swept away a large part of the debt, and have enabled the landlords and farmers to pay the taxes with wheat at four shillings a bushel, and mutton at fourpence a pound. Here would have been a settlement: here would have been a permanent and safe remedy: we should have had a gold currency, the villages would no longer have been plundered, a stop would have been put to the swellings of the all-corrupting and all-swallowing Wen, and, with a little time, the country would have set itself to rights, property would have had something like a fixed value, men would have known what they were worth; they would have known how to purchase, how to sell, and how to make their wills.

You, and your eulogized House of Commons, chose another mode of proceeding. Not daring to look *equitable adjustment* in the face; not daring any longer to attempt to redeem the pledge given by *Peel's Bill*; not daring to return to that currency of our ancestors, which the Speaker, MANNERS, told the Prince Regent, in 1819, that it was absolutely necessary to return to, and *congratulated* him on the resolution of the Parliament to do it; not daring to pursue this system, you abandoned it and returned again to the fallacious, the delusive, not to say fraudulent, experiment of *paper-money*.

Pressed by the landlords and farmers; worried out of your senses by their clamours; menaced daily and hourly by the at once corrupt and stupid writers of the London stock-jobbing press, you fled from the petitioners of Kent, Norfolk, Hereford, and Surrey; and resorted to the *Small-note Bill*, which was, observe, a part repeal of *Peel's Bill*, since it enables the Bank of England even to make small notes, which *Peel's Bill* forbade; and, from that day to this, every means in your power, whether direct or indirect, has been made use of to add to the quantity of the

paper. The effect which this must ultimately have upon the affairs of your Bank, I shall notice by-and-by, when I come to speak of the struggle now going on between the paper and the gold. At present let me observe, that one effect of this Small-note Bill was, instantly to *raise the price of corn*. Here was a dreadful injury committed against labourers and servants of every description; against tradesmen who had debts upon their books of some time standing, and who very soon had to receive little more than one-half of what was actually due to them. You, the *friends of commerce*! Are you aware that, by this very measure, you deducted from the property of all exporting merchants to an immense amount? If I export a thousand pounds worth of goods, when wheat is at four shillings a bushel, and if I receive payment for those goods, when a clipped coin, or paper-money, has made the wheat eight shillings a bushel, I, in fact, receive only five hundred pounds instead of receiving a thousand. This is so plain a matter, that one would think it impossible for any sane man not to understand it. Yet I am quite serious when I say, that I believe that you and your colleagues understand nothing at all of it. Not that you are incapable of understanding it; not that I presume there to be any natural defect in your minds; but the truth is, those minds are continually employed in the finding out of miserable expedients to answer the purposes of the day, seeming to be like those of the two bricklayers, one of whom propped up the wall with his shoulder, while the other went to get payment for the job. Your system is a system of contrivances; a system hostile to all permanency; a system of unfixedness and uncertainty; so that the rich man of to-day does not know that he may not be half a beggar before the year be out.

The "*old Roman plan*" has just had, I perceive, a vote in its favour of 30,000*l.* In defiance of its innate futility and profound folly having been demonstrated; in defiance of every thing to which sober reason ought to listen, 30,000*l.* of the money of England appears to have been voted to enable philosophers Horten and Peter to renew their "*experiments*" of sending Irish people to Canada, at an expense of 110*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* a family, at the least. Mr. JOHN SMITH is reported to have said, upon this occasion, that he would grant the money, because it was *giving relief* to so many poor Irish people. Well, Mr. SMITH; but why not give the 110*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* to the family in Ireland? Philosopher Peter has told you, that, after the expending the 110*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* upon a family, the family only obtain a "*reasonable chance*" of being able to support themselves in future. Set the paper-mill to work, Mr. SMITH; give the people no money at all, and they will, for a time, do better in Ireland than Peter will enable them to do in Canada, though Peter's Scotch brother is, I believe an Attorney-General in that country, and though the Scotch LORD DALHOUSIE is the Governor. Do you not see, Mr. SMITH, that these Irish become *paupers* in Canada; that they crack stones in that terrestrial paradise; and that LORD DALHOUSIE gives money to *relieve* them "*out of the pocket of his Majesty's Government*"; that is to say, out of the rents, the farm-stock, the stock-in-trade, and the sweat of labour in England? If, Mr. SMITH, Irish people are to be relieved in Canada, out of taxes raised in England, I should be glad if you would be so condescending as to tell me whether English money would not be better employed in relieving those families in Ireland, and not keeping them in Canada just until they are able (and not a moment longer) to make their way into the United States, there to add to the wealth and

strength of our most formidable enemy. No, you will not condescend to answer this question, I know.

But, what is there to prevent a law to procure for the Irish people, who may stand in need of relief, effectual relief **OUT OF THE RENTS OF THE LANDS IN IRELAND?** I have never heard any argument against this proposition. After the plunder of the Church and of the poor in England, provision was made for them, and effectual provision too, because it grew out of the soil. The Irish suffered as the English suffered from the horrible transfer of property; but, though both islands were under one Sovereign, a provision out of the soil was not made for the Irish; and hence, and hence alone, it is, that that nation has always been in a state of misery compared to the English. There needs not, after my unanswerable arguments upon the subject, after the testimony of circumstances and events for three hundred years, after the evidences furnished by the statute-book: after these, there wants nothing to prove that a nation must be miserable, unless there be ample provision for the indigent, guaranteed by the right of possession to the land. Greatly mistaken are those who imagine that the United States of America present an exception to this maxim. Every inch of land, every house in that country, is liable to assessments for the relief of the poor. In every country in Christendom, Ireland excepted, care has been taken to provide, in some shape or other, and effectually to provide, for the relief of the indigent.

And, why is poor Ireland to form the solitary exception? Why are its landholders (clerical and lay) to take all away? Why are they to be exempted from a regulation which Blackstone says has its foundation in the very principles of civil society? But, if they will not contribute to the relief of the indigent who till their estates; if they will not give a portion of their income to sustain those, the marrow of whose bones has been wasted in making them opulent; if they will not give a part of their immense havings to conciliate the good-will, to prevent the hatred and the vengeance of their suffering poor, why, in the name of reason and of justice, are the people of England to be taxed to obtain them security from that vengeance! No: leave them to themselves; leave them to their system of refusal, and let them, unpitied, incur all the consequences, however terrible. Is it not a shame, that so fine a country as Ireland, inhabited by so laborious a people, fruitful as it is in all the products of the earth, should present a spectacle which makes us actually turn away our sight! This is the way to relieve Ireland to a certain extent, at any rate; but, in the mean time, if, relieve the poor Irish we must, is it not something very little short of insanity to talk of relieving them by sending a few families to Canada, with a sum of expenses caused by each family that would really be a fortune if paid to them in Ireland.

Before this thirty thousand pounds had been voted by me, I should have asked philosophers Horton and Peter whether they meant to export this time also *two men to a woman*; and whether they meant to take out *no aged and infirm persons*. The last "*experiment*" did, they tell us, *fail*. Well, if that "*experiment*" failed, how are we to suppose that another will *succeed*; and especially if philosophers Horton and Peter take out a due proportion of women, who cannot fell woods and crack stones; and also a due proportion of aged and infirm persons. The thing is monstrous altogether. To put the Burdett Roman plan into execution, you must take away a million of people at least; and here,

upon their own showing, there are more than *twenty-two millions of money requirrd!* And this you will observe, for no earthly purpose, as is alleged, except that of causing capital to flow into Ireland. I observed before on the supreme folly; on the monstrous madness of such a project. I would fain hope that the whole project will at once be abandoned; but of those who can entertain such a project, only for one single moment, any thing may fairly be presumed, and almost any thing may be expected.

I have now to speak of the *state of the gold and the paper*. Ah! Mr. FREDERICK ROBINSON, to make use of the original saying of CASTLE-REAGH (who cut his own throat at North Cray, in Kent), you hallooed before you were out of the wood. I told you, in the Register of the 6th of March last, that you played a desperate game; that you thought, that wheat could, upon an average of years, be twice the price here that it was in France; that this delusion must lead to your ruin; that it must produce a stoppage at the Bank, or a total breaking up of the country bankers; that, yet, you were compelled to resort to the paper, or to come to the dreaded equitable adjustment; that another year of low prices would have produced the blowing up of the Borough system; that your danger was still greater on the other side, for, that another stoppage at the mother Bank was the end of your affair; that, nevertheless, that stoppage must come, unless you repealed the Small-note Bill; that that Bill would soon inundate the country with paper, and (now mark me) would send the gold out of the country, as it was sent by the issues of paper-money in 1817.

This is what I told you a very little more than a twelvemonth ago. And, IS NOT THE GOLD GOING OUT OF THE COUNTRY? You know it is, as well as I do; and, the questions now are, whether you will be able to put a stop to its flight, and what will be the consequences, if you were to succeed in putting a stop to its flight. My opinion is, that, after producing dreadful ruin amongst merchants and traders, by an attempt to put a stop to its flight; after breaking up fifty or sixty thousand farmers, you will find that you cannot succeed. I have before observed, that you, of Whitehall, are not a very far-seeing race; that your measures are calculated for *the day*; and that you very seldom think about anything beyond it. Be it known to you, then, that issues of paper-money do not produce their effect all of a sudden. We saw that the Bank stoppage of 1797 was produced by issues of several years before. The great issues of 1817 did not produce their shock until 1819. The issues, therefore, of the fall of 1823, and 1824, are only now beginning to be felt in their effects. The reason of this is, that it takes a considerable time before commercial transactions have a decided and visible effect upon the exchanges. However, whatever may be the reasons; whatever you may think of the matter, the fact you cannot deny; that the gold is, at this moment, going out of the country at a great rate, and that the mother Bank is endeavouring to check the flight, by drawing in its paper, *through the means of a diminution of its discounts*.

Those who deal in gold and silver are the cunningest of all the sons of the devil. They know, to the thousandth part of a farthing, what will answer their purpose and what will not. To talk to such a race about love of country, public good, is like making use of to them the whistling of blackbirds or thrushes. If they could melt down their own mothers into ingots of gold, they would do it. Let no one suppose that they will not perceive when gold can be sent away with a profit; and that they will

not do it to whatever extent they are able. They are going at this moment, carrying in the notes and taking away bagsfull of gold. Can you stop this, Mr. Frederick Robinson? And, especially, will you be able to stop it when it has gone on a little further? I do not believe that you can stop it; but, I well know, that you cannot stop it without a very great reduction of the quantity of the paper-money. It is pretty notorious that the country bankers, which were engaged in the rag trade previous to the passing of the Small-note Bill, have more than *doubled* the quantity of the paper which they had out previous to the passing of that Bill; and it is equally notorious that the number of the ragmen has been greatly added to since that time. The quantity of paper afloat is, therefore, pretty nearly as great as it was during the Bank stoppage. People have a *right* to demand gold of all bankers; but, all about the country, the bankers are the bashaws over every body in the middle and lower ranks of life. The parson, the dead-weight man, the fundholder, the tax-eater: these are all stanch friends of the paper. If a tradesman were to *demand* gold of any of them, they would discard him instantly. The farmer is, nine times out of ten, accommodated by the ragman. He, therefore, dares not talk of gold; and, as to the noblemen and gentlemen, they are in a state very little better. Many of the big fishes amongst them have actually their estates mortgaged to the mother Bank; and, very few of the rest of them can rub along without the assistance of the ragman. Thus, do circumstances have the force of law, every where but just in London.

In consequence of this, the rags are spread again all over the kingdom; and, spread they must continue to be, or wheat must come down to four shillings a bushel. I question whether the mother Bank, if stoutly pushed (as she probably will be), could save herself; for, as I observed before, she drew in in great haste in 1797 and 1818; but that did not save her. On both those occasions, laws were passed in great haste to protect her. But, even if the old mother of all the mischief could save herself, she could only do it by those very means that would blow up the country banks. These banks, as well as the old mother herself, are *now liable to be called upon for gold!* And, though for the reasons which I have just stated, the tradesmen, the mechanics, the farmers, the noblemen, the gentlemen, the "dead-weight," the parsons, and all the tax-eaters: though they, by compulsion some, and by good-will others, all take and circulate the paper, and never go to ragmen to demand gold for it: though they do this *now*, they would not do it if there came to be any thing like an *alarm*; and, that alarm will certainly come if the exchanges get a little more against us, and if the exportation of gold becomes matter of general notoriety.

You are such wise people at Whitehall, that it would be almost criminal to suppose, that you had not *some plan* ready in case this alarm should take place. You will say as you said not many weeks' back, on the occasion of making your budget speech, that you are right and that I am wrong. You said, in substance (I have not the Report before me), that you had a statement of the most prosperous financial state of the country to lay before the thrice honourable House; that you were, however, aware, that there were persons, both in this country and abroad, who looked upon this *prosperity* as not being *entirely solid*; that you were convinced that such persons were deceived, and that this *financial prosperity* was like the "munition of rocks." Whether you actually said

munition of rocks, I will not pretend to say; but I know that you exhausted pretty nearly the whole vocabulary of Whitehall in describing the wonderful solidity of your "*prosperity*." You will, therefore, say (for it takes a great deal to cure you) that you were right and that I am wrong; but if I *should* be right, then what will you do? What is your plan? How will you save your concern?

The old mother of mischief cannot draw in her paper to any extent without producing a great drawing-in on the part of the country ragmen, who, the moment there is a run upon them for gold, will be all frightened out of their senses. Draw in, did I say? They cannot draw in to any extent. What gold have they in proportion to the amount of their notes? All the gold in France, added to our own, would not be sufficient to pay off their paper. One of two things, however, must happen: they would get the gold or they would not. If they get the gold, they must get it from the old mother, and by that means break her: if they get it not, they must break up themselves.

"Either way they are sped." Their paper ceases to circulate; the quantity of money afloat is diminished; and wheat comes back to four shillings a bushel! Wheat at four shillings a bushel, any more than Satan himself, Whitehall dares not face. Yet, what is to be done? Why, if the gold go; if it continue to be justifiable to send gold out of the country, the old prohibitory laws, with additional rigour, must be renewed; and even that will not do, for the thing will soon break out into *two prices*; and that is the grave of your system. I take it, then, that paper-money must become, in some shape or other, in a greater or less degree, a LEGAL TENDER. I hear people say that you will rather suffer martyrdom than gratify me by another Bank Restriction Act. I have a great opinion of the sturdiness of Whitehall upon this score; but, I have a still greater opinion of the power of circumstances over Whitehall. Wheat at four shillings a bushel I say it dare not face; and I am firmly convinced that there must be something like a legal tender of paper-money or wheat at four shillings a bushel, which is much about the gold price, and to that it must come if gold continue to be legally demanded.

In the meanwhile, I would advise my readers to get gold and keep it. To get gold while they can; for let them remember that legal tender comes like a thief in the night. That in 1797 the Bank paid gold on the Saturday: an Order of Council issued *on the Sunday*, and the poor creatures went away chap-fallen. In 1819, gold was to be had at the Bank as may be *to-day*: *two days* afterwards, payment in gold was put a stop to; though the payment was only of small notes of a certain date. A legal tender comes, therefore, like a thief in the night. A few hocus-pocus words changes our gold into paper. It is not to be expected that people will go and knock at the doors of the country bankers, and make them surrender, until the people really see their danger. One could expect, however, that some few men would have sense enough to perceive what is coming; and the moment they do perceive it, and act upon the discovery, they will have imitators in great abundance.

The system now going on, all over the country, is a system of anticipation. If a farmer wants to buy farming-stock, he goes and borrows paper of the country banker. This fellow gets 5 per cent. interest, which is more than he can get in any other way; and, very frequently, he gets it without possessing anything for his paper. As long as such a system can last, it will make a *show*; it will create what very silly men

look upon as proofs of public prosperity. All these immense streets that we see rising up about the Wen, are mere creatures of paper-money. Let the paper-money blow up and down come the streets. It cannot last but for a certain time; and, that time, even war wholly out of the question, cannot be long.

It is curious enough that, while we know that the gold has began to depart; and while we know that this has been caused by the Small-note Bill: it is curious, that while we know this, measures are continually adopted for facilitating the issues of paper-money, and, of course, for increasing its quantity. An Act was passed last year for enabling a very numerous class of persons to be bankers, and to issue notes in Ireland, which persons could not issue notes before that Act was passed. The Bank of Ireland is, we read, establishing Branch Banks about the country. The blowing-up of this system would produce dreadful mischiefs in England; but, what pen or tongue can describe the horrible calamities which it would produce in Ireland?

In conclusion, Mr. Frederick Robinson, let me tell you of something, of which, I dare say, you know very little, and which, nevertheless, is of great consequence to you and your system; namely, that the United States of America are surpassing even you in their issues of paper-money. During the last winter, the Legislature of the State of New York seems to have done little else than pass Acts to extend the circulation of paper-money. Not a bit of silver or of gold is to be seen in the whole country. The thing is just in the same state in which it was there just previous to the last war. Their system blew up at the end of the war, and again in 1819. Whenever we draw in here as we did in 1814, and 1818, we blow the Yankee paper up; because their paper is bottomed, for the most part, on the credit which they obtain from England. Your liberal and wise colleague may remember, perhaps, how Peel's Bill smashed the American merchants, and smashed the English exporters to America.* I think that Jonathan, if pushed a little, will come to "*equitable adjustment*" with as little ceremony as may be; and this may serve as a caution to all those, who have what they call *money* in the *American funds*. If we blow up, the Americans blow up to a certainty; but, as their *general Government* always takes care to hold in its hands the power of demanding its taxes in hard money, there will be less of explosion with regard to the Government there than here.

Finally, let me observe, that I am firmly persuaded that this is the last trial of paper-money in England. Anything like Bank Restriction, or legal tender, would make people see that the system was never more to be relied on. And yet it is this very paper to which you owe all your strength. Let that fall, and we shall have Parliamentary Reform, Catholic Emancipation, no Sunday Tolls, and none of those other Acts which press the middle class of the people down amongst the paupers. It is the root of all evil: it has done more mischief than any other invention of the devil; and the day of its destruction will be the day of a jubilee for the whole human race.

WM. COBBETT.

* The same thing occurred in the winter of 1837.—Ed.

CORN BILL.

(Political Register, April, 1825.)

Kensington, 26th April, 1825.

THE cry for an alteration in the Corn Bill, or, rather, Law, is very loud; and, except amongst the farmers and landlords, very general. All other classes are crying out for *cheap bread*; and, observe, cheap bread implies cheap meat. And it does seem monstrous, that the Government should be praised to the skies for its *liberal principles* of commerce; for its efforts to add to the quantity of exports by means of duties taken from imports, while it insists upon excluding food, which might be obtained at half our present prices.

But this is a view of the matter *wholly erroneous*: it contains *not one* correct idea. The corn is called *dear* because the price of it is higher than the price of corn abroad. We do not call any *other thing* dear on that account. Butter, cheese, glass, mustard, vinegar, tea, sugar, and many other things are higher priced here than they are abroad; and yet there is no new law called for with regard to them. *I am for open ports for corn*; but my reasons are altogether different from those of the persons who now cry so loudly for a new Corn Bill.

Before we call for cheap corn, there are some things for us to inquire into, relative to *the cause of its now being dear*. It was not dear in 1822: it was then "*cheap*," as it was called. Since that year the law has been new-modelled; the import price has been *lowered*; yet the corn is now called dear. The ports have been closed ever since the early part of 1819. They have been closed during six years. And as corn has been quite cheap enough during a part of that period, why are we not to suppose, that it may get to be *cheap again*, without an alteration in the law? It would, I imagine, be very difficult for any of the cheap-corn people to answer this question; and, if they cannot answer it, upon what ground is it that they petition for an opening of the ports to foreign corn? WEBB HALL thought, that the very smell of the *banded* corn made the English corn "*cheap*." But we have seen it become "*dear*," in spite of that smell.

The *cause* of the present high price cannot, then, have been produced by any thing that has been done relative to foreign corn; and, observe, unless these petitioners can make it out, and quite clearly too, that the present high price has been produced by the excluding of foreign corn, they must be silent on the present subject of their complaints. One would think, that there is before their eyes quite enough to convince any rational beings, that the high price of corn has not been produced by the cause against which they now petition. Mutton, beef, veal, pigs, horses, cows, sheep, lambs, underwood, timber, wool, have all become nearly

double the price that they bore in 1822, when Sir THOMAS LETHBRIDGE put on his white hat.* And we well know, that the ports have been shut against these. They all keep pretty exact pace with the bushel of wheat; and yet, what has the *foreign market* to do with them? If men exercised, upon these subjects, their usual sense and reason, would not these notorious truths make them hesitate, before they ascribe the high price of corn to non-importation from abroad? Bread is truly enough called the staff of life; but, observe, its *amount* is small compared with that of meat, horses, butter, cheese, and wool. Why rest the complaint upon bread alone? Why not include all these articles? Why not, at any rate, endeavour to *show*, that it is the non-importation which has caused the high price even of corn alone? For, unless you can show that, on what ground can you demand an importation in the way of *relief*?

If the "*dearth*," as it is presumed to be, arose from short crops; if there were a *scarcity* of the article; then, indeed, it might be unnecessary to make further inquiry into *causes*, and men might reasonably call for aid from abroad. But there is no such scarcity. The crops have been fair average crops ever since the day when our great Prime Minister stated the evils of the country to have arisen out of "*surplus produce*." This being undeniable, and the ports never having been open all the while, what ground can any one have to call now for importation of corn? At least, what ground can he have, unless upon a better showing of *causes* than any of the petitioners have yet attempted to produce?

The facts of the case are these:—

1. That the ports have been closed ever since 1819, inclusive.
2. That wheat was at 9s. 6d. a bushel in 1819.
3. That wheat was at 4s. a bushel in 1822.
4. That it is at 9s. 6d. a bushel in 1825.
5. In 1822, the country was in *deep distress*.
6. In 1825, the country is (to use Mr. CANNING's phrase) "*outgrown by prosperity*."

These facts are wholly undeniable, except the *last*, and that fact Mr. ALDERMAN THOMPSON, who is one of the head *petitioners*, will, I suppose, be the last man in the world to deny. And if these facts be undeniable, upon what ground does Mr. ALDERMAN THOMPSON petition? He is, I hear, a *talking man*; but he will, I imagine, find it very difficult to make his petition out to contain a fair and reasonable proposition, unless he can deny the above facts, which I am sure (except the last) he cannot; and I am sure he will not deny that.

Now, then, let us take the *true view* of the matter; let us see *what it is* that has raised the price of corn. Let us look at the *real cause* of this presumed *dearth*; and, then, we shall soon find, *that importation is not the remedy*; but, that importation, unaccompanied with other, and *most important measures*, would plunge the country into distress far greater than that of 1822.

In order to open the way to the view that I am now about to take of the matter, it will be necessary to go back, and give a history of this Corn affair for twenty years past. The price of corn, owing, for a short time, partly to a *damaged crop*, became very high in 1800 and 1801,

* A *White Hat*, at this time, was considered the emblem of Radicalism.—
Ed.

when it rose, at one time, to about twenty shillings a bushel. Importation was, then, not only allowed, but it was accompanied with a *premium*. The *peace of Amiens* came just after this, and there came with it a *plentiful crop*. Added to this crop was a *great drawing-in of the paper-money*: so that, altogether, the price of corn was brought very low; and, though the Debt and taxes were nothing compared to what SNAP PERCEVAL and his partners made them, there must have been a Corn Bill even then, or a total ruin of the landlords and farmers, if ADDINGTON had not got into the war again. But, and I beg the reader to mark this, there was of late years, *no law to prevent the importation of corn, until the year 1815*. The ports were always open; and, with these open ports, corn was always sufficiently high in price, not to *satisfy* the land-people (for it takes a great deal to do that), but to prevent them from *grumbling*; and that is as much as any reasonable man can ever hope to do. Yet, though the price of corn was generally very high, from 1795 to the beginning of the new war, nobody ever *complained* of it. It was not looked upon as an *evil*. Every thing was high in price, and corn went along with other things.

But, when the *next peace* came, the "wisdom of Parliament" had added about *four hundred millions* more to what is called the *National Debt*; and, now it became necessary to make a formal *break*, or to *return to gold*. The law, as it then stood, compelled the mother Bank to pay in gold in six months after the conclusion of peace. This was not done. Acts were passed to give it time. But, it was necessary to *prepare* for the terrible duty; and this preparation threw the land-people into the utmost confusion. There must, however, be an open *bankruptcy*, or *gold*. Yet, this could not be without one of two things; a *sweeping away of a large part of the Debt*; or, the ruin of the land-people, who had done very well with *high taxes and high prices*, but who could not do with *high taxes and low prices*. The Government had not the courage to make an "*equitable adjustment*," as it might have done then. Its supporters and its hirelings talked as big as ever about its honour and its *good faith*; though it was by no means good faith to make the people pay back in hard money that which had been borrowed for them in paper. To avoid the performance of this sacred duty, the Government resorted to the miserable scheme of a *Corn Bill*; and, for the first time for many years, passed a law to prohibit the importation of corn, unless when corn in the country should be at a certain price. It was soon found that this measure was wholly unavailing, though it, doubtless, had *some effect*; but this was the first Corn Bill, brought in in 1814 and passed in 1815.*

In spite of this miserable attempt to prevent that *equitable adjustment*, such as bankrupts come to, and which is the only efficient remedy for want of means to pay in full; in spite of this, the Bank continued to prepare for gold payments, prices continued to decline, and by the latter end of the year 1816, the landlords and farmers were reduced to the utmost distress. They were in no distress so long as there were no preparations for paying in gold. Nothing could be more prosperous than their affairs; though, observe, the ports continued open for corn during

* See Mr. COBBETT'S papers on the Corn Bill of 1815, Vol. IV. of this work, pp. 320 to 348.—ED.

the whole of the time, and, of course, there was no petitioning against Corn Bills. In the early part of 1817, the Government was exceedingly embarrassed; for, though the mother Bank was still protected against the demands of cash payments, she was still holding herself in a state of preparation to meet those payments as far as she could. The Government, in order to get rid of embarrassments for the moment, *caused a large issue of paper* in the spring and summer of 1817; and, the consequence of that was, great relief to the land-people, very high prices in 1818, in spite of a crop finer than any that the country had almost ever seen. The Corn Bill of 1815 remained in force; but so high were the prices, that early in 1819 the ports became open, and a large quantity of corn was introduced.

Now, however, in this memorable year, 1819, the year of the Manchester slaughter, and the year of the Six Acts, the same Parliament did, in its wisdom, resolve that it would once more return "*to the currency of our ancestors.*" To foresee the consequences of this was by no means difficult. Payments in cash were to begin on the 1st of May, 1823. Every thing prepared itself for an awful epoch. The paper grew less and less; the country banks grew less in number; rents fell, farmers broke, landlords sold their estates, heirs thought themselves fortunate not to have to pay more than they received; a whimpering began to be heard in 1819; in 1820, it became a cry; in 1821, a howl; in 1822, a yelling and a bellowing that frightened even Castlereagh, and seemed to make even our famous Prime Minister himself begin to think. Yet, observe, the ports were still closed; they had been firmly closed ever since the beginning of 1819. There was no petitioning against Corn Bills. The Corn Bill was in full vigour, and, since its enactment, wheat had fallen from 9s. 6d. to 4s. a bushel.

What was now to be done, then? Looking back to 1815, we find that a Corn Bill had been preferred to *equitable adjustment*. The Corn Bill, though it must have done *something*, had not saved the landlords one hour. It was the *paper money* that was wanted, and not a Corn Bill. The wheat had come to four shillings a bushel with a Corn Bill in force. Gold was not yet actually forthcoming. That was not to be the case for some months to come. Yet the yelling and howling were insupportable; and, if it had but continued but a little longer, even the stoutest of the landed advocates for national faith would have ranged themselves under the banners of *equitable adjustment*. Indeed, this celebrated phrase was not mine, but belonged to Mr. EDMUND WOODHOUSE, one of the staunchest of all the staunch supporters of the Government.

What was now to be done, then? We were now towards the close of the year 1822, and gold was actually to come out on the next month of May. A Corn Bill had been tried, and it had had very little effect. What, then, was to be done? Nothing upon the face of the earth but paper could give the system a reprieve. Under the name of a *Small-note Bill*, the paper was resorted to: not a paper of positive force; not a paper of nominal legal tender; but a paper virtually a legal tender, until a panic arose; and as effectual for the purpose of raising prices as if it had been a tender by law: a paper that people have every where a legal right to demand gold for; but a paper which not one man out of a thousand dares demand gold for; a paper which, more than a year ago, Peel's Bill would have made it unlawful to circulate; but a paper, the circulation of which is now authorized by a law which partly repealed that Bill.

Here, then, we have *the cause* of the present high price of corn, and of every thing else. The landlords and farmers are again jocund; they now pay again their high taxes without grudging, because they have high prices to pay them with. The fundholder, the dead-weight man, the long tribe of sinecure people, pensioners and placemen, receive one bushel of wheat from the land where they received two bushels in 1822. This is *equitable adjustment* in another form. In pounds, shillings, and pence, their receipt is the same; but in wheat and meat, it is only about half what it was in 1822. *How long this state of things can last*, is a question beside our present purpose. This has been the effect of the putting out of the paper;* but, observe, this effect would now be to a certain degree counteracted by a repeal of the Corn Bill. The land-people thrive in consequence of the quantity of the paper, which gives them high price; but, if you open the ports, and thereby bring down the price of their corn, you take from them a part, and a pretty considerable part, of that which has been given them by the paper.

I may be asked why the absence of a Corn Bill should have this effect upon their prices now, when their prices continued to be so high before 1815, though there was no Corn Bill then in force. The difference is this; that then there was not only no gold in circulation; but there was no gold *demandable*. Paper was created at pleasure, almost without limit and without danger.

A correspondent has written to me, remonstrating with me very strongly, upon what he calls my *partiality for the land*. I have no such partiality. I care very little, indeed, for the fate of the landlords. Generally speaking, they have done as much as their great power and their little sense and little virtue would let them do, for the impoverishment and debasement of the great body of the people; but I cannot change them. They have the land, and the farmers and labourers and artisans, and every body that works must suffer, if they suffer injustice. I have no partiality for the land; but I have a great partiality for common justice and common sense. I know that all these numerous classes of persons must be plunged into utter ruin, if they have to pay the present taxes with wheat at a price less than nine or ten shillings a bushel. With the far greater part of them, it is anything but prosperity even now. Take from them the burden of the National Debt and the "*Dead-weight*"; place them, as to taxes, where they were before the ever-accursed days of PITT and PERCEVAL and their understrappers. Bring the poor-rates back to what they were when bawling PITT first scaled the walls of power; bring them back thus, and they may be, as the farmers of that day were, able to live with wheat at four shillings a bushel; but, do what you will, pay for the dear loaf you must, or lop off two-thirds of the Debt and the "*Dead-weight*"; aye, even if the present peace were as solid as the foundations of the earth itself. I shall be told, perhaps, that the petitioners do not ask for a *total abolition* of the Corn Laws. But, they petition for nothing if they do not petition for that which will *lower* the price of corn. As to their talk about *regulating* the prices, keeping them *steady*, and the like, it is sheer nonsense. It is an attempt to regulate that which the sun and the rain forbid them to regulate. They want to make the price less, upon an average, at any rate; and whatever effect they pro-

* See our note to page 52 of this volume.—ED.

duce in that way, it is so much in the way of doing injustice to those to whom it has been attempted to do something like justice by the issuing of the paper.

The petitioners, like a great many other people that do not very well understand what they are about, begin at the wrong end. There is something else to be done before you invite foreigners to bring corn into the country. What man in his senses would not try first to cause corn to be raised in England sufficient to be sold at a reasonable price, before he endeavoured to cause it to be brought from abroad? Can these petitioners doubt that it would be better for us to eat English wheat at four shillings a bushel, than French wheat, or Polish wheat, or Dutch wheat, at four shillings a bushel? Well, then, take off the taxes that load the land. Take off the malt tax, the soap tax, the candle tax, the tax on all the implements of husbandry. Take off this immense load; enable the labourer to live upon his wages by paying more of his money for food and drink, and less of it into the hands of the tax-gatherer; take the labourer thus out of the poor-house or from the poor-book, and English farmers will gladly sell you their wheat at four shillings a bushel; the petitioners should begin by praying for a removal of these taxes; and they should end by praying for a total abolition of the Corn Laws; or, they should begin by praying for a due and full execution of PEEL'S Bill, and then the Corn Laws would become nearly a dead letter, as they were in the year 1822. Only let Mr. FREDERICK PROSPERITY give notice that he means to move for a repeal of the *Small-note Bill*, and you will have wheat at four shillings a bushel before this day month.

O! exclaims some furious ragman: what! you want, like a true Jacobin as you are, to destroy the *foundations of our prosperity and of our greatness!* Yes, I do, indeed; and, if the petitioners against the *Corn Bill* do not also wish to destroy the foundations of your prosperity and your greatness, they would act a much wiser part to let the thing remain quietly as it is. It is a very ticklish thing; a most rotten thing; it rests upon very thin bits of very dirty paper, such as no pen but a butcher's can make a mark upon. It is a thing to be let alone; not to be stirred up, rummaged and canvassed.

I think it probable that these petitioners for a large loaf may be saved the trouble of carrying through the work that they have in hand. For, if the paper be already sufficient in quantity to render some measure necessary for preventing the gold from going out of the country, the thing will soon be placed beyond their reach, and that of the Minister also. If the gold once sets outward with a strong tide, the measures necessary to stop it will either bring corn down to a very low price, or will fix it so high that the farmers will be enabled to laugh at a Corn Bill.* I have frequently repeated my opinion, that Whitehall will never face wheat at 4s. a bushel again. Yet, after the Canada affair; after sending the Irish away at the expense of 110l. 2s. 6d. a family, in order to cause "*capital*" to go into Ireland, "*to absorb the population there;*" after this, it would be presumption, indeed, to pretend to foresee what Whitehall may attempt to do. Farmers, therefore, pray be upon your guard.

* The panic took place in December and January of this year, and prices came down and kept low till 1833, when Lord ALTHORP raised them again by the Joint-stock Bank bubble, the end of which seems to be approaching (1837).—ED.

Take no lease, if you can avoid it. Wheat may be 15s. a bushel ; but it may be 4s. All depends upon causes over which you have no control : your skill, your care, your industry are nothing. Estimates and calculations are of no use to you. All depends upon the value of money. That value entirely depends upon Acts of Parliament relative to paper and to gold ; and no human being can guess at what those Acts may contain.

A gentleman that I saw the other day told me, that he was about to sell a farm in Lincolnshire. He said he thought that things were now *got up as high as they would go*, and that he heard that the Bank was *drawing in her paper* ! Thus, then, said I to myself, the thing is really understood by some people at any rate. This estate now, for instance, if not actually paid for within a year or thereabouts, may, if it sell for ten thousand pounds, possibly be paid for in money not worth above five thousand pounds of the present day ; and, on the other hand, it may possibly be paid for in money worth twenty thousand pounds of the present day. Lawyers are said to toast the *glorious uncertainty of the law* ; but never before, I believe, was there a country having for its possession a complete uncertainty as to property. Even this Corn Bill is, at this moment, making a sort of a suspension in the dealings of one-half of the people of this kingdom. It is generally believed, that the Ministers have a desire to *do something* about it. That something, be it what it may, cannot be of trifling importance. It cannot fail deeply to affect the interests of numerous families. If it open the ports in any degree whatever beyond the extent of the present law, it virtually violates leases ; it lessens the value of farm stock ; it lessens the value of the land itself ; and it shows besides, that neither has anything which it can call *security*.

I think that the petitioners would do well to consider what I have here said before they proceed further with their petitions. If they be ready to call for a reduction of the interest of the Debt, and for a removal of those taxes which load the land, and which cause the poor-rates, I am ready to join them ; but if they be for paying the fundholder and the "*dead-weight*" to the last penny of the nominal amount of their demands, I am for giving them bread at fourpence or sixpence the pound. These petitioners are, the leaders of them at least, in the City of London. They are not aware that, in attacking the Corn Bill, they, in reality, *attack that Debt* which has rendered the Corn Bill necessary ; or, they attack that paper-money which has raised the price of corn to that height of which they complain. However, we shall, I dare say, have speeches and paragraphs abundant upon the subject, to form one more volume of those innumerable volumes of nonsense which have come from the heads of shallow men meddling with such matters. The thing will end, in all probability, in an endeavour, on the part of the Ministers, to produce a sort of compromise between the land-people and the petitioners. No compromise, however, can take place without the land *giving up something* ; and in whatever degree it gives up, it will be so much nearer the point at which it shall be completely devoured by the cormorants of 'Change-alley.

I cannot conclude this article without noticing, and, indeed, without inserting a letter from a correspondent, alluded to above. The letter being anonymous, I ought to apologize for publishing the latter part of it, containing, as it does, so high a compliment to myself. But I will insert it just as it stands. It is worthy of great attention, and shall receive that attention from me.

" Sir,

" I beg to apologize to you for putting you to the expense of this letter, an expense which I would willingly defray, could I do so with convenient secrecy. I am a constant subscriber to your Register, let that be an excuse. It has long been a source of regret to me, that a writer most able, and most resolute in exposing truth, should upon one point be so influenced by partialities imbibed in early life, as to advocate principles which tend to deprive the industrious (or, their successors,) of that independence which forms the chief stimulus to industry.

" In answer to the questions of Mr. W. E. in the Register of the 9th April, I beg to submit to your attention those following :

" 1. Are not tithe-owners landowners ?

" 2. Does not the consumer pay the land-tax ?

" 3. What is the amount of the legacy duty and the stamp duties paid upon the transfer of money, compared to those imposed upon transfers of landed property ?

" 4. Barley being 10s. a quarter in the cheapest market, and 50s. in England, how many real pennyworths of barley does the labourer get for his money who spends 5s. in beer ?

" 5. The average of wheat being kept up at 68s. 9d. per quarter, when it might be had in the cheapest market for 30s. ; what is the yearly amount of the tax imposed upon the man who consumes 1½lb. of bread per day ?

" 6. How much does the cost which the British community incurs for the maintenance of the monopoly of grain, established for the advantage of land-owners, exceed the cost of the army, the navy, and the public debt altogether ?

" 7. Were not the lands of England granted by William the Conqueror, on the express condition, that the necessary expenses of the national wars should be defrayed by their possessors ?

" Surely, Sir, property of all descriptions has an equal claim to the protection of a just and good government. Surely, the savings of industry ought to be respected ; this cannot be the case if a constantly increased value is to be given to land, to the prejudice of all other possessions.

" Surely, for example, and I hope you will pardon me the liberty, your own transcendent talents, and unremitting diligence, (besides acquiring fame,) ought to be remunerated in a coin of solid and never-varying worth, insusceptible of depreciation ; a coin which cannot fail to insure to your family, to the latest posterity, the blessings of ease and independence.

" I am, Sir,

" Your most obedient servant,

" 15th April, 1825."

" E. W."

I have before distinctly disclaimed all partialities for the land ; and, I can assure this writer, that there is no man in the world more averse than I am from advocating any principle which has a tendency to deprive the middle classes of the fruits of their industry, and to heap those fruits upon the higher orders. But, I wish to be clearly understood as shutting out from all pretensions to *industry, genius, and talent*, that class of money-making vagabonds, who, favoured by a system of trick and fraud, make their half millions of money by "*watching the turn of the market.*" I know that there must be different ranks in society. I know that there will be something of an aristocracy everywhere ; and of all the aristocracies in the world, the most execrable is that of an aristocracy created by funding and by bank-notes.

Now, as to the questions put to me by this gentleman. To the *first* and *second* I answer in the affirmative. The tithe-owners are land-owners. The consumer does pay the land-tax. The consumer pays not only the land-tax but all the taxes on the land. But, I should be glad to know how this alters the question. Before the consumer pays them, they have to be paid by the farmer ; and, in order that he may pay them, in order that he may be enabled to pay them, he must be paid for his produce ;

and he must be paid for his produce, too, *in proportion to the amount of those taxes*. To be sure, the consumer pays the taxes; the consumer pays the poor-rates also. But, while landlords and farmers are consumers as well as other people, they must, as well as other people, be paid by those who purchase their produce, in proportion to the taxes that they have paid, in order to get that produce. This is precisely what I have been contending for. Lessen the taxes paid by the farmer directly, and those which he pays in the wages of his labourers and his tradesmen, and he will sell you wheat at four shillings a bushel as well as the French.

I do not think that the third question has anything to do with the matter.

As to the *fourth* question, it is referable to what has just been said on the first and second question; but this, and the fifth and sixth questions are answered by the observation, that you ought not to ask how much we pay for beer and bread more than we ought to pay, "*for the maintenance of the monopoly of grain*;" but how much we pay more than we ought to pay, for the maintenance of *the debt* and the "*dead-weight*." This is the proper question to ask; for, sweep those away, and the English farmer will thrive upon prices lower than the prices in France. My correspondent would, I am afraid, not be willing to sweep these away; and yet, unless he do that, he must pay for wheat at nine shillings a bushel, or the land *cannot be tilled*. When he was asking about the pennyworths of barley that the labourer did not get for his money, it is a wonder to me that he did not recollect, that those pennyworths are directly deducted from the labourer, and through him from the farmer, by the Debt and the "*dead-weight*." It is also a wonder that he did not recollect, that the same Debt and *dead-weight* rendered it necessary for the farmer to receive sixty-eight shillings for his wheat instead of thirty.

But, it really puzzles me to know, whether people be *serious*, when they ask questions like the *fifth* and *sixth*. I have seen, and people have been so good as to send to me, statements, and in print too, relative to this "*cost*," as they call it, of the "*Corn Monopoly*," which statements have quite astonished me. The mode of calculating is this: the calculators take the price of wheat in France, for instance, where it is (suppose) 4s. a bushel. Then they take the price in England, where (suppose) it is 9s. a bushel. Then they state (no matter on what authority), the number of bushels of wheat *consumed in England in a year*. They then divide this number, which amounts, of course, to many millions, by *four*, which gives them the number of *pounds sterling* which "*we pay* for our wheat *more than we should pay if the ports were open*." They carry this into the prices of corn of all sorts; and the result is, that "*we pay*" God knows how many millions a-year "*for the Corn Bill*." I think that some of the calculators have made this "*payment*" amount to more than a *hundred millions a-year*! And, my Correspondent, in his *sixth* question, makes it amount to more than that of the *army*, the *navy*, and the *Debt* all together!

This is *wild work* indeed! An old friend of mine, whom I always think of, when I meet with statements like these, used to say, "*nothing is so false as figures*;" and, when they are false, they are false indeed. By *figures* PITT paid off the national debt, led thereunto by Dr. PRICE, who, by figures, *proved*, that a *farthing*, put out to interest at the birth of Jesus Christ, would now have amounted to *more money than would have*

weighed down the world. The Doctor did not embarrass his argument by any inquiry respecting *who* was to *pay* the interest. Nor do our calculators embarrass their argument by any inquiry respecting *where the corn is to come from* in quantity sufficient to *supply this whole kingdom.* Then, when they talk of the Corn Bill "*costing us so much,*" and about "*our paying so much for it,*" who do they mean by "*us*" and "*our*"? They surely, do not leave *the people of England* out of the question? And *who* are the people of England, if not those who *own all England, who till all England, and who make houses, clothes, and tools for all these?*

These calculators appear to me to proceed upon the following set of suppositions:

1. That those who own, those who occupy, and those who till, all England, together with all the wheelwrights, collar-makers and smiths who make implements for them, and all the inhabitants of the agricultural villages and towns, who make houses, and clothes, and who provide other things for the owners, occupiers and tillers; that *all these* make up but a very small and insignificant parcel of people.
2. That they are *not much wanted* in the country, which might get *all its* corn from foreign countries; though it is not so *very clear,* how the meat and cheese and butter and wool could be got from those countries.
3. That, if there were to come from foreign countries corn enough to feed this *whole country,* that would *not raise the price of corn in those countries.*
4. That by importing corn "*we*" should obtain a *great market* for "*our*" manufactures.
5. That the present market for "*our*" manufactures would *not,* on the other hand, *be lessened* by making the owners and tillers of all England *unable to buy them.*
6. That this country is under the dominion of *witchcraft*; for that, though the landlords and farmers are *growing so rich* by means of the Corn Bill, there is *nobody to endeavour to share in the gains,* and there is no *competition* to prevent them from sacking the whole of the wealth of the country.

Gross and monstrous as these suppositions are, I do not see how they are to be rejected by those who talk, in the above-mentioned strain, of the "*cost*" of the Corn Laws. The Corn Laws are intended to *keep up* the price of corn, just as much as the Excise Laws are intended to *keep up* the price of beer; and, for precisely the same purpose; namely, that those who sell beer may be able to pay the taxes, which are wanted to pay the score due for *Anti-Jacobin wars.* Why not petition against the enormous price of *the pot of beer?* Let me brew beer in Flanders, and I will bring in better beer for *three halfpence* a pot than I can buy at any public-house for *sixpence.* But, what would this do? Why, it would put an end to the brewing of beer in England, and all the generous Jews who lent the money to set the Waterloo heroes in motion, and all those heroes themselves, must go unpaid.

Here comes my jolly landlord with his foaming pot of beer in one hand, and with his other grimy paw held out for the "*Sixpence, if you please.*" Sixpence, you vile extortioner! Why, I can take barley (in spite of the Corn Bill), turn it into malt, and make a better pot of beer

for three halfpence. "Aye, master," says my landlord, "but this pot of mine has paid malt tax, beer tax, license tax, my house tax, window tax, candle tax, coal tax, and taxes besides without number." I am silenced, of course. I cannot expect to have a man's beer without reimbursing him the taxes that he has paid on it. It would be a flagrant robbery to force it from him at three halfpence a pot, or at any price under sixpence. What answer would it be to him, to tell him that I could, at a third of the price, get better beer in Flanders? He would say, "Why, then, master, you must go to Flanders and get it, and *drink* it too; for, if you bring it here, I must pull down my sign, or be ruined."

And, pray, do not all these arguments of the beerseller apply to the case of the farmer? The exciseman does not, indeed, go and *guage* his wheat; but, he comes at it in other ways, not less effectual, though not quite so visible to all eyes. "Nine shillings, you rogue, when I can buy wheat in France for less than four?" "Yes," says the farmer; "but, consider the *Waterloo taxes* that I have paid upon this bushel of wheat." "What taxes?" "Why, land tax, poor tax, window tax, beer and malt tax, soap and candle tax, sugar tax, leather tax, iron tax, and all those taxes for my labourers and wrights as well as for myself, for their taxes are included in what I pay them *for work*." Am I not, then, as completely silenced as I was in the case of the jolly landlord? Will not the farmer tell me, that, if I get my wheat from France, he must cease farming, or be ruined?

Turn the matter which way we will, it always comes to this at last, that there is a Corn Bill, to make us buy corn dearer than we otherwise should buy it, and that this Corn Bill exists not for the benefit of the owners and occupiers of the land; but for the benefit of the Treasury; or, rather, for the benefit of those who live upon the taxes, seeing that those who own and cultivate the land cannot pay the taxes without this high price of corn.

Here I ought to stop; but, not five minutes ago, I got the newspapers of this morning; and, from them, I find, that the Ministers *do not mean to make any change in the Corn Laws this year*. It is plain, that they *do not know what to do* with those laws; and this is a mere putting off of the evil hour. The subject was brought forward in the House of Commons, last night, by the presenting of a petition from *merchants and bankers* in the City of London. Their orator disclaimed all wish to *injure* the land-people; but in the course of his speech, he said, that the *high price of food deprived the people of the comforts of life*; and, therefore, his object must have been to *lower* the price of corn. Then came out my old friend, GAFFER GOOCH, and my other old friend, Mr. HUSKISSON, as follows:—

"Mr. Gooch stated, that although he agreed that a petition from London was entitled to the respect of the House, yet he thought the subject of a nature which ought not to be tampered with. When the honourable Member for Bridgnorth had given notice of his motion, not one petition was before the House. *All classes felt contented*, and no complaints were made against the Corn Laws. A strong case, therefore, ought to be made out before they entered into the discussion. He did not pretend to state that the Corn Laws ought not to be revised at *some future time*, but the agricultural interests did not complain. As to the citizens of London, their trade was going on *prosperously*; they had nothing to do, on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday, but stuff themselves with roast beef and plum pudding. The poverty of the citizens of London was all a *humbug*."

He was sorry that the subject was brought forward, for it agitated the country from one end to the other. Since he had the honour of a seat in that House, there was no subject on which he had received so many letters, all expressing their fear that they may be reduced again to the state of a few years ago—the poor thrown out of work, and the poor-rates raised to an enormous rate. If ever there was a question before the House which called for the exertions of the agricultural gentlemen, it was this—did his Majesty's Government intend to alter the present laws?—if they did, the agricultural gentlemen would be 'duller than the fat weed that roots itself with ease on Lethe's wharf,' if they did not exert themselves against the measure.

"Mr. Huskisson said, that with reference to the question which the honourable gentleman put, he had no difficulty in stating that his Majesty's Government had no intention of proposing any general revision of the laws respecting the trade in foreign corn during the present session. If the honourable Member for Bridgnorth did intend to suggest such a proposition, it was his duty to have done so at an earlier period in the session. But he was quite ready to state, that considering all the circumstances connected with the state of the Corn Laws, he regretted that the subject should now occupy the time of the House. He should himself suggest to Parliament, at an early period next session, the propriety of entering into a general consideration of the state of the laws, which regulated the trade in corn between this and other countries. If the motion was brought forward on Thursday, he should have a regular opportunity of stating the considerations which had induced himself and colleagues not to feel desirous to enter on the subject. He had no difficulty in saying, that in a few days he should submit to the House a proposal, relative to the foreign corn which had been under lock for two years; a proposal, which he apprehended would afford satisfaction to all parties interested on the subject."

Well said, OLD GAFFER! But, Mr. WILSON had just said, that all the interests were prospering. Why meddle with them, then, Mr. WILSON? Why not let them go on? As they have so prospered under a Corn Bill, why meddle with the Corn Bill? The truth is, that the fundholders and other tax-eaters begin to feel the effects of the *Small-note Bill*. They pay a *shilling* for bread and meat, which they could get for about *eightpence* two years ago. They feel this; and they want the *eightpenny* times back again. They are *not prospering*; and this Mr. WILSON knows very well; and, if a little more paper-money were to get out, they would cry exceedingly loud. The paper-money has made a *deduction* from their messes; and this is the real ground of their complaint. Mr. WOODHOUSE and I proposed "*equitable adjustment*"; Mr. ATTWOOD and Mr. WESTERN were for a sort of *clipping of the coin*; the Ministers chose a *part repeal* of Peel's Bill, and *fresh issues of paper*. These were only so many different ways of coming at the same end; namely, a deduction from the receipts of fundholders and other tax-eaters; but, now, the tax-eaters, beginning to feel this deduction, cry out for something to put a stop to it; and, of course, *those who have to pay the tax-eaters*, want to stand where they are. All this is very plain and very natural; and, it is by no means surprising, that the Government does not wish to take a part in the dispute.

Mr. ALDERMAN THOMPSON seems to have been much chagrined by the notification of the "liberal" Minister of Trade. He asked the latter whether he meant to persevere in his reduction of duties on foreign goods and manufactures. The answer was not very positive; and showed, that the Trade-Minister had had *corn in his eye*, when he proposed the said reduction! This is very clear. The ALDERMAN predicted ruin from those reductions, *unless corn were included*; and Mr. WILSON said, that the Trade-Minister was *inconsistent* (oh, horrid!) unless he included corn. The Trade-Minister appears to have been a good deal puzzled, and

worked his way out awkwardly enough. It would not do to talk of the matter as I have talked of it; it would not do to call the Corn Bill a make-shift, in order to enable the land-people to deduct from the sums which they were paying to 'Change Alley and to Waterloo; this would not do, though the Trade-Minister knew it pretty well. He, therefore, called it a subject of great *delicacy* and *intricacy*; and reserved himself for a future occasion, alleging, that it was now *too late in the session* for a full discussion of the matter.

Thus, then, the system has got another six or eight months. This is a longer tether than it usually aims at. But who is to tell what will *happen* before next session? Who can tell whether the "*liberal*" trade scheme will now go into effect? Who can tell whether, even under the present law, the ports will be open before next year? These are questions very difficult to answer; but they are questions of which no *farmer* ought to lose sight. The *Courier* newspaper acknowledges that gold is going out of the country. The Ministers may, perhaps, think, that the drawing in of the paper, necessary to stop this flight of the gold, will *reduce the price of corn* without any alteration of the Corn Bill. But, in short, they do not themselves know any thing of the matter. They are carried along by chance; and they direct nothing that is of any real importance to the country. *No man can tell what his estate will be worth next year*; and this is quite enough to say of the system.

WM. COBBETT.

APPEAL OF THE CATHOLICS OF IRELAND TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.*

(*Political Register, February, 1825.*)

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-SUBJECTS,

Those who are labouring under oppression will naturally seek for deliverance, and they will be exposed to the strong temptation of receiving (if they can obtain it) assistance from any part of the world; but, of the whole world, we would, if the choice lay before us, prefer the obtaining of such assistance from you. To you, therefore, we appeal on the present momentous occasion; on your sound understanding and justice we rely for aid in the obtaining of deliverance from our unmerited ill usage:—from thralldom, from injustice, from degradation, cruelty, and insult, such as never had a general existence in any country but Ireland.

* The part that Mr. COBBETT took, in 1825, in favour of the Catholics is well known; and his principal work being to remove English prejudices against "popery," he wrote his "History of the Protestant Reformation" in that year. The above address from the Catholics of Ireland to the people of England, was also written by him, and given to Mr. ENEAS MACDONNELL, the Secretary to the Catholics residing in England. It was signed by Mr. O'GORMAN, their Secretary in Ireland, and published extensively in England.—Ed.

We are well aware of the prejudices which systematic deception, constantly carried on for two centuries and a half, has implanted in your minds. When we hear, within the walls of Parliament itself, our ancestors of only two centuries back, represented as *half-savages*; when we hear this in such a place, and see that it passes as a truth acknowledged, we can scarcely impute blame to you for suspecting that we are by nature unfitted for the enjoyment of those rights and immunities which the law insures to you. But, Englishmen, listen no longer to these calumnies; hear the voice of history, and consult your own good sense. The former will tell you that Christianity, the great civilizer of mankind, had, before it had taken root in your country, long flourished, and spread far and wide its blessed branches in ours, where the mournful ruins of our abbeys, and all our numerous ancient monuments of piety, patriotism, and science, still remain to prove that at later periods, Ireland yielded in civilization and in science to no country in the world. But your reason, your unbiassed judgment will tell you, that two hundred and fifty years are much more than five times as many as wisdom and justice, accompanied with legislative power, require for the civilizing even of savages; and that, therefore, if the well-earned fame, in letters as well as in arms, of Catholic Irishmen, were not so firmly established in every Court and Army of Europe, except our own, whence their services have been driven to be offered to other States; even if this, together with the recent innumerable triumphs of our Catholic priesthood over those who imprudently attempted to sow the seeds of discord amongst their flocks; if these were not an answer to the selfish, and crafty and malignant detractors from Irish merit, your justice, when you hear men in power affect to regard us as buried in gross ignorance, and as unfitted for freedom; your justice will lead you to turn upon them, and indignantly ask, "Why, then, after all the unchecked authority that you have had in your hands, after all the countless millions that you have heaped on the Protestant clergy of Ireland, after all the immense treasures, the fruit of our patrimony and our toil, that we have so unsparingly poured into your laps for so many, many years; why, after all these, is so large a part of our fellow-subjects in this deplorable state?"

Englishmen, the pictures exhibited to you of the *ignorance* and *idleness*, and seditiousness of the Irish people, are foul calumnies, invented by cunning fraud, to impose on your unsuspecting natures, and thereby to obtain the aid to be derived from that prejudice, which has been and is so fatal to us, and so costly to you. We cannot bring you here to show you a people, who down to the very lowest walks of life, well understand (thanks to their pious, industrious and titheless teachers), all their duties towards God and their neighbour. We cannot bring you here to show you (nor need we, if you but think of the specimens which you yearly have, in harvest time before your eyes) a people the most cheerfully laborious, and contented with the hardest fare of any people on earth: we cannot bring you here to show you a people, who, so far from being seditiously disposed, submit peaceably, and almost without a murmur, to oppression and contumely past all description; and whose occasional acts of vengeance are the effect of tantalising and tormenting cruelty, the bare thought of enduring which would drive Englishmen mad.

But, if we cannot bring you here to give you ocular demonstration of these truths, we can refer you to facts which are notorious to all the world, and from which, if you dismiss from your minds the prejudices there obtruded by fraud, you will not fail to draw a just conclusion. Can, then,

we ask, those immense quantities of food and raiment, with which this island supplies the navy, the army, the colonies, and even England herself; can these be the fruit of ignorance and idleness, and improvidence?

True, those amongst us whose hands produce this food and raiment, are half naked, and you have been called upon to subscribe for their relief when they were actually starving by thousands upon thousands. You generously gave that relief; and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Misery never appealed to English humanity in vain. But, it is not your benevolence, though we join the rest of the world in applauding it, but your *justice* that we want. That justice will lead you to ask how it can have happened that a people should be in a state of the most deplorable distress, the most frightful famine, at the very moment when fleets, laden with food, the produce of their own soil and labour, were freighted from their shores; and while, oh deceived Englishmen! you were paying and clothing a large and most expensive army, who were well fed and even feasting on Irish food, and whose cannons and sabres, and bayonets had no other use than that of making the expiring producers of the food refrain from breaches of the peace? If you put this question to yourselves, if you cast your eyes on this scene, and then coldly turn a deaf ear to the call we now make on you, never again let us hear of English justice, or of English *humanity*!

Trusting, however, that we shall always hear of both, and that it will be our delight to be amongst the foremost to proclaim them to the world, we will in few words, lay the history of our wrongs before you; we will briefly state to you the causes of our miseries, and describe to you that remedy in the obtaining of which we now appeal to you for aid.

During more than one thousand years the Catholic religion was the religion of our and your fathers. A time arrived when the Government became Protestant, and when, no matter by what means, your fathers were brought by degrees, to adopt and to follow the new religion. Our fathers retained the ancient faith. This faith they have handed down to us; in this faith we were born; this faith we believe to be that which our Saviour and his holy Apostles taught; and therefore, to this faith we have remained, and still remain, attached by the double motive of veneration for our fathers, and duty towards God. And what motive more worthy of respect and admiration ever actuated the mind of man?

Yet, for acting upon this motive, what have we not suffered? In the long list of persecutions, invented by minds at once the most fraudulent and ferocious, there is not one which, during some portion or other of the last 250 years, we have not had to endure. To see our abbeys, our cathedrals, our churches; to see the first of these confiscated and demolished; to see the two latter, together with all the immense endowments attached to them by our pious, provident, disinterested and generous forefathers; to see this our patrimony wrested from us, and given to a clergy, who protested against our faith, and in whose doctrines our consciences forbade us to believe. To see this, was a trial sufficient for ordinary minds, but, of our wrongs, this forms not a thousandth part. During two centuries and a half, we, as well as you, have had eleven sovereigns, and one usurper; and, except the reign of one sovereign, no reign passed, until that of his late Majesty, without some new law, in addition to those in existence, for punishing us for our fidelity. Barely to quote the titles of those acts, barely to describe the objects of that code, to propose, or even to think of which would have made Nero blush, would require much more space than the whole of this our appeal. There

is nothing ; we believe that there is no one thing, which is unjust, cruel, and insulting, which is not to be found in some part or other of that code. "*Wives be obedient unto your own husbands,*" says the holy Apostle. *Wives be disobedient unto your own husbands,* said, in effect, the code ; for it tendered the former a power over the property of the latter, if the former would become Protestant, while the husband remained a Catholic. "*Honour thy father and thy mother,*" says God. *Dis-honour thy father and thy mother,* said the code ; for, if any son would but apostatize, cover his parents with shame, and bring their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, it, in despite of his parents, rewarded the unnatural monster with a large part of their estate. "*Covet not thy neighbour's goods,*" says our Maker. *Covet thy neighbour's goods,* said the code ; for, if any Protestant saw a Catholic have a horse worth more than five pounds, it gave him a right to take away the horse and make it his own, upon giving the owner five pounds ; and if any Catholic had a lease yielding him a profit greater in amount than one-third of the rent, any Protestant might go, turn him out, and become proprietor of the lease in his stead ; and all this, and a hundred times more than this, for no other cause than that we remained firmly attached to the faith and worship of your and our fathers !

True, these parts and many others of this flagitious and sanguinary code were done away during the reign of his late Majesty, whose memory we, on that account, hold in grateful remembrance. Still, however, much remains to be removed, in order to place us on an equal footing with our Protestant fellow-subjects, which is the object of our present exertions and prayers. His present Majesty, when Regent, in the 57th year of the reign of his Royal Father, graciously gave his assent to an Act, which in some degree mitigated our disabilities in respect to the army and the navy. But we still remain excluded from all offices in corporate towns and cities ; from the higher ranks at the Bar, and wholly from the Bench ; from the office of sheriff (an office of the utmost importance to the security of life and property) ; and from the councils of the King and both Houses of Parliament. There remain other and more serious grievances ; but we rest our appeal to you on these grounds alone.

Our crafty and selfish foes, your foes as well as ours, would fain persuade you, that that for which we pray would do *no good* ; and they ask, with a degree of simplicity which would not have detracted from the cunning of the seducer of the primitive parents of mankind, how the allowing of Catholic merchants to become Mayors, Aldermen, and Common Councilmen of towns and cities ; how the permitting Catholic gentlemen to be Sheriffs ; how the making of Catholics occasionally King's Counsel, and Law-officers of the Crown ; how the putting of Catholic Judges on the Bench ; how the making of Catholics sometimes Judges in Equity ; how the putting of a few Catholics into the Privy Council ; how the placing of fifty or sixty of them, perhaps, in Parliament ; they ask, with all imaginable simplicity, how this could tend to clothe the backs and appease the hunger of the ragged and half-famished people of Ireland ? But, Englishmen, make but for a moment our case your own. Suppose that some strange combination of circumstances were to give the small sect of Unitarians, for instance, a mastery over you ; supposing this sect, not forming more than a 16th part of the population of England, held all the civil offices of importance ; that they, and they alone, nominated juries

in causes of property, and of life and death ; sat on the bench, administered justice in equity ; were alone the advisers of the King ; alone were Mayors and Aldermen, and Common Councilmen of towns and cities ; kept wholly to themselves the power of making laws ; appointed all the justices of the peace ; disposed of every civic office down to the very excisemen and tidewater ; and suppose that to all these powers, they added that of disposing, at their pleasure, of the whole of the tithes, and of the immense property of your church ; heaping benefice upon benefice on the same man, even unto half scores together ; suffering the churches and parsonage-houses to tumble to pieces ; and compelling you to pay taxes for their re-erection and repair, while there was only one of sixteen to enter those churches, and while you were compelled to build chapels for yourselves, and pay your own teachers, or live without the knowledge of God in the world : suppose all this, and though we think we see your cheeks redden at the bare idea ; suppose all this, and you are still far short of the case of Ireland, where, out of about four hundred thousand Church Protestants, which thus domineer over six millions of Catholics, there are about forty families, who engross for themselves and their dependants, all the real power, all the honours, all the emoluments of the State ; in fact, all the revenues of our country, which do not now yield annually to the King's Exchequer a sum equal to that which you yourself pay for the purpose of forcibly keeping us in abject submission to these families and their faction ; add, moreover, to our sufferings, the habitual insolence and cruelty of this faction, who, though now deprived of the administration of certain parts of the plundering and sanguinary code, still act as if they had an imprescriptible right to be unjust, profligate, and ferocious : and still, a mere handful of a faction as they are, treat the people at large as outcasts and slaves.

Would, then, our emancipation from the fangs of this faction *do no good* ? Could there be Catholic Mayors, Sheriffs, Aldermen ; could there be Catholic Law-officers of the Crown, Judges in Law and Equity, Privy Councillors, and Members of both Houses of Parliament, and could things still remain the same ; and will this faction still, in all simplicity, ask how that, for which we pray, could possibly tend to improve the food and clothing of our labouring brethren ? If they still ask this question, we beg not them, but you, to reflect ; first, on the powers which the administrators of justice, the rulers of towns and cities, the sheriffs of counties, the advisers of the Crown, and the makers of laws, have, and always must have, in the making of the people happy or wretched. In the next place, returning to the supposition, that you were domineered over by the sect of Unitarians, though the domination were more bearable than that which we endure, we beseech you to say, whether the consequences would not be an incessant heartburning, pervading almost the whole of the people : continual efforts on the part of the domineering faction to repress and degrade, by every species of partiality and injustice, those by whose subjection it could alone retain its power and emoluments ; unceasing endeavours, on the part of the oppressed, to obtain justice ; and, if that were unattainable, revenge ; and, as a necessary result of these, a flight of the land-owners, and even of the clergy, from the country, to spend in peace and safety those revenues which ought to be distributed amongst the people ; leaving those to be ground down into bare beggary, by middlemen, tithe proctors, drivers, and land-jobbers, the hardest-hearted of all mankind. You feel indignant at the

mere thought of your being reduced to this state. But acknowledge, we are sure you will, that this would be your state, if you, like us, were under the domination that we have described. To obtain deliverance from this intolerable domination, we are now about to make supplication to the Parliament; and we call on you to join us by your petitions in those supplications. With Englishmen, famed throughout the world for generosity and bravery, it were as unjust as unwise, to make appeals addressed to sordidness, or to hold the language of menace. But, while justice to you, who have so long been deceived, demands that we tell you, that our degradation now loads you with taxes to the amount of several millions a year; and that that debt, which may yet make England hang her head in the face of her enemies, has in no small degree proceeded from the same cause; while justice to you makes us tell you this, that frankness and sincerity, in which alone we are your rivals, bid us beseech you, with a solemnity suited to the source of the words, to "lead us not into temptation," nor by indifference or neglect to induce us to rest our hopes on any thing but the justice of the Government, and of the English people; nor to leave it in the power of any person to suggest to any portion of the people of this country, the possibility of seeing in foreign fleets or bands the deliverers of Ireland, but to see them, in a most gracious King, and in a just Parliament, dutifully called upon by us, in conjunction with you, our fellow-subjects of England. Many are the occasions when you have, by your petitions, produced the most salutary effects. In the exercise of this right you are obstructed by no impediment; and never, since the right was heard of, was it exercised in a cause more closely connected with every consideration interesting to the mind of man. We conjure you, therefore, in the names of that justice, and of that humanity, which, bright as your renown is, are the brightest gems in that renown; we conjure you to back our prayer for Emancipation from our deplorable state. "That which you would that others should do unto you, do ye so unto them," is a precept which all are called on to obey, and to which all acknowledge the duty of obedience. While, therefore, with this precept in your minds, you lay your heads upon your pillows, think of the miseries of this ill-treated Island; think of the nakedness, the famine, the pestilence; think of the manifold pangs, bodily and mental, that your brethren here endure; and, when you call upon God for mercy and protection, be able, we implore you, to say, "as we have shown mercy and given protection to our fellow-subjects of oppressed and unhappy Ireland."

NICOLAS PURCEL O'GORMAN,
Secretary to the Catholics of Ireland.

TO THE MINISTERS,

ON THE BREAKING OF THE DEVONSHIRE AND CORNISH BANKS;
AND ON THE SILLY BUBBLE ABOUT EXCHANGES.*

(*Political Register*, October, 1825.)

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN, Kensington, 11th Oct. 1825.

The *broad sheet* tells us, and, as it has been declared by one, who is destined to be Chancellor, not of the *Chancery*, but of the "*London University*," wherein we, the silly loons o' the Sooth, ignorant, and non-*antalletual* beings as we are, are to be taught how to "augment the *capital* of the empire," and "to add to the sum of human *happiness*," by watching, merely by "watching the turn of the market"; as the *broad sheet* has, by this, to use the language of the heap of brickbats, "*illustrious* and *super-human* advocate"; as the *broad sheet* has, by this Lord Rector of Glasgow, whom, however, I intend to supplant in that post next year; as the *broad sheet* has, by this zealous patriot, who frankly confessed, that, as long as there were *such men* as INOS in the world, *there must be* such men as EDWARDS; as the *broad sheet* has, by this great Doctor of all Laws and all Medicines and all Divinities, been most positively declared to be the "*best public instructor* that human imagination could have devised," we must, of course, believe, that this broad sheet does not deal in most impudent and *barefaced lies*. Well, then, this point being settled, I return to the end of the first five words of the above what I call hooking in sentence, and I say again, that the broad sheet tells us, that you, or some of you, at least, including the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Trade Minister, and the Author of the celebrated Cash-payment Bill, do actually attend the Ricardo, or oracle, lectures of *Peter Macculloch*; and that he, with his great Scotch spoon, made of a split cow's horn, just such as I (when I had the honour to serve his Majesty) was, by a company of Highlanders, quartered at Sittingbourne in Kent, hospitably, though on the upper floor of a stable, invited to use in the partaking of a mess of soup, made of nettle-tops and bullock's liver, and *servi*, as the French call it, in the sawed-off bottom of an old beer-barrel, which might, perhaps, before it came into its present office, have assisted the top of the staves in performing the very useful functions of a hog-tub. . . . where was I? . . . O! I was saying that the broad sheet tells us, that he (that is Peter Macculloch) has, with his great Scotch spoon, been feeding you with his political pap; that he has been pouring into your mouths all his doctrines about "*creating capital* by the means of a *cheap currency*"; about the "*prodigious loss*" that there would be, if "*perverse* people were to

* The panic which Mr. COBBETT had foretold in 1824 (see this volume, p. 381) was now beginning.—Ed.

cause us to get our *gold back again*"; about the "*gain which all persons in the community share with the paper-money makers*"; about the "*greater risk in having sovereigns than in having paper-money*"; about the great mischief arising from the "*perverseness of the women in continuing to breed*"; about the lot of the Irish people being "*not made at all worse by the produce of Ireland being drawn away to be consumed by foreigners, instead of being left to be consumed by themselves*"; that all these messes, and many others of equal quality, Peter has been feeding you with, and that you, like a brood of young owls gaping for murdered and quartered mice coming from the bill of their mother, have sucked down all these messes of pap with the greatest satisfaction imaginable.

Now, My Lords and Gentlemen, it is not I who say this: it is the *broad sheet* that says it. If the broad sheet *lie*, if the "best public instructor" *lie*, then, indeed, what I am about to say will, after all, have been unnecessary. But, upon the supposition; and I will proceed on nothing more, notwithstanding Mr. Brougham's responsibility for the strict veracity of the broad sheet; upon the supposition, that the broad sheet has, in this respect, spoken the truth; upon the supposition, that you really have swallowed the whole, or any part of this mess from the big spoon of this at once conceited and clumsy Scotch cook, I really must endeavour to make you bring the mess up again; for, far too dilatory would, in such a desperate case, be any other process known to me, great Doctor as I am in counteracting the effects of all sorts of unnatural cramming.

Turn, then, My Lords and Gentlemen, turn from Peter to me; I mean, upon the supposition that you have swallowed his mess; and here let me observe, that, though I would fain believe, that as to this matter of swallowing, the *broad sheet* has *lied*, still I do see this PETER MACCULLOCH'S "EVIDENCE," as it is drolly enough called, published by order of the House of Commons; while I and every body else know, that such evidence always comes from persons, whom the Ministers, or other members, *sel. ct* beforehand for the purpose of giving such evidence as those Ministers, or other members, have already been made acquainted with; and while, at the very least, I know, that this "EVIDENCE" of his could not have been printed and published, at an expense, perhaps, of a thousand pounds to the people, without your consent. Though, therefore, I would fain believe, that the broad sheet has *lied* as to this affair of political pap swallowing, I have, I must confess, my fears upon the subject; and, knowing well that my physic, though strong, can do you no harm, I shall, without further ceremony, proceed to administer it, always, however, proceeding only upon the supposition, that you have actually swallowed PETER'S miserable mess.

Peter has taught you, that, to make paper-money is "*to create capital*"; that, "*a cheap currency*" is a *clear gain* to the nation as a whole and to each individual in it; and that there is "*much greater risk arising from the possession of sovereigns than from the possession of paper money.*" Now, addressing myself to you, almost by name, I will not seriously impute to you an adoption of his impudent Scotch trash; yet, I cannot but recollect, that you *assented*, at the least, to the putting of this already over-burdened people to the expense of "*evidence,*" that is to say, the mere opinions of this same man, and which expense, if I had been in the House (and that you shan't, say you, as long as we can

help it; but, say I, that may not be very long), never should have been incurred without a devil of a noise at any rate. I cannot but recollect this; but, still, I will not impute to you such impudent, such brutal vulgar notions as these of Peter about the *creating of capital* by making paper, about a *cheap currency*, and about the *superior security* of paper-money over the king's coin. However, lest by some strange twist of the thinking faculties, some out-of-the-way turn of what this Peter and Doctor Black (of the *Morning Chronicle*) call the *antullac*; lest, from some such cause, you should have adopted these dreams from a brain begotten by the double father, ignorance and impudence, upon the body of corruption, turn, I once more say, turn, My Lords and Gentlemen, from Peter to me; or, rather (in the first place at least) from conceited, impudent and empty Scotch Peter to *the warning voice*, which, in consequence of your having acted upon Peter's and Ricardo's pernicious principles, you now hear from the mouths of the poor, ruined and miserable and half-mad paper-money holders of DEVONPORT, PLYMOUTH and the vicinity.

And here again, we have another to be added to those thousands of instances, in which that *broad sheet*, to which Mr. BROUGHAM had the meanness to worship, as the Indians do the devil, by calling it the "best public instructor," and which Mr. DENISON, member for Surrey, seeming resolved to outdo the would-be member for Westmoreland, had the something more than meanness (unless the broad sheet lied) to call "the OMNIPOTENT public press"; here we have another instance, in which that stock-jobbing, that hush-money, that infamous broad sheet, has basely abandoned the duty which it owed to that public. TWO BANKS HAVE STOPPED IN, OR NEAR PLYMOUTH, creating the greatest confusion and uproar, and plunging thousands of poor people into the greatest distress; and the *simple fact* of the stoppage, to say nothing of the distress and confusion, never found its way into any London paper, until TEN DAYS after the first stoppage took place! Ah! this broad sheet well knows, that a real gold currency, once completely restored to England, would blow every corrupt thing to atoms, and the broad sheet itself amongst the rest; for it is essentially, intrinsically, in its very nature, stock-jobbing, and corrupt. The broad sheet would never have mentioned the thing *at all*, but for two reasons; if the fact, the bare fact, must at last have come out in the *Gazette*; and, second, that it would, in all probability, come out in some *Devonshire paper*, and then *I should get it*. Had there been no other periodical publication than the broad sheet, it would, though with heaps of private letters on the subject, have kept the matter as snug as a murder, committed by one man without a witness. Nor, let the reader (or, rather, you, my good Lords and gentlemen) imagine, that any meeting on the subject, and stipulated concert, amongst the different branches of the broad sheet, is necessary to make them all of a mind in a case like this. They are all under influence of *one feeling*, which is common to them all; and they no more want a previous consultation to make, in a case like this, than a flock of rooks in a pea-field want a previous consultation to make *them* act with unanimity, when they see the farmer coming with a gun in his hand.

Well, the base thing held its tongue for *nine days* after the news must have been, as to the first stoppage, known in London, and known to it, too, to a certainty; because it always has several regular correspondents at Plymouth. The bank of PRIDEAUX and Co, at *Kingsbridge*, stopped on

the 27th of September; that of SHIELLS AND JOHNS, at Devonport (which is the same, I believe, as part of Plymouth), stopped on the 1st of October; and the first intimation that the broad sheet gave us of either was through the Evening Paper, the STAR, of the 7th of October: and, even then, we only got what had been published in the PLYMOUTH JOURNAL, and which, as every one must know, would necessarily be such a *smoothing down* of the matter as to give us, not upon the spot, little idea of what was *really the effect* of these stoppages. However, I will first insert this article from the STAR, copied from the Plymouth paper; and, then, I will, in spite of Mr. DENISON'S "omnipotence," take upon me to make a little free with this poor attempt to keep up the delusion.

"It is with *great pain* we have to record the failure of two *respectable* banking establishments in our neighbourhood. The Kingsbridge Bank (Messrs. SQUARE, PRIDEAUX and Co.) stopped payment yesterday se'night, and the alarm occasioned by this *circumstance* spread with rapidity through the country. An immediate and unexampled run took place on *every bank without distinction* in this town, at Devonport, and in fact *throughout the south of Devon*. This SPIRIT was further excited on Saturday, when it was known that the firm of Messrs. SHIELLS & JOHNS, at Devonport, unable to withstand the *severe run*, had also been obliged to suspend their payments. On that day, and on Monday, and the early part of Tuesday last, *confidence seemed entirely at a stand*; an universal consternation prevailed, and the *influx of the lower classes* from the country continued, almost without interruption, until Tuesday noon, when, in consequence of the prompt manner in which the different banks met their issues, and the *unconcern* expressed by the principal merchants and tradesmen of these towns, who *exhibited notices in their windows* that they were ready to take the notes of either of the banks, *in exchange*, to any amount, the panic suddenly subsided, and business is *now resuming its usual attitude*. It is *gratifying* to notice the stability of our banking establishments, thus *unquestionably proved* by their readiness in meeting such a sudden and unprecedented demand on their resources. The *peculiar situation* of country bankers *ought to be taken into account*. In London good securities may be converted, on any sudden emergency, at half an hour's notice; but provincial bankers must, in a great degree, depend on their own immediate resources, the distance from the Money-market being too great to allow of a *supply of cash reaching in time to provide against extraordinary and unforeseen demands*. It is, therefore, not always a proof of the *insolvency* of a bank, when they are *unable to meet such sudden and extensive calls* with promptitude: from the very nature of their business, they are *entitled to forbearance*; but the Plymouth and Devonport banks, with the *single exception* mentioned above, have *demonstrated the secure basis* on which they stand. We have been informed that between fifty and sixty thousand pounds in *sovereigns AND Bank-notes* arrived here on Tuesday from London, for their use, and a considerable supply is also on the road."

"On the road," are they? God send them a safe and speedy arrival! I mean the *sovereigns*; for, as *my intelligence* says, the *bank-notes* will be of little use, if another push should come, as, to a certainty, it will come. Nobody can doubt, that this is, in fact, a publication of the *Rag-rooks themselves*. Most likely this Plymouth broad sheet "*keeps an account*," as it is called, with some Rook, if so, it is his *abject slave*. This is mostly the case throughout the kingdom: what else can account for the dead silence of the *Irish newspapers* on two or three recent occasions? Thus this monstrous thing first makes the *dogs dumb* and *draws their teeth*, and then fleeces and eventually kills the sheep. I shall, by-and-by, tell your Lordships and you, gentlemen, what *my correspondent* (not a *hired* one, but a volunteer) says about the effect of these stoppages: but, I must first bestow a remark or two upon this publication of the Rag-rooks.

"It is with *great pain*," they say, they have to record the failure. Aye, to be sure, it is. They need not have told us that, at any rate; nor need I tell them, that their great pain gives me, and every man who really loves the country, great pleasure; and with all my heart and soul, I congratulate *Mr. Jones* of Bristol on their great pain; for, it is he who has had the merit of inflicting it.—These were "two *respectable banks*," were they? What, then, there are, according to these writers, banks that are *not* "respectable." But here, as in the case of Hart Davis's "respectable" friends of the Castle-bank at Bristol, if the "respectable" ones do not pay in gold on demand, what are we to expect of those which are *not* respectable? However, even these paper doctors disagree; for, in the *Jones debate* (without which the last session would not have been worth a pinch of snuff), Mr. JOHN SMITH (the critic on my Kentish motion) said, "that *no respectable* banker would refuse to pay his notes in gold." Well, then, that which Mr. Jones had complained of was *not respectable*! Sad dilemma; but now, the Devonshire rag-rooks call those "*respectable*," who have actually stopped! Aye, aye, all respectable enough up to the very moment that people go to demand *real money* of them. What, a "*run throughout the South of Devonshire*." O, no, rag-rooks: it was too soon for you to know that: that sort of run is to come by-and-by; and then you will look as pale as so many globe turnips, that is to say, of a dirty-whitish colour.

So? "Confidence was entirely at a *stand*," was it? Rather upon the *go*, or was *gone*. The rag-rooks seem to have been like BIG O, in my Comedy, "rathered *bothered* or so," when they put this upon paper. It was the rag-rooks that were at "a stand," and "confidence" was upon the *go*, except absolutely *gone*.

Ah! What, then, the "*lower classes* from the country came in great *influx*, did they"? Poor creatures, poor "*lower orders*"! And you, you insolent broad sheet fellow, *what do you deserve* for not even hinting a word of compassion for these ruined, or, at least, greatly and justly alarmed people? Why, you deserve to expire with hunger, with which, before it has done, this monstrous system will make hundreds of thousands of innocent industrious persons perish. Indeed! What, did the "principal merchants and tradesmen express *unconcern* on the occasion," and did they "*exhibit notices in the windows* that they would take the other bankers' notes, in exchange, to any amount"? In exchange for *what*? You do not tell us that; but, I know it; for, as you will presently see, I know that *sovereigns were at a premium*! And then, again, pray, was there no motive for these *window exhibitions*, other than that arising from *confidence* in the other banks? Might not the motive be *just the opposite* of this? Might it not arise from fear, that the other banks might fail, and *involve these window-notice exhibitors in their ruin*? Had these people any ready money, *other* than the paper of some of these banks? Had not most, if not all of them, *accounts with these banks*? Must not many, if not the whole, of these persons *have broke*, if the banks had all broken? Well, then, they might post up notices that they were *ready to take their notes*; but, as to exchanging them for *sovereigns*, that, as I shall presently show, was quite out of their power.

"Business is *resuming* its usual *attitude*." O! it had then been but in a queer sort of way; travelling about a bit or so.

"It is *gratifying* to notice the stability of our banking establishments" (very "*gratifying*," to be sure, you stupid creatures!), "*thus unquestion-*

ably proved." What, by two of them stopping, I suppose? O, no! by those that remain being able to stand the run. All in good time, stupid: there is no law to say that this shall be the last run. And, besides, the window-notice people, if they had deposits in these banks, which they would have lost if the banks broke, and which banks, therefore, it was their interest to prop up for the moment, will now take special good care to remove those deposits as soon as things get quiet, and to have their money in gold in a very short time, or in French Stock, or something more secure than these ticklish things. These banks are "entitled to forbearance, in order to give time for a supply to come from the Money-market." What the devil! Do you think that people buy money in London? "Unforeseen demands." What? Do they not know what they owe, and do they not know, that they may have it brought into them at any moment? Ah, well! but all's safe now, for there were 50 or 60 thousand pounds already got down "from the Money-market" in sovereigns AND bank-notes; besides a "considerable supply on the road." Indeed! Why, then, there will really be some real money, at any rate, at Plymouth. What a curious thing!

Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, this is their own lame miserable story. At last, on Monday, the 10th of October, thirteen days after the first bank stopped, Dr. BLACK (of the *Morning Chronicle*) smells out the news. He had been so busy with "police reports," with "Mr. MARTIN," and other such important matters in big type, that he could not, I suppose, find time even for using a pair of scissors on this trifling affair in Devonshire. To expect the Doctor to waste his own refined Caledonian "intellect" upon so gross a thing, would have been too much; and we think ourselves "too happy," as the French say, that he, at the end of thirteen days, thought it worthy of being crammed into an obscure part of his paper, and in the smallest type that he uses. However, with much hunting, I, at last, found it in words that throw some new light upon the matter; and here they are:—

"The town of Devonport has experienced the greatest shock to its public credit by the failure of the Naval Bank of Messrs. Shiells and Johns. The failure of the Kingsbridge Banking Establishment of Messrs. Square, Prideaux, and Co., last week, connected as it was with a district of many miles around, composed mostly of small farmers, was replete with distress, and occasioned, from a loss of confidence, a partial pressure on all the Banks (six) of Plymouth and Devonport. As the extent of that calamity became known, a kind of panic prevailed, and Saturday last, being market-day, a general run commenced on all the banks, principally against that of Shiells, Johns, and Johns, who were compelled to shut up an hour before the usual time. On Monday, a notice appeared in the windows, that, in consequence of the severe pressure of Saturday, Shiells and Johns were unable to resume their payments. The most favourable reports respecting the finances of the firm are, that their debts are £0,000l., and they have assets to the amount of 20,000l.; whilst others state their debts to be 100,000l., and that the estate will not pay 2s. in the pound. The excitement of the public was heightened on Thursday, by the announcement of the death of Mr. Shiells. He was found dead in his bed at five o'clock the previous afternoon, at a small estate he has, called Corn Wood, about fourteen miles from the town. Thomas Slinton Shiells, Esq., WAS A MAGISTRATE FOR THE COUNTY OF DEVON."

Thus far, then, the broad sheet. Now, then, my Lords and Gentlemen, hear my correspondent, who tells me, I dare say, very nearly the exact truth. And, I advise you to ponder well upon this letter, and also to begin to think how long this thing can be suffered to go on; or, rather, how long it will go on.

" *Devonport, Oct. 4, 1825.*

" SIR,—The failure of the Kingsbridge Bank (Prideaux and Co.), last week, paved the way for a general *run* on all the banks in the neighbourhood.—Shiells and Johns of Devonport, the oldest bank, stopped on Saturday. To describe the consternation is impossible. They have failed for a very large amount.—The soldiers were usually paid in the *local paper of Shiells*.—The 24th Regiment was on the eve of departure for Ireland, and had just been paid all their arrears.—The 32nd Regiment had just landed from Corfu, and had drawn on Greenwood for what was due to them, the bills for which were cashed at Shiells and Johns's a few days previous.—Two, three, and four thousand pounds to individuals are common talk. They *deserve* to lose; but what shall be said to the poor, who have, perhaps, forty thousand pounds distributed amongst them.—For the first time in my life I saw a *Bank of England note* bandied about (between the forefinger and thumb of a serjeant) from house to house, bank to bank; *nobody could touch it*, to exchange it for him; and yet only for one hundred pounds. *Sovereigns were at a premium*. Ten thousand pounds worth of securities were offered to cover the advance of a few sovereigns, until a supply could be had from town.—It was running here, and bustling there; St. Vitus's dance seemed to control the movements of the people.—There was to be seen one man lamenting his *hundreds*, and another sorrowing for his *thousands*; whilst the poor fish-women and market-folks wiped their eyes with their hard-earned but solitary note. One man became absolutely *mad*, and swore he would not leave the door; he was conveyed to the Town Hall prison until his reason should be restored.—This scribble is for your use, if you choose to avail yourself of it; the fact is, we do not see any thing but *local paper of the worst description, and only payable where drawn*; consequently the people of this part of the country are taxed exactly one penny per pound. Every note that passes through their hands must be carried to a bank for a bill payable in London for their payments—or they must pay a banker one penny in the pound for exchanging it, after the said bankers have withdrawn all the gold from circulation. It is ten times worse than in the war; for the bills then were made payable in town.—If a tradesman wants to remit to London, and takes in to the banker of Plymouth or Devonport one hundred pounds, a two months' bill is the shortest date, for *Cornish and Devon local paper of equal quantities*.—If bank paper, a thirty days' bill is given on London; therefore charging one penny extra for the local rubbish.—Of what use is it that the Bank of England pay in gold, whilst country banks issue what sums they please?—*The above is a hasty sketch, but my time is short*. The confusion of the Tower of Babel existed here for a time from the failure of one bank. What it would be if the Bank of England stopped, heaven only knows.—You will get the main facts in the papers. The only thing that induced me to write, is, perhaps you were not aware, that the people of Cornwall and Devon were paying so much to men, who occasionally take it in their heads to break.

" I am, Sir,

" Yours respectfully,

" _____."

Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, if the broad sheet has told us truth, in telling us, that Peter Macculloch has, with his *big-Scotch spoon*, been cramming you with the *capital-creating* and *cheap currency* and *paper-better-than-gold* doctrines, here I have given you a dose to bring them up again, even if you have stomachs equal in strength and tenacity to that of the ostrich. But, what is this, compared to the doses that a short time may administer? By-and-by there may be, and, I am convinced, there must be, twenty or thirty banks go at a time, sweeping round a whole country with what may not improperly be called the besom of destruction. Who is to quiet the people in such a state? Are they to be thus robbed of their earnings and starved to death, and remain *quiet* all the time? Are we, at last, to see the "*glorious revolution*" debt, begun by the "*Protestant deliverer*," bring us to this? Well, let those who still boast of the blessings of the *Protestant Reformation*, endure this, with all my heart.

But, I have not yet quite done with this Devonshire affair. I have shown, above, that the *window-notifications* of confidence in the other banks could deceive nobody but real fools; and, that they might, more truly, be considered as proofs of the *fears* of the parties. For, if these parties had *no fears*, if they had *full confidence* in the banks that remained, why should they thus call upon the public to confide in them? But, what is this "*confidence*," as it is called? Why, to have sense in it, it must mean, that the party confiding, firmly believes, that a bank, for instance, can, on demand, pay its notes, at once, *in the legal coin*; and, if I, for instance (which happens not to be the case), do *believe this* of a bank, why should I *stick up in my window*, a declaration, that *I will*, that *I*, who am no partner in the bank, will *take its notes in payment*, or *exchange them*? Base fools of the broad sheet; why should I do this, if I *firmly believe*, that this bank can *pay its notes in gold itself*? But, if I *most firmly believe*, that it *cannot*, then, I having an *account*, or a *deposit* at the bank, or holding a parcel of its notes, have a very powerful motive to stick the said bill in my window; for, if the bank fail, I am greatly injured, and, perhaps, ruined; and, mind, I *risk nothing in now taking its notes*; for, if the bank stand, I am paid for the notes; and, if it fail, I am *no more than ruined*; I am only where I should have been if I had not taken them. Those who believe in *my belief* in the bank, do not know that I am so dependent on it. And thus are the several parts of all this Plymouth, for instance, held together, not by "*a golden chain*," as Big O wished to hold the Catholic priests, but by a chain of paper.

After the run had abated, partly, no doubt, by means of the *window notices*, the *surviving* bankers put forth *public thanksgivings*, like mariners who have experienced aid in saving them from shipwreck, or, like people who have, by the help of neighbours, escaped being burnt in their beds. I will insert these *thanksgivings*, as a specimen for *general use*. I take them from the *Devonport Telegraph*, of the 8th of October, and insert them just in the form in which they stand in that paper.

KINGSTON AND PRIDEAUX

TAKE the earliest opportunity of thus publicly offering their *grateful acknowledgments* to their friends of Plymouth and its vicinity, for their great *confidence*, and the *kindnesses* which they have recently received from them.

General Bank, Plymouth, 10th Month 5th, 1825.

NAVAL BANK.

Plymouth, October 5, 1825.

AS it is impossible to make personal acknowledgments where attentions were general, Messrs. HARRIS, ROSDEW, HARRIS, and Co., beg thus publicly to express their *grateful thanks* to the Nobility, Gentlemen, Ladies, and Tradesmen of Plymouth and its vicinity, for the *confidence* reposed in them, and for the many *kindnesses* they have experienced.

GENERAL BANK, DEVONPORT.

MESSRS. HUSBAND and Co. beg most *sincerely* to thank their numerous friends and the public generally, for the *kindness* manifested towards them during the alarm created by the late failure here.

Devonport, October 7, 1825.

NAVAL AND COMMERCIAL BANK, DEVONPORT.

MESSRS. GLENCROSS and Co. embrace the earliest opportunity of expressing their *gratitude* and *warmest thanks* to their friends for the *zeal* and *liberality*, and to the public generally, for the *confidence* manifested during the late period of unprecedented alarm.

WILLIAM HODGE.
JOHN NORMAN.

October 7, 1825.

PLYMOUTH BANK.

AS it might be invidious to designate any Ladies, Gentlemen, and Tradesmen of Plymouth, and its neighbourhood, in particular, where so many have claims on *their thanks*, and it would be hopeless to think that each Friend could be thanked individually, Messrs. Sir WILLIAM ELFORD, Bart., TING-COMBE, and WERE CLARKE, beg thus to offer their *grateful thanks* to all those Ladies, Gentlemen, and Tradesmen, to whom they have been so much obliged for the *confidence* that has been so generally shown.

Plymouth, 5th Oct. 1825.

Ah, a, a, a, a, a, ah! There they are! Readers of the Register, tell me how to *write a laugh*; and you, Mr. JONES of Bristol, whom Sir JOHN WROTTESELEY (who is, I now find, a banker at Wolverhampton) thought might be some "*mischievous person*" that had "*calumniated respectable men*", you, particularly, Mr. JONES, join me in that glorious laugh!

What "*grateful*" creatures these are! There *were*, but a few days before, *seven* of them; and the remaining *five* seem to have seen the gap, when they thus put forth their *thanks*. But, was there much *sense* in these effusions of their grateful hearts? Did they imagine, that thus going almost upon their bellies to thank their "*kind*" friends for their "*confidence*" would tend to increase that confidence for the future? Paper-money makers are not much of philosophers, but, a moderate portion of plain common sense would have told those paper-men, that men's *gratitude* after an escape is in exact proportion to the *danger* that they have *been in*; and, that same common sense would have told them, that, thus to proclaim their *having been in danger* was not the way to create confidence in them for the future. If they thought to keep their *deposits* by their coaxing and crawling, they will find themselves deceived, unless the people of Devonshire are (which is *far indeed* from being the case) the softest "*flats*" in this whole world. You may coax and crawl men out of praises and of shakes by the hand, and now-and-then out of a dinner; but, when it comes to their *own money*, something more than coaxing and crawling are required.

These advertisements are in the lowest style of *Quacks* and *Player-people*; and, indeed, they have no precedent, except in those put forth by "*respectable families in distress*." The last, that of Sir WILLIAM ELFORD and Co., is, at once, of the mendicant and theatrical style. Here are "*Ladies, Gentlemen, and Tradesmen*." But, "*SIR WILLIAM*," thou accomplished *law-maker*, here, with your leave, are two errors. First, why not *Tradeswomen* as well as "*Tradesmen*"; and, then, why make a distinction between "*Gentlemen and Tradesmen*"? Now, this is what the player-people never do. They are *all* "*ladies and gentlemen*," that the player-folks live by; and ought not those to be the same that the paper-folks live by? No objection to your copying so largely from the strolling actor's play-bills, seeing the strong resemblance, which, in more respects than one, exists between your profession and theirs; but, pray, take care, another time (if you should have to return *thanks again*), to make no such indiscreet distinctions. Your best, as well as most numerous customers, are *tradespeople*; and, what is the singular happiness of your profession, the more they are distressed for money themselves, the faster and "*kinder*" friends they will be of your concern.

Now, turning again to you, my Lords and Gentlemen, I beg you to think well of all this, which I shall dismiss with this practical anecdote.

The day that I got the *letter*, which I have inserted above, I happened to be at Fleet-street, when a gentleman (whose name was not told me) sent up to ask me, whether I would advise him to *sell out stock*. I was engaged at the moment, and sent down for answer, "Yes, by all means." The messenger came back to ask me, whether the gentleman would not do better to stop, *until after the next dividend*. I had no time to see him; but, I sent him down the above-inserted *letter* to read. He sent me the letter back, and instantly went off, sold out his stock, *bought French funds yielding interest to equal amount*, and then went to the Old Lady (with the remainder) a *good banging bag of socereigns for present spending*.

Think well of this, then, my Lords and Gentlemen. Think of it *in time*, too. However, it is *your* affair and not *mine*. If my advice had been followed, this state of things would never have been seen. But, there is one piece of humbug going on, which I must say a word or two about; I mean, the story about the *exchanges*. "The exchanges have taken a sudden turn, Ma'am," says Doctor Black to Anna Brodie. "Indeed, Doctor," says Anna, "wastly glad to hear it." In comes Peter Macculloch, running, grinning and snapping his fingers, whistling, and capering, and holding out his *two* hands to Anna and the Doctor, to join him in a sort of half-savage Scotch dance, called a three-handed reel; and "Egode, mon," says he, "the *exchengus* a' taken a sudden turn i' th' favor o' Breston, and we sal ha' the gold bock agen."—But, stop, Peter. I thought you said you liked a *cheap* currency, and that it would be a "prodigious loss" to get the gold back? However, never mind that; for, now let me ask you, what the *exchanges* can have to do with this matter, *as long as the mother Bank shall be compelled to pay in gold*? Gold may go out of the country faster than ever, as long as this law exist, and yet the *exchanges may be in our favour all the while*. So that all the hopes of keeping gold here by what is called an "*improvement in the exchange*" is as foolish as the dreams of an old ugly rich widow, with a beard a quarter of an inch long, who imagines that a mean young fellow, who is without the means of buying a hunter, is going to wed her and bed for the sake of her person, and not of her money.

What is that thing, called the *exchange*? One man draws a bill on another man; a third man buys this bill of the first, and sends to the second for payment. The *exchange* is, that which the second man *pays to*, or *takes from*, the first man, *over and above*, or *less than*, the amount of the bill, this is what is called the *exchange*; and when he gives neither more nor less than the amount of the bill, the exchange is what is called *at par*, just as our money is, when we get twenty shillings in exchange for a sovereign.

Let us take an illustration, and let it be *at home*, where the money has the same name in all places. SHARPSHINS, a Bristol man, draws a bill on a LONDONER for a hundred pounds that the Londoner owes him. Another man, whose name shall be BROADBRIM, who owes a hundred pounds in London, comes to him, and *buys this bill*. Now, if there be few persons at Bristol who have anything due to them in London, and who can draw upon London, and a great many persons at Bristol who want to transmit money to London, and as a bill is a much more convenient thing than a bag of gold to send to London, SHARPSHINS says to BROADBRIM, I will not let you have my hundred pound bill, unless you give something over which BROADBRIM will do, in order to get the bill,

which is a most safe and convenient mode of conveying money. Then this that BROADBRIM gives for the bill, over and above the hundred pounds, is called the rate of exchange; and this exchange is said to be *in favour of London*, because a bill on London will fetch more money than the sum that it is drawn for. But, when the contrary is the case; when there are *many* persons who want to sell bills on London, and *few* persons in Bristol who want to buy such bills; then SHARPSHINS must sell his hundred pound bill for *less* than a hundred pounds, or else BROADBRIM will not have it, seeing that there are so many persons who want to sell bills on London; and now the exchange is *in favour of Bristol*, seeing that a Bristol man can pay a London debt of a hundred pounds with *less* than a hundred pounds: seeing that the London people owe the Bristol people more than those of Bristol owe those of London. Sometimes the dealings and debts between the two places are so, that each owes as much to the other as this other owes to it. Then the 100*l.* bill will sell for a 100*l.* and *no more*. And then the exchange is said to be *at par*; or, *on a parall*l.**

It is the same with regard to *two nations*; but here comes in the circumstance of different denominations of money, to account or reckon by. Ours is the *pound sterling*, the French have their *franc*, the Italians have their *florin*, the Spanish their *dollar*, the Dutch some beastly thing that does not now occur to me. Let us take the French franc: 25 francs (I leave out the fraction) are equal in intrinsic value to an English pound. Therefore, if I owe a man in France 100*l.*, I must send him a bill for 2,500 francs, if the exchanges be *at par*; but, as in the Bristol and London case above stated, I may have to give more, or to give less, than 100*l.* for a bill of 2,500 francs, according as the debts due from one country to the other, affects, as we have seen above, the rate of exchange.

Now, then, what has this to do with the *export of English gold*, in the *present state of things*? This, my Lords and Gentlemen, supposing you to have been crammed with PETER MACCULLOCH's spoon, "as the best public instructor" says you have, is a question for you to attend to; and that too, very narrowly; for the answer to this question will convince you (if Peter have not completely choked up your "*antalluc*"), that this "*turn of the exchanges*," which so delights Doctor Black and his broad sheet consort, Anna Brodie, supposing the "*turn*" to be a *truth*, and not as it is, a *stock-jobbing lie*, will do and can do, nothing for your system, except to extend a little the duration of delusion.

Exchanges are, as we have seen, affected by the greater or less amount of debts, which one country owes to another. These debts are in amount proportioned to the exports and imports of the two countries to and from each other. So that *gold*, being an article of *commerce*, may, and will go away, *as well as other goods*, to any *creditor country*; that is to say, to any country, to which we owe more than it owes us; and with regard to which the *exchanges*, as explained above, are against us. Thus far, gold, as *goods* or *merchandise*, will go if the exchanges be against us; and, by its going, it will, just as the going of other *goods* will, assist to bring the exchanges more in our favour; because, by thus going it will lessen our debt in that other country.

But (and now, mind), there is ANOTHER AND A GREATER CAUSE for gold going away, and for going away *alone*, too, and not in common with other goods! Turn, now, from Peter's big spoon and his mess of "*cheap currency*," and hear me; open your docile mouths, and swallow my dose.

I have hitherto proceeded upon the supposition, that the money is, in all cases, *real* money; not *sham* money; not Devonport money; not *rags*, but gold and silver. Now, then, let us suppose the contrary, and take Bristol and London for the purpose of our illustration. Suppose there to be a law (since the first of the above supposed transactions between Sharpshins and Broadbrim) to make *rags* a legal tender in London, and in no other part of the kingdom. SHARPSHINS has another bill of 100*l.* on London to sell, as before; and Bristol has, as before, more owing to her by London than she owes London, and therefore the exchanges would, as before, be *in favour of Bristol*: and so SHARPSHINS, who has sucked down the Scotch pap from Peter's spoon, and looks upon a "*cheap currency*" as the best, says to BROADBRIM, you must give me more than 100*l.* for my bill, as you did last time. "Oh, no," says BROADBRIM, "for thee sees, Friend Sharpshins, that thy bill will be paid to friend SLY (or Fry, perhaps,) not in sovereigns such as I give to thee, but in *rags*, which rags are not worth so much as a like number of sovereigns by *one-fourth*. And therefore thee sees, Friend Sharpshins, that I can give thee only 75*l.* for thy 100*l.* bill.

In like manner, a Frenchman, to whom a bill on London for 1000*l.* is offered by a dead-weight man, or by a Protestant Irish squire, and who is asked to give 2,500 francs for it, exclaims, "Mais, monsieur, rapellez vous qu'on me prayera *en papier*!" remember that I shall be paid (the 100*l.*) in *paper*; and, as this paper is not worth so much as its nominal amount in gold by *one-fourth*, I can give you, for your hundred pound bill, only 187*8* of my good silver francs.

This was what was going on during the days of Bank-restriction. But, now came, under the auspices of the SPINNING-JENNY political economy, a new and strange state of things; great heaps of paper-money all over the kingdom, a sort of indirect but pretty effective legal tender every where but in London; but, in that London, A BANK COMPELLED TO GIVE EVERY BODY GOLD AT 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* AN OUNCE, that is, real sterling money. Ah! this is quite another matter. SHARPSHINS now makes BROADBRIM give him the full hundred, or more, for the bill of 100*l.*, because BROADBRIM's friend *Sly* (or *Fry*) can go to old Mother Bank and demand a hundred gold sovereigns for it. In like manner the dead-weight man can get from the Frenchman 2,500 francs for his 100*l.* bill on London; for, now the former draws for *gold*, and not for "*paper*" as before.

Therefore, as long as the Bank is compelled to pay in gold at this rate, how are the exchanges to be affected by *the export of gold*, except in as far as gold is an article of *merchandise*? But, while this is the state of the case with regard to commerce with foreign nations, such may be, and such is, the state of our own internal affairs, that *paper-money* is *less valuable than gold*; HERE they pass, at present, *at par*; but, when they meet at *Paris*, they have a different value. There five gold sovereigns will, at this hour, sell for *nearly a shilling more than a five-pound Bank of England note*. Now, then, as a man can go to the Bank of England, and, with a thousand pounds in its own notes, get a thousand sovereigns, and can send them to Paris and get a *thousand and ten pounds* in Bank of England notes for them, will not he do it, especially as he can repeat the operation about forty times in a year.

What, then, have the *exchanges* to do with this matter? Our bank-notes might be at an open discount (as they were, the other day, at Ply-

mouth); there might even be *two prices* in our markets; a pig that sold for a pound in gold, might be sold for ten pounds in paper; and yet, if the Bank of England could continue to pay in *gold*, the foreign exchanges might, all *this time, be in our favour*.

Therefore, my good lords and gentlemen, turn away from Peter and Doctor Black and Anna Brodie; laugh, as I do, at their three-handed reel in celebration of the "sudden turn of the exchanges." And, now, let me ask you: Do you think, that you ought to talk about *prosperity*; and whether you do not feel some little shame, when your empty and bawling SIR GLORY is expressing his wish to "extend the *prosperity of the Empire to Ireland*," by disfranchising the forty shilling freeholders? Let me ask you also, whether you yourselves be really humbugged, as the fund people are, by the "*increase of the quarter's revenue*," which, supposing the statement to be true as to figures, takes no notice of the *fall in the value of money*, which, after the most abundant crops ever known, *makes wheat now fifteen shillings a quarter dearer than it was last year at this time*. However, it is *your affair, not mine*: go on; and I will hold the *Feast of the Gridiron*.

WM. COBBETT.

THE
"WISDOM OF PARR-R-RR-LI-A-MENT."

A
NEW YEAR'S GIFT

FOR THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE FREDERICK PROSPERITY ROBINSON.

(*Political Register, January, 1826.*)

SIR,

Kensington, 1st January, 1826.

With an expression of my hopes, that you and the "Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment" (as great, empty, staring, botheration PITT used to call it), may have as happy a new year as you deserve, I send you, as a present, or *gift of the New Year*, a short essay on that "*wisdom of Parliament*," on which you gave us such a fine eulogium on the 23d day of February, 1824, and of which eulogium I, at that time, said, that I would remind you for many a day to come. This "*wisdom*," that the prudent "*Op-*

position" Scotchman, Mr. JAMES PERRY (who got *sons* and *faithful Scotch* editors to INDIA, notwithstanding his "opposition") used to call the "Collective Wisdom of the nation." You call it a "prosperity-creating wisdom"; or a wisdom that "dispenses blessings from the portals of an ancient constitutional monarchy." Pity BURKS had not lived to *spend* instead of *bequeathing* his pension! He would have given us this as a specimen of the "sublime and beautiful" united. What a fine Treasury-idea! There stand (we think we see them) the "portals" of the venerable monarchy; there stands the "Wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment" on the platform; there kneel the "contented" and "grateful" people, with "joyous and smiling face," receiving the "blessings," which "the Wisdom," from her ample portfolios, is "dispensing" in the shape of "promises to pay"! God forbid that I should insinuate that you were guilty of plagiarism; but, it would be injustice to SWIFT not to notice that he has, in his LEGION CLUB, an idea of this sort, at least.

"At the porch BRIARIUS stands,
Showing bribes in all his hands."

To be sure, *bribe* is, in the common acceptation, very different from "blessing"; but, both begin with a *b*; and I remember, that in 1806, when I posted up, at HONITON, a text of Scripture, which says: "The Lord will consume the habitations of bribery," the electors of the "Collective," living in that town, charged me with the "wicked design to rob them of their BLESSING." So that they, at any rate, looked upon *bribe* and *blessing* as synonymous terms.

However, we will not waste our time in this sort of word-mongering: we will leave that to the old shuffle-breeches fellows that Messrs. MURRAY (I think it is) and CONSTABLE hire to write, at so much a sheet, in the QUARTERLY and EDINBURGH Reviews, *praises* on all the books, in the sale of which said MURRAY and CONSTABLE (and their partners) are interested, and *censure* on all those, in the sale of which said MURRAY, CONSTABLE, and Co. are not interested; we will leave word-mongering to these hiring hacks; and will proceed to the feats of the "Wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment," with regard to the *prosperity paper-money*.

As to how the paper-money thing began *first of all*; how it was hatched by Scotch BURNET for the purpose of keeping down Catholics; how it produced the SEPTENNIAL Bill, that is, how it emboldened men, *elected for three years*, to enact, that *they would sit and make laws for seven years*; how the paper-money and its debts produced the *American revolution*, and raised up a maritime power, at the name of which we now grow pale: how the paper-money scheme produced these events, is it not plainly written in No. XIV. of the "PROTESTANT REFORMATION," and will it not be read from Chili to Canada; from Mexico to Rome? I am not, therefore, here going back so far; nor am I going "*presently*," as PETER MACCULLOCH would say, to state the *cost of the American Revolution*, and to show how it added to the debt, and how it produced the French revolutionary war, and its *eight hundred millions of debt*; but shall content myself here with relating a part of the feats of the "Wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment," from the beginning of PITT's career down to the month of July last, when the "Wisdom" separated, after being *thanked* for their diligence and "*wisdom*" during the session.

When PITT came into power in 1784, the debt amounted to 250,000,000*l.* and some odd thousands. The nation were, at this time,

fools, despicable fools, enough to be divided into two parties; PITTITES and FOXITES; names taken from two men, the first of whom was made by nature for a showman or an auctioneer; and the latter for a jovial companion of some one who had more money than could well be spent, even on the turf or at the gaming-table. Both had what is very well called "the gift of the gab"; both were descended from fathers who had fattened pretty well upon the public money; both were second sons; PITT came after his brother, as claimant of the title and *perpetual pension* given to his father; FOX came after his elder brother's son, to the title given to his, and he (FOX) was, and had been from his infancy, a *sinecure placeman*. They were both great talkers; but, as events have proved, neither ever was fit to have the management of a nation's affairs, any more than any two tinselled chaps that you might snatch off from a mountebank's stage.

They were talkers, one was the "English Cicero," and the other the "English Demosthenes"; the Parsons, and other review and magazine and newspaper writers, placed themselves some on the side of Cicero, for what was to be got then; others on the side of Demosthenes, for what might be got thereafter; and thus was the nation noddled along in the belief, that it had the two greatest men in the world! PITT began his career with a project for paying off the national debt! Nothing could be more popular. The nation did not consider that it could never be paid off, unless the means came out of its property and labour; that it could not be paid off by legerdemain. However, such was its anxiety to be relieved from the dreadful load, that, like the alarmed patient, it was ready to listen to any quackery. PITT's scheme was, to raise a million a year in taxes, to form a SINKING FUND, which was to go on accumulating at compound interest, and which would pay off the Debt in forty years! Bravo! "Heaven-born Minister" came forth from every kind, or stupid, throat in the kingdom. "What a man! What a surprising young man!" His father, according to BURKE, was ELIJAH, and the son had "caught the mantle"! The nation is now suffering, and has long to suffer for its follies of that day. Demosthenes, who opposed Cicero in every thing else, joined him here, and proposed one of the clauses in the famous Bill; and there you heard the old conundrummites congratulating each other, that these "two great men had co-operated to bring to perfection this great national work"!

PAINE came soon afterwards, and told them that this scheme was a delusion: that it was taking out of one pocket and putting into the other; that it was like setting a man with a wooden leg to run after a hare, and that the farther the man ran, the farther would he be behind. I demonstrated in Paper against Gold, that this scheme was as sheer a piece of folly as ever was invented; and the idea of its ever being capable of lessening the national burdens, has, for some years past, been openly ridiculed, even in Parliament itself! After all this, the Scotch talk of a Doctor (they are all Doctors) "HOMALTON, mon," who, only the other day, made the same discovery! However, no matter who made the first discovery: it is now discovered, that this joint-job of CICERO and DEMOSTHENES was as contemptible a piece of foolery as the world ever witnessed; and that the "Wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li a-ment" has, instead of paying off the Debt, swelled it up to four-times, and, in reality, more than four times its then amount.

Until 1793, there had been no Bank-notes, or paper money, under ten

pounds. But a great deal of paper-money had got out, and the Sinking Fund Scheme had given rise to a monstrous degree of gambling in all sorts of trade, and had run the *Funds* up to a *hundred*, or more, for *three per cents*. The country banks had begun their pretty works; there were vast quantities of paper afloat of one sort or another. All was "PROSPERITY." CICERO was cried up to the third heaven; he, who had RAISED THE NATION from such a state of depression to such a state of envied "PROSPERITY"; but, CICERO, like you, Mr. Robinson, modestly ascribed all the "*merit*" to the "*Wisdom* of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment;" in whose behalf, he, *like you*, claimed the "*gratitude*" of a "happy people," only asking for himself (besides his *salaries* and *sinecures*) that his name might be inscribed on the solid pillar, which that "*Wisdom*" had raised, "sacred to public credit."

Just at this moment of general joy, the *bubble bursted!* The Bank found its *gold going away to France and elsewhere*. War was coming too; but, the bubble must have bursted without the war. The Bank *drew in*; and there was, in spite of "*the Wisdom*," a *tremendous crack*; not like this present one; but tremendous for that time, when the workings of "*the Wisdom*" had hardly begun to be in full swing of effect. In this unexpected emergency, "*the Wisdom*" resorted to two schemes, issuing great parcels of Exchequer-bills to be lent, to prop up staggering merchants; and, *issuing five-pound notes from the Bank of England!* Thus "*the Wisdom*" set the thing agog again, and all was *prosperity, loyalty, great and glorious, rule-Britannia, and God-save-great-George-our-King*; and, if any man dared to say the contrary, or, to abstain from saying *that*, he was sure to suffer for it, in some way or other. But, though *men* were to be kept down in this way, GOLD was not; it *openly resisted*; it would circulate no longer with the paper-money; the Bank *drew in again*; but it was now too late: it produced another terrible *crashing*: but, it came too late: the seditious GOLD kept going away: the Bank Directors reported its disaffected conduct to the "Heaven-born": and, one cold February morning, just after the KING had *congratulated* the Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment on the *safe and solid* state of *our resources*; just after BURKE had written a pamphlet to show, that we ought not to make peace, because the French could not get on with *assignats*, not convertible into gold, and because WE had not a scrap of paper-money, which any man might not *instantly exchange for gold*; just after this, one cold February morning, not a great while after, Lord MORNINGTON (now WELLESLEY, sen.) had been, in a speech of five hours long, proving to the Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment, that the French financial system was *tyrannical and base*, and coming to *contrast it with ours*, had concluded in these words: "HERE we see nothing of *arbitrary finance*; none of the "bold frauds of *bankrupt power*; none of the wild struggles of *despotism*" in *distress*; no *debasement of the substance of the coin*; HERE we behold "revenue flowing freely and copiously from the *opulence of a contented people*;" one cold February morning, just after PITT had told "*the Wisdom*," that the French assignats were reduced to almost nothing in value; one such morning, while *many presses were at work, in London, forging those assignats* to be sent to the Continent; just at that time, on one cold February morning, in the year 1797, the GOLD, when about to desert in a body, found a placard sticking on the Bank, positively *impounding it*, until "*the Wisdom* of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment" could be consulted on the subject!

This was the devil, to be sure! This was a choaker for "the Wisdom." This was a stunning blow for the grand Operator, who had bespoken a place for his name, on "the column to be raised sacred to PUBLIC-CRE-DIT." Away was gone the "column," and the Operator stood gaping and staring like a stuck pig. However, he applied to "the Wisdom of Parr-r-r-li-a-ment," and he talked more of that than ever. "The Wisdom" determined, that there should be little bits of paper instead of gold; but, this was to be only for *six weeks*, just to give the Bank time to get in gold, or, rather, for the "*false alarm to subside*." At the end of the six weeks, the tether was lengthened to the end of the Session; then to the commencement of next Session; then for a year; then *for the war*, and till six months after the peace, come when it might!

Huzza for "the Wisdom"! Out went the paper-money, up went prices, and "PROSPERITY" was greater than ever! Peace came in 1801. The six months would soon expire! Gold must come then. The Bank began to *draw in*; smashing again, though another year was granted to paper-money; then another, and that was *to be the last*; but, before that expired, war came again; and then Addington, coolly observing, that, "as a *war measure*, he never heard any one object to the restriction," brought in a Bill to continue the restriction to *six months after the next peace*; and "the Wisdom" assented to it *unanimously*.

Now for about six years all was "PROSPERITY" again; prices high, jobbing plenty; but, the guinea was got to be worth 28s. in paper-money! This was awkward for "a *solid system of finance*." This was not half the *real depreciation* of the paper. The *bushel of wheat*, on an average of years, was the standard to measure that by. However the "*Opposition*," as they are hypocritically called, who had said not a word about this when they themselves were in place, three years before, took it into their heads, in 1810, to make a *worrying* about this; and, at last, obtained a committee (called the BULLION COMMITTEE), to inquire into the *cause* of this depreciation, and to find out a *remedy*. This Committee, with one HORNER, a Scotch lawyer, at the head of it, reported, that the *remedy* was, to compel the Bank to pay in gold, *in two years from that time*! This Committee was only a *branch* of "the Wisdom," to be sure; but, as is the sack, so is the sample. I, in *Paper-against-Gold*, *proved*, that this could not be done without total ruin to the *land and to trade*. "The Wisdom" refused to pass such law, not, however, *for my reasons*, but, because it was *unnecessary* to pass it, seeing that the paper-money was *as good as gold*. This was put, by the great BEXLEY, into the form of a "*RESOLUTION*," in these words:—"That the Promissory Notes of the Bank of England have HITHERTO been, and NOW ARE, held TO BE EQUIVALENT to the legal coin of the Realm, in ALL pecuniary trans-
actions, to which such coin is legally applicable."

Now, guineas were openly sold for 28s. That was both a *pecuniary* and a *legal* transaction; for they were bought and sold by all sorts of persons! How, then, could the notes be *equivalent*, that is to say, of *equal value*, to the coin? However thus "The Wisdom" resolved. But though "The Wisdom" did not agree to lawyer HORNER's proposition, the Bank had its fears, that the Committee might be listened to; and, therefore, it *drew* in its paper-money to a great extent; and immediately a *smashing* began that was quite terrific before it was over. People began to *make two prices*; they began to push *Country-bankers for gold* in exchange for their notes; and Lord King had demanded *gold in payment of*

rent. Little PERCEVAL ruled at this time; and, under his gentle auspices' three bills were brought in, and passed by "the Wisdom," the first, to punish people for buying or selling coin for more than its nominal value; the second to make Bank of England notes legal tenders in payment of country bank-notes; the third, to compel landlords to take, as coin, Bank of England-notes in payment of rent.

Thus, then, the thing was made pretty complete; out went the paper-money at a famous rate, and up went wheat to twenty shillings a bushel. Brave times! Never was there in the world before, such "PROSPERITY"! Not quite equal to your "PROSPERITY," Mr. Robinson; but surprisingly great it certainly was. There had now been FOUR CRASHES; that of 1793; that of 1797; that of 1802; that of 1810; four rolls, or swags of the system; but, these were nothing in point of destructiveness, to what that system had in reserve; while the destruction, that it has since produced, is not to be named along with that which is yet to come, unless the system be totally abolished, and that, too, before it be long.

This "PROSPERITY" and its parent, paper-money, went on till, in 1814, peace came, with its six months again, for resuming cash-payments. That suspension, which "the Wisdom" had, at first, declared to be intended to last only for six weeks, had now lasted eighteen years; but, now, when war, when foreign expenditure, when all "false alarms," when all pretences had fled, the Bank would, surely, pay again in gold! I said it could not: it did not: the law was renewed for a year, just to give time to make preparations, after "so glorious" a war, and glory being so very costly a commodity. But though the Bank did not pay, it did not know, that it might not soon be compelled to pay. Therefore, it drew in apace. Down went prices; smash, smash, smash, went the merchants, the bankers, and the farmers; and the poor squires themselves, in spite of Corn Bills for their relief, began to look as tame and to speak in a voice as humble, as a saucy chap, who has been nine months married to his match.

On went the fall of prices and the smashing of all sorts to 1816, nearly the whole inclusive; when, all of a sudden, out went the paper again, up went prices, and the "PROSPERITY" of 1818 came in double dose, and, indeed, too much to bear; for it really, for a short time, opened the ports for foreign corn! But, alas! nothing sublunary is certain, and particularly if it be liable to the influence of paper-money. However, this swag might have lasted a little longer, if "the Wisdom" itself had not resolved to put an end to it by the passing of PEEL'S BILL. This was the blow! This was the harpoon, with which, rankling in it, the system of paper-money has, from early in 1819 to the present hour, been darting and plunging about, and, at every plunge, has been overwhelming and drowning hundreds of thousands of unfortunate creatures, who have been hurried down in a moment, without ever having perceived their danger.

The Bank had now, in 1819, been protected five years during profound peace; and, as all was now "PROSPERITY," the "Wisdom of Par-r-r-li-a-ment" resolved to make this "PROSPERITY" PERPETUAL, by placing it, as that coxcomb, "THE ORACLE," called it, "on a METALLIC BASIS." O! the egregious ass! It was now, then, enacted, after long reports, and long discussions, that the Bank should, after due time for preparation, really pay in gold on the 1st of May, 1823; that

it should continue to pay in gold for ever after that period; that, AFTER THAT PERIOD, IT SHOULD ISSUE NO NOTES UNDER FIVE POUNDS. "The Wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment" enacted this, though I had a hundred times warned it, that it could not enforce such a measure, without almost exterminating the people. I had a hundred times, and more, *proved*, that such a measure, unaccompanied with a very great reduction of the interest of the Debt, and with *other measures* that would make such reduction just, would produce a state of things full of all sorts of horrors. Yet, "*the Wisdom*," listening to Ricardo, Baring, Tierney, and others, passed this measure WITH VOICE UNANIMOUS, and, moreover, the SPEAKER boasted of it, in his speech to the Regent, the now King! I, and I alone, prophesied the result.

The bill had hardly passed; the harpoon had scarcely begun to tickle the ribs of the system, when, at one twist of her body and with one slap of her tail, she sent down a good third part of the fellows who are, now-a-days, called *merchants*, and who bear no more resemblance to the men that frequented the Royal Exchange when it was built, than a nasty, lurking, thieving, stinking Hanover-rat bears to a bull-dog. *Slap*, at the first move of the system, went down a fair third of these tricky fellows, without their having time to cry out "*discount*," much less to prepare for their "*long account*" to the Lord Chancellor.

As the *harpoon*, flung from the hand of that "fine young man," the Member for the "*learned*" *University of Oxford* (oh! how it all fits so well! how *just* are God's judgments!); as the harpoon entered the carcass of the system, she dashed, she writhed, she dived, she came foaming up again, now swamping merchants, now bankers, now manufacturers, now shop-keepers, till, at last, all the other "*GREAT INTERESTS*" having been knocked and dashed about sufficiently, she began swamping the farmers and the landlords; and they *cried indeed!* They were not to be swamped in *silence*, like the other "*great interests*." It required *time* even for a monster like this to swamp *the land*; though, just as I had foretold, even *the land* itself was fairly going.

About six months after the gallant PHEL, aided by "*the Wisdom*" of the "*omnipotent* Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment," had harpooned the system, I, having arrived in the river at Liverpool, was most earnestly advised *not to come on shore*. The ship had come to anchor; I had just washed myself in soft water; I was about to cast off my sea dress; the steward had taken my clothes out, and was brushing them; when a couple of very genteel men came on board, and, being introduced to me, expressed their satisfaction at having seen me, but, at the same time, their *sorrow* for seeing me THERE. They then went on, with terror painted in their faces, to relate to me the *horrors of the 16th of August*, and all the other acts and symptoms of that most terrible year, concluding with what was well enough calculated to inspire awful forebodings; namely, that "*Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment*" was about to hold an *extraordinary Session!* And then they besought me to remain quietly on board, and to return to New rk when the ship went back. "*Never mind* brushing my clothes, then," said I to the steward. "But," said I, turning to my advisers, "what the devil! can they have *paid off the national debt!*" They did not understand what I meant. I, in a loud and eager manner, repeated: "I *say*, have they *paid off the national debt!*" They, smiling, shook their heads in sign of "*no, faith*." "O! then," said I, turning to the steward, "*bring me my clothes*." And now when the harpoon had got

fairly into the flesh of the system, *here was I*, who had been hunted almost off the face of the earth, who had been threatened with military "interference" if I entered Manchester, and for announcing whose arrival in good health, a man had been *gaoled* at Bolton: here was I, when the harpoon had "*worked well*," riding about the country, explaining to the half-ruined farmers and landlords the true cause of their sufferings, and inducing them to send up, from county meetings in *four counties*, one of which, the county in which I was born, petitions for REFORM of "Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment," and for a *just* reduction of the *interest of the Debt*.

What a change! "Aye," says Doctor Black, "and what *egotism!*" *Egotism!* O, no! These are *historical facts*. My history is so closely interwoven with the history of this tremendous system, that it is impossible, *completely impossible, fully to relate the one without relating the other*.

The harpoon had caused dreadful work; and yet we were still *nine long months* from *real* gold payments and a *cessation of small paper-money*. If the harpoon had stuck in the system, without relaxation, till May 1823, wheat would have been at *THREE shillings a bushel*; and, in three years from that day (the Debt and other things continuing to be paid in full), every farm in England and Wales would have been taken possession of by the *overseers*, in order to raise food for the people. *Something*, therefore, must be done; the harpoon must be drawn back; or, there was such a revolution as the world had never beheld, notwithstanding Mr. CANNING had said, that "*the Wisdom*" had "*SETTLED THE QUESTION FOR EVER*": O! wise man, great eulogist of the House that "*works so well*."

And something was done: the harpoon was *drawn back*: the *small paper-money*, was, in July 1822, *nine months before* the harpoon was to have its full effect, *resorted to again*; PEARL'S Bill was in great part repealed; and my *prediction was fulfilled*.—"Again?" you say; aye, and *again and again*; for, if there had been *no one to foretel* the consequences, there would have been no one with a *clear right* to cast blame on the authors of the mischief. Now the blame can be cast on you and your colleagues with *clear justice*; not, however, by "the gentlemen opposite"; for they have been fellow-workers with you all the way through.

The harpoon was *drawn back* from touching the vitals of the monster-system; wheat rose in price; "money became plenty"; a "*surplus capital*" came with "*sic yun cheep currency*"; and PETER MACCULLOCH lectured, and you bragged of "*the wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment*." The King was advised to tell "*the wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment*," that "*there never was a time when all the great interests of the country were in so thriving a state*"; and you, *modestly* ascribed the blessing solely to "*the Wisdom*." This is as important a point as any in the whole history of "*the Wisdom's*" paper-money works; and, therefore, I must note it well. This speech of yours, of February 1824, which I will endeavour to cause never to be forgotten as long as you remain one of this unhappy people's rulers, was manifestly uttered with the design of smothering "*for EVER and A DAY*," as the great Protestant psalm-translator has it; of smothering and extinguishing the very hope of REFORM; for, after all, that is the great object of your dread. You would, *both sides*, fain persuade the people, that the House, as now constituted, is as *good for them as any House could be!* You are aware, that the mode of

getting it together is not easily reconcilable with the laws or with reason; but, if the people think, that it *does as well* for them as *any House could do*, they, of course, will not dislike it, and will not want a change. Hence all the repeated assertions about the House "*working so well*"; about the *good working* of OLD SARUM, GATTON, and the rest; and hence your vaunting and bombastical speech of February 1824, which I have not room to insert here, but the substance of which I will state.

After describing the country as having been recently relieved from great *difficulty and distress*; after having asserted that it was now in *prosperity and happiness* beyond the powers of description: after this came what was to be the "*MORAL*" of the fable, namely, that the *House* was a good House, and *worked well*, and that *no change* in its constituent parts was wanted. But I must give this "*moral*" in your own words, to the *sense*, and especially to the *modesty* of which no abridgment can do justice. Your modesty, upon this occasion, is so much like that of MALVOLIO, when he ascribes OLIVIA's love to "*Providence*," that, when I read the words, I almost think I see you in "*yellow stockings and cross-gartered*," and smiling and smirking, and looking round at the calves of your legs. However, here are the words; here is the "*MORAL*" of your tale of "*PROSPERITY*"; and I trust that it will be remembered to the last hour of the existence of the system:—

"His Majesty's Government *does not* claim the merit of having brought the country to this state of content and prosperity; many others, they are satisfied, have at least an equal right to the applause and gratitude of the nation: I claim them not for individuals: I claim them for Parliament—for that calumniated, that vilified Parliament, which we have been told by some is so essentially vicious in its nature and in its construction, that it was utterly impossible for it to extricate the kingdom from that condition of distress and depression in which it was recently placed. They contended, indeed, how truly the result has shown, that in Parliament there was nothing good—that its councils were venal, its members corrupt, and, in short, that unless everything were at once turned topsy-turvey, and a new system of representation established, the nation could never be relieved from its difficulties, and rescued from its dangers. (Continued cheers.) I say, and I say it boldly, that the present state of the country *affords the best, because the practical refutation of what I maintain to be a calumny upon the Constitution.*"

So, then, the "*prosperity*" of 1824, was to be considered as a "*refutation*" of all our arguments in favour of *reform*. Well, then, ought not the present *adversity*, the present *ruin*, and almost *convulsion*, and the manifest *tremendous danger*, which have all directly, and visibly to all eyes, proceeded from the workings of "*the Wisdom*"; ought not these to be regarded as the best possible proof of the soundness of our arguments in favour of *reform*?

Yes, we did think, or, at least, *I did*, that "unless a new system of representation were established" (and it was I that you alluded to); I did say, not that it was necessary to "*turn things topsy-turvey*"; but I did say, that, "UNLESS THERE WERE A NEW SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATION, THE NATION NEVER COULD BE RELIEVED FROM ITS DIFFICULTIES AND RESCUED FROM ITS DANGERS"; I did say this; and the counties of Kent, Norfolk, Hereford, Surrey, Huntingdon and Cambridge, in petitions agreed to at county meetings, and now standing in the House's journals, *said the same thing*; this we did say, and this we SAY STILL, and that, too, with if possible more confidence than ever; because we have now an ad-

ditional instance of the monstrous evils proceeding from the workings of "the present system of representation," the history of which evils and workings I must bring down to the end of the year.

And, what have you NOW to say in answer to us? Scarcely had the King, in February, 1825, told "the Wisdom," that at no former time were all the great interests in so prosperous a state; scarcely had you asserted those (me) to be fools, who said that prosperity would not be permanent; scarcely had your ignorant and impudent Scotch eulogists fairly set to work in crying up the "surplus copatal, mon," and the "cheep coroncy, mon," and "hoot awa, mon," to those who wanted real gold payments; scarcely these, when the quag, the "solid prosperity" quag, began to tremble. Your last boastings were in March; then you called those fools who thought the prosperity not solid; and "the Wisdom" CHEERED you. This was in March, and in May the TRADE MINISTER discovered, that a BAD HARVEST might make a DISTURBANCE IN OUR CURRENCY!" And still "the Wisdom," on neither side, took, or proposed, any measure of prevention, though it was, every week of its life, warned by me of the dangers impending.

In June, a more formal warning, a practical illustration of the danger was laid before "the Wisdom," in the petition of Mr. John Jones of Bristol. But, even now, when it was acknowledged that bankers, if called upon to pay off their notes in gold, agreeably to the law, could not make, were not able to make, such payment; even now, though "the Wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment" had all this plainly before its eyes, it chose to shut those eyes; it did, at any rate, take no steps to mitigate the mischiefs that were at hand. "The Wisdom" was now warned again by me in a most solemn manner. It was cautioned against the consequences of breaking banks. It was told of the ruin and misery that such an event would spread around. It was told, that the very existence of the Government itself would be brought into danger. It was plainly taught how to estimate all the consequences. And yet "this Wisdom" separated without taking any one, even the most trifling, measure of precaution! It separated, it departed, it jigged merrily away, to your tune of "prosperity," to Scotch PETER MACCULLOCH's Highland drone of "sic yan a cheep coroncy, mon," and to DOCTOR BLACK's swaggering song of "surplus copatal, mon." But, alas! the "house was built on sand: the winds blew, the rains fell," the walls shook, the roof began to tumble in, and thousands upon thousands were crushed, their fate being, however, no more than a mere slight "FORETASTE OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME," unless, repeating what I have a thousand times said, there be "EQUITABLE ADJUSTMENT," preceded by REFORM!

Thus have I traced the feats of "the Wisdom of Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment," as to the paper-money affair, from the beginning of the career of PITT to the present day. And, NOW, how does it stand? And, NOW, what will the Wisdom do? Is there, NOW, one single man in the whole kingdom, who believes, that this system can be again patched up, to last for any length of time? Is there one sure person in the country who does not anticipate some terrible result? And is there, NOW, one rational being, who can look, for deliverance, to THOSE, under the influence and guidance and power of whom this long series of shakes, more and more violent, and this long series of calamities, going on constantly increasing in severity, have taken place? According to your own mode of reasoning, independent of my foregoing statement, there ought now to

be a change in "the system of representation"; for you rest your assertion of the contrary on the fact (true or false) of the "country being in a state of prosperity"; whereby you tacitly, but plainly, admit, that a contrary state of the country would lead to and warrant a *different conclusion*.

You censured me and other reformers for insisting, in 1822, that by the House, as now constituted, "*the nation never could be relieved from its difficulties and dangers*"; and, said you, "this is *refuted* by the *present prosperity* of the country," which, said you, HAS BEEN rescued from its difficulties and dangers. But, what do you say NOW? Has it NOW been rescued from its difficulties and dangers? We will not mind *how*, and *through whom*, "the difficulties and dangers" came upon the country. Let that pass here, it having been fully explained above. It is NOW certain, that "the difficulties and dangers" are *greater than ever*; and what ground is there NOW to hope that they will be removed by that same "*Wisdom*," from whose acts they have all proceeded, and that, too, when there has not been one of those acts, of the fatal consequences of which "*the Wisdom*" has not been *most solemnly warned*, before, and long before, those acts respectively were passed?

It is not easy to imagine how you are now to look each other in the face. You have no reproaches to fear from the "*gentlemen opposite*," they being in the same boat with yourselves; and being, indeed, as to this great matter, rather more blameable than you. But, you must *say something*: you must have *speeches*: a Parr-r-rr-li-a-ment without *speeches* would be like a pudding without fat. There must be *reporting and printing*, and we "*out of doors*" folks shall be *reading*! O! here is the devil and all! How you are to avoid *naming me* and the *gridiron* I do not know; and yet you *must* avoid it; and then there will be such *everlasting fun*, in remarking upon your surprising ingenuity in this particular. But, after all, there must be *speeches*, aye, and a *King's speech*, too! "O, Lord!" I really almost think I hear real corporeal sighs and groans. Here are about a *hundred banks broke already*; here is THE ONE POUND BANK OF ENGLAND NOTE AGAIN! O! "down, down, thou searest mine eye-balls!" Yes, here they come, pretty little oblong snips, "*dispensed*" from the "*portals* of an ancient constitutional monarchy!"

I tell you what, Sir: I, in *your* place, would send (if I could find out *where he was*) for PETER MACCULLOCH, and, in order to do the thing *well*, I would make him give some more "*evidence*" before a committee of "*the Wisdom*," proving as clear as second sight, that paper-money is better than gold, and that bank-notes are accompanied with "*less risk, and much less risk of loss, than coin is*"; and, of course, that if people have been ruined and starved by the breaking of banks, it is a just punishment for their perverse love of gold. I would send for half a dozen QUAKERS, each of whom would, in cunning and cool impudence, surpass the devil himself. If they, after they had sitten, wrapped up in their drab great coats and covered with their broad brims, their eye-curtains half pulled down, and their thumbs turned over each other, for an hour or two; if *they* could invent nothing for your relief, you might *despair indeed*! If this buttonless and unbaptised brotherhood, whose *bare word* Mr. BROUGHAM wanted to put upon a level with the *Christian outh*, even in cases of life and death; if *they* could invent no expedient, then might you exclaim, *all is lost*!

And, now, Sir, having performed the task that I proposed at the outset; having given the history of the *swags*, or *shocks*, in 1793, 1797, 1802, 1810, 1816, 1819, 1822, and 1825; having related how "*the Wisdom*" produced these *eight shocks*, in the space of *thirty-two years*, that being, on an average, *one shock* in every *four years*, I would proceed to show how this eventful history is *likely to end*; but, before I do that, I think it right to employ two or three Registers before "*the Wisdom*" shall "*collect*," in explaining the *principles of circulating money*; in showing the *necessary evils of a paper-money of any sort*; in showing that there is *no use in banks or in paper-money in any case whatever*; in showing the great injury that *they must do to the community*; in refuting that stupid notion, *that great commerce cannot be carried on without paper-money*; and, in showing whatever else I think likely to make an useful impression upon the minds of YOUNG MEN, at this moment, when almost every soul is more or less alive to the subject, and when I am convinced, that **SOME GREAT MEASURE MUST BE ADOPTED**, or, that this system will end in scenes more terrible than any that eye has ever witnessed, or ear heard described.

W. M. COBBETT.

TO

SIR JAMES GRAHAM, BART.,

On his Pamphlet, entitled "CORN AND CURRENCY;" which Pamphlet is addressed to the "Landowners," and which Pamphlet contains a proposition for (in fact) robbing the whole Nation, and the Fundholders in particular, for the purpose of upholding the Aristocracy and the Established Clergy.

(Political Register, September, 1826.)

LETTER I.

"That it is well known to your Honourable House, that, for more than twenty years, the *particular families* received a large part of the above-mentioned emoluments out of the *money borrowed from the fundholders*; that, during that period, more than a million of money was taken out of the loans to be given to the Church; and that, in fact, no inconsiderable part of the whole of the loans went into the *pockets of these families*; and, therefore, your petitioners will not suppose it possible for your Honourable House to harbour an intention to take even a single shilling from the fundholders, so long as these families shall continue to receive those emoluments."—NORFOLK PETITION, 3rd January, 1823.

SIR,

Burghclere, 20th August, 1826.

I apply the word *Sir* to you, merely for form sake; and I beg my readers so to understand it; for, I shall have to prove you unworthy of that appellation, unless it be understood to designate a proud, insolent, and unprincipled writer: I shall have to prove you to be unworthy of any appellation conveying the idea of respect; and I should be guilty of hypocrisy, if I were to leave the appellation at the head of this letter, unaccompanied with this explanation.

I look upon this pamphlet of yours as the precursor of an attack upon

the Fundholders, by the Landholders. It is manifestly intended to pave the way to such an attack. You yourself tell us, in the title of your pamphlet, that you are "of *Netherby*," which is, I suppose, to distinguish you from Sir JAMES GRAHAM, the old attorney, and the famous agent of the Lowthers. In the Baronetage book I find you represented, or rather, representing yourself, as a prime aristocrat, "descended from the EARLS of MONTBETH, in Scotland," and having for ancestor, in the reign of Henry the Fourth of England, JOHN, surnamed "*John with the bright sword*." I hope that John's sword was brighter than your pen, or it must have been very much like the sword of Hudibras. You go on, from "*John with a bright sword*," down to the present time, or at least, to the date of your pedigree, tracing yourself along through a wonderful parcel of Lords and Baronets and Parsons, till you come down to your own precious self, who, as you tell us, was born in 1761, married (1785) to "Lady CATHERINE STEWART, eldest daughter of John, seventh Earl of GALLOWAY, K.T." Aye, do not forget the K.T. for God's sake! You tell us that you had, in 1819, thirteen children. Four sons and nine daughters, one daughter married to a *Parson*, and another to a *Major*. These circumstances would be of no more importance to the public than the pedigree of those infernal caterpillars, that I left at Kensington devouring my Indian corn, and the destruction of which reptiles I left an order to accomplish with all possible despatch. These circumstances relating to you and your family, would be of no more importance to my readers than the pedigree, I say, of those nasty voracious caterpillars; but you have been thrust forward, or have poked yourself forward, as the herald of the designs of the landowners, to plunder the rest of the nation. You have promulgated a project, which, if it could be carried into effect, would make England a country of the vilest slavery upon the face of the whole earth.

Before I go any further, let me call upon you, or rather, let me call upon my readers, in general; let me call upon the public, in short, to look well at the motto to this letter. You have got a motto to your pamphlet. Yours is a *Latin* motto; and, it is just as applicable to the subjects of your pamphlet; just as applicable to a discussion relative to the effects of a depreciated currency, as it would be, to the matter contained in a treatise on music or dancing. You are about to write on the ruin brought upon landlords by peace and paper-money. You are about to promulgate a project for sponging off the National Debt, and for laying, at the same time, a heavy permanent tax upon bread: this is what you were going to write about; and you take the following passage of VIRGIL for a motto:

Quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas, tot bella per orbem,
 Tam multæ scelerum facies: non ullus aratro
 Dignus honos; squalent abductis arva colonis.

Now, the English of this is: "When right and wrong are so confounded; when war so much prevails, and when there are so many kinds of crime, the plough cannot receive due honour, and the fields, deprived of their cultivators, must lie fallow and fall into decay."

Now, "Sir James Graham, Baronet, of *Netherby*," do tell us, man, what this motto about wars, about crimes of soldiers, about pressing farmers to go to the wars; do tell us, thou son-in-law of the seventh Earl of Galloway, K. T. (never forgetting the K.T.); do tell us, thou descendant of "*John with the bright sword*"; do tell us, or I shall go

crazy, what the devil this motto has to do with the affairs of a country, which has been twelve years at peace, and which knows of no torments, except those of National Debts and paper-money; and the *high state of cultivation* of the lands of which is known to the whole world, and is an everlasting boast amongst all the Landowners in the country? Do tell us, then, what could induce thee to choose this motto. I will tell thee what it was, then. The motto arose out of thy stupid aristocratical insolence. You thought that even these Latin words would tend to inspire the vulgar, as you call them, with reverence for you.—You, therefore, must have *some Latin*; and not having judgment sufficient to select a passage that was applicable, you took one that was inapplicable. Latin was Latin; and you did not expect that any one would expose your ignorance. Your habitual insolence, together with the habitual subserviency of the poor wretches about you, made you believe that you might say any thing without being laughed at.

My motto is of a different description. It is applicable to my subject: it shortly expresses the *point* to which I shall come before I have done; and that point is precisely opposite to that at which you aim. This motto of mine is taken from the Norfolk petition; and, let it be borne in mind, that this petition, which was agreed to by that public-spirited county, in St. Andrew's Hall, in the City of Norwich, on the third of January, 1823; let it be borne in mind, that this petition now stands on the Journals of the House of Commons.

After this preface, I come to the subject matter of your pamphlet, which I pronounce to be a base production; an insult to the morals of the nation, an attack on its character for justice and courage; a literary crime which calls for immediate punishment, which punishment, it is my duty as well as my inclination to inflict; and, in order to discharge that duty, I shall, first of all, describe the object which you have in view, and which you have the profligacy to avow.

You first speak of the dangers which threaten the landowners. You say that one part of the landowners clings to the Government of "the day, and blindly supports its prodigal expenditure, in the hope of sharing its patronage, and of making that provision out of the public purse for dependants, which the hereditary family estates can no longer bear";—This, then, is a very pretty crew to be preserved, at the expense of fundholders or any body else. This is a very pretty crew, who are to be kept up in all their splendour, even at the risk of ruin, starvation, and open rebellion! Can there be upon earth a more despicable crew than this? Yet, it is to preserve a crew like this, in all their splendour; it is to preserve to them their power of still living upon the sweat of the people, that you would commit the monstrous robbery that you propose! You say, in another place, "I protest that the number of proprietors, with estates unencumbered, form so small a minority as to make the description of Mr. Huskisson applicable for all practical purposes, to the whole body; that is to say, that the whole body have their lands so deeply mortgaged, as to be, in fact, hardly the owners of the estates which they call theirs."

This is the state, in which you say the landowners are. Your object is, to save these landowners, and the parsons along with them. The parsons are, indeed, a part of the aristocracy; and so is the army, and the same is the navy. The aristocracy have all the livings, and all the high offices. Church, army, navy, colonies; all appear to be made for them, and for them only; and as we shall see, by-and-bye, you would

take the fortune of the fundholder away, while you would leave all these in the hands of the aristocracy. You acknowledge, that the scheme which you propose must produce considerable injustice; but that it would save the aristocracy. Let us have your words here, for they are most impudent and most profligate:—"I will not, therefore, attempt to deny, "that the course which I shall presume to recommend to the landowners "is open to grave objections, and that it must produce considerable in- "justice; but if it save the aristocracy—if it save the landed interest, "it will also restore vigour to our commerce and plenty to our labour- "ing poor; it will inflict partial injury on a few, but it will bestow last- "ing benefit on the community!"

What a surprisingly impudent assertion! What! It would assist the labouring poor, would it; it would bestow lasting benefit on the community, to rob *three hundred thousand families*, in the middle rank of life, for the purpose of keeping up, in all their ill-gotten splendour, from six to ten thousand families of lazy and insolent aristocrats, who have had, who have put, according to the words of my motto, a large part of the public loans into their own pockets.

I shall speak, by-and-bye, of the MEANS that you propose to employ for the purpose of effecting this object; but, let me first state the case of the landowners; let me state this case to you truly; and, when that is done, we shall better understand the nature of your proposition; we shall see more clearly the impudence and the wickedness of that proposition. I state their case, then, thus, in distinct propositions:—

1. That the landowners, according to your own account, in pages six and seven, are the makers of the laws; that the House of Lords ("notwithstanding the *recent infusion of less noble blood*,"") contains an immense majority of ancient landowners; and that, "in the House of Commons, the landed proprietors form a phalanx, that no Minister can resist"; that, therefore, according to your own account, the landowners had and have, the making of all the laws; and that, accordingly, they have made what laws they pleased.
2. That they have pleased to make laws to make a national funded debt, an unfunded debt, and a dead-weight debt, amounting altogether to more than a thousand millions of pounds sterling, and demanding, directly and indirectly, more than fifty millions of taxes to be raised annually, the bare collection of which taxes costs more than four millions of pounds sterling a year; that is to say, more than the gross amount of the taxes raised in the United States of America, for debt, for army, for *every thing*, including the expenses of building a most powerful navy, which building is constantly going on!
3. That, the landowners (that is to say, the aristocracy and the clergy), caused these enormous debts to be contracted, for the purpose of carrying on wars and of paying pensions, sinecures, and grants; that the first of these expensive wars was, that which was carried on against the Americans, to compel them to bear taxes, without choosing their Members of Parliament; and that the other of these expensive wars was for the purpose of keeping, what were called French principles, out of England; namely, principles which were at war with tithes and with aristocratical title and power.
4. That, the aristocracy and clergy did not succeed in compelling the Americans to be taxed without having Members to serve them in Parliament; that they did succeed in keeping, what were called

French principles, out of England ; that they preserved the tithes, and the aristocratical distinctions in England ; and that, by means of war, and measures of a warlike nature, they, at last, succeeded in preventing a reform of the House of Commons, which great part of the nation had loudly called for, and which was prevented by various measures of force of an expensive nature.

5. That, however, the landowners ; or, in other words, the lords, the baronets, the big 'squires, and the established clergy, did finally succeed in preserving the titles of nobility, the pensions, the sinecures, the grants, the tithes, and the **MODE OF FILLING THE SEATS IN PARLIAMENT.**
6. That they succeeded in preserving it all ; that their measures were crowned with complete success ; that they gained a "*glorious victory*" ; that they shouted and clapped their hands with joy, while hundreds of thousands of pounds, and even millions, were voted out of the taxes for the keeping of a jubilee, and for the building of triumphal arches and monuments to commemorate the valiant deeds, by which had been preserved the titles, the church lands, the tithes, the pensions, the sinecures, the grants, and particularly the *ines- timable mode of filling the seats in Parliament.*
7. That persons, so happy as these landowners, would not have been found upon the face of the earth ; that they would now have been ready, after vomiting forth their stomach-full of insolence, to die overpowered with joy and exultation, but that, alas ! they had **BORROWED THE MONEY**, wherewith to effect the preservation of these valuable things. They had had the assistance of nearly a million of Austrians, Russians, Prussians, Bavarians, Italians, Hessians, Hanoverians, Danes, Swedes, Switzers, Dutch, Westphalians, Belgians, Genevese, Genoese, Maltese, Spaniards, Portuguese, Algerines, Tripolitans, Africans, and God knows who besides ; Calmeres, Hungarians, Bohemians, Transylvanians, Polonese ; whether they had any Japanese, I cannot say ; but they had, at one time, nearly a million of men in arms, to assist them in preserving the tithes, the seats, and the other precious things.
8. That, however, alas ! assistance is seldom to be had, without **MONEY**, and particularly of this valuable kind ; that the landowners did not choose to go without rents to their estates during the wars, and without places, pensions, sinecures, and grants ; that, nevertheless, it was impossible to have rents and all these other good things to live upon in splendour, and to pay upon the nail, the money necessary for the Austrians, Russians, Prussians, Switzers, Hanoverians, Dutch, and so forth ! that it was impossible to pay these good people upon the nail, out of the rents and sinecures, and so forth, and still to have the same rents and so forth, to spend upon themselves ; that, therefore, the landowners borrowed the money to give to the Austrians, Switzers, Hanoverians, and so forth, to buy them victuals and clothes, and muskets and powder and ball, and hairy caps.
9. That, thus it was that the landowners contracted the debts, mentioned in the second proposition ; and that their estates became, in fact, by laws, **MADE BY THEMSELVES**, even according to your own account, mortgaged for the amount of these debts, to the mortgagees, or annuitants, or fundholders (call them which you please), who hold the mortgage deeds and bonds.

10. That, those who lent the money have a right to receive the interest in full, according to Acts of Parliament made, as you yourself say, by the landowners themselves ; that the landowners, before they had advanced very far in their borrowing, found it necessary to pay in paper, instead of gold and silver ; that they have now made attempts to return to gold and silver ; that they find it extremely difficult to get along ; that they perceive their inability to continue to pay in full ; and that, they begin to perceive, that if they continue to pay in full, agreeably to the laws which they have passed themselves, they will soon cease to receive any rent at all from their estates.
11. That, thus situated, you come forward with a scheme for their deliverance ; that this scheme is, not a scheme for *paying the debts off*, but for *wiping them off* ; and that, too, *while the debtors keep on receiving* in full all their rents, tithes, pensions, sinecures, grants, and so forth !
12. That, it is a fact not to be denied, that the pensions, sinecures, grants and other emoluments, received, for many years, by the landowners and their families, were PAID TO THEM OUT OF THE LOANS ; that it would, therefore, be most monstrous iniquity, to deduct a farthing from the interest of those who lent the money, until *those who pocketed* the lent money had been compelled to *refund as far as possible* ; and that it would be an act of tyranny the most barefaced that the world ever heard of, to deduct from the interest of the fundholder, while the pensioners and sinecurists and placemen and army and navy and parsons and bishops retained and enjoyed all that they now possess ; that no people upon earth ever yet did quietly submit to an act of tyranny like this, and that, if the people of England submitted to it, they would deserve to be whipped and beaten, as the most unfeeling of mankind whip and beat mules and asses.

Yet, descendant of " John with the bright sword," *this is what you propose!* This is what you have the impudence and insolence to put into print. I have been, for twenty-three years, called " a rogue," because I proposed a " just " and " equitable," clearing off of the national debt. Of late years, I was thus called, because I proposed to the county of Kent to pray for a just reduction of the debt. Because I proposed the same in the county of Surrey, a sinecure lord almost called me a rogue. Because I proposed an equitable adjustment in Norfolk, Daddy COX and Lord SUFFIELD ran about, cackling against me in holes and corners and barns, like hens going to lay. Yet, what did I propose ; how modest was my proposition, when compared with yours ! I never proposed to reduce the interest of the Debt, in the amount of even one single farthing, until reductions had taken place every where else. I never proposed to take one farthing of interest from the fundholder, until the whole crowd of generals and admirals and the enormous dead-weight had been strictly inquired into ; until the army had been reduced to next to nothing ; until every sinecure had been completely abolished ; until the crown lands had been disposed of ; until the grants of those lands had been resumed, as far as equity would sanction ; until the whole of the pensions, not merited by well-known public services, had been abolished ; until those who had received money in pensions, sinecures, grants, while loans were going on, had refunded, if possible, every farthing of that money : until all this had been done, until the Church had yielded up a very considerable part

of its property and income; and particularly until it had paid back the one million and six hundred thousand, which had been given to it *out of the loans*: until all these things had taken place, not a single farthing, according to my proposition, was to be taken from the fundholder.

Such is not the nature of your proposition. You mean to deduct from the interest of the Debt; you mean to take a large part of their property away from the middle class of the community, and you mean to leave the aristocracy and the Church in possession of all that they have; in possession, not only of their own original estates, not only of the estates which they have bought with the fruit of their sinecures and pensions; but, you mean still to leave them in possession of the sinecures and pensions themselves! Nothing but aristocratic impudence and insolence, and ignorance, into the bargain, and all possessed in the highest possible degree, could have emboldened a man to put such a proposition into print.

What is the pretence that any man can find for lowering the interest of the Debt? Why does any man think of such a thing? O! it is because the Debt is so burdensome; it is because it is a "mill-stone" round the neck of the nation. But, this is *figurative* language. It is what is called fine talk. Let us have it plainer. We want, then, to reduce the interest of the National Debt, because this interest is now so great as to make us pay more than one-half of our income and our earnings, in taxes. We pay sixpence a-pot for beer, which, if there were no taxes, we might have for three-halfpence. We give six shillings for a parcel of tea, that would, if there were no taxes, cost us, perhaps, half-a-crown. Now, then, we want to pay less taxes; but, the interest of the Debt is so great, that it must have great parcels of taxes. Therefore, say you, Come, good people all, and join the landlords, in *reducing the interest of the Debt*. Come, my good folks, come and join the landlords, those merciful people that let you have bread so cheap; come and join them in reducing the interest of the National Debt!

Softly, "Sir James Graham, of Netherby"; softly, son of "John with the bright sword"; softly, say the people of England. The Debt does cost taxes, to be sure; but, is there any thing peculiar in the nature of those taxes which the Debt requires? Are taxes *less* heavy, less galling, do they impoverish or provoke us more, when they go to a widow or her children when they have money in the funds, than when they go to pay the sinecure-salary of CANNING or the pension of his mother and his sister? Are they *less* provoking to us, when we pay them to a troop of orphans, than when we pay them to a troop of the dead-weight fellows, many of whom are Hanoverians? Look at that *old man* there: does it irritate me *more* to pay him a hundred a-year in *dividends*, than it does to pay that *parson* there a hundred pounds a-year in tithes, while, at the same time, I am compelled to pay taxes, in order that he may receive *half-pay as a military or naval officer*!

O! "Sir James Graham, of Netherby," are you vain enough to suppose, that we are such sots, that we are such infatuated creatures, that we are such despicable wretches, that we are so eaten up with, or over-awed by, the names of *Lord* and of *Parson*, as to think nothing of taxes given to the latter, while we feel so severely taxes which we give to persons in our own rank of life? O! Son of the "bright sword"; son-in-law of "the seventh Earl of Galloway, K. T." O! thou reader of *Virgil*! Doest thou think, that I, WILLIAM COBBETT, for instance, am

such a despicable simpleton as to be eager to dock off the money that I pay every year to my neighbours, my acquaintances, and, in some cases, my PERSONAL FRIENDS, who are fundholders; that I am eager, above all things, to deduct from them, what I have to pay them annually; and that I have no desire whatsoever to deduct what I pay to the *Lord Charleses*, the *Lady Wilhelminas*, the *Bishops* and the *Parsons*? Doest thou really think this, Sir James? Doest you think that I do not even yet feel the aristocratical and clerical foot heavy enough upon my neck; doest thou think that I relish the weight of that foot? Faith thou knowest better, and I will prove that thou knowest better, before I have done!

O! no, Sir James, we all understand this matter too well to be imposed upon by any schemers like you; and the circumstance of your having put forward the proposition, shows clearly that you are totally ignorant of the general way of thinking of people upon this subject. As I observed to TIERNEY, in my letter to him, published in the summer of 1818, a remarkable peculiarity belonging to this subject is this: that it is perfectly well understood by the working classes, while it was not, at the time when I was writing, at all understood by those who had the making of the laws. You seem to have been totally unaware of this. You seem, with the presumption and insolence habitual to the generality of your order, to look upon the people as being ignorant as brutes. I will engage, that out of every five hundred weavers and spinners in the North, including Scotland, four hundred and ninety-nine understand this subject better than you; that they understand all the causes, and all the effects, better than you; that they have more accurate opinions, with regard to the consequences yet to come; that they know a great deal better than you, not only what is likely to happen, but what will be best for the country, in the times that are coming.

Do you imagine, then, that you can persuade such people to join the landowners in a scheme which would crush three hundred thousand families in the middle class of life, which would take not one farthing of the income of the aristocracy and the Church; which would leave these two latter, infinitely more powerful, relatively considered, than they now are; and which would render their arrogance intolerable? There are few men, amongst even the working classes, who do not see this matter in its true light; and though it is extremely desirable to get rid of the Debt altogether, there is no man, who has any regard for the liberties of the country, who would not run the risk of a civil war rather than give his assent to a robbery that must end in putting the people under a military tyranny that would keep all the rest of the community in absolute subjection to the aristocracy and the clergy.

I have now described the tendency of your project: I shall, by-and-bye, come to a description of the MEANS which you propose to make use of; but, before I do that, I must notice a little of what you say, as to the causes of the present danger to the landowners. You are quite ORIGINAL in this your discovery and definition of causes. You have discovered, that, "it is a CURIOUS FACT, that the *operations* of the Bank of England commenced with the first creation of a *paper currency*," and with the *existence of a National Debt*." Now, are you a real fool, or do you only sham it? If I were one of your four sons, I should begin to look pretty sharp after you. Now, suppose I were to say, it is a *curious fact* that George the Fourth began to squall as soon as he was born; or, that he began to be a husband as soon as he was married; or,

apter still, that he began his operations of reigning from the time he got upon his throne. What the devil, I say, do you think the people would say to me? Would they not, chucking up their chins, and shrugging their shoulders, say, "Ah! poor Cobbett!"

Why, is it possible that you do not know that *Bank of England* and paper currency, and National Debt, were all ACTUALLY CREATED BY ONE AND THE SAME ACT OF PARLIAMENT! If you do not know this, you are a pretty fellow to write about paper-money; and if you do know it, what do you mean by the above stupid sentence?

You have *discovered*, that PITT foretold, in 1797, that, if the country were once overcharged with paper-money, a diminution of that paper-money would be ruinous to the country. You call this a "*sound prediction*" of PITT. You omit, you mean creature, you poor wretched old aristocrat, you omit to observe, that PAINÉ not only foretold this years before; but that he also foretold that the Bank would stop payment.

You have *discovered* that the lessening of the quantity of the paper-money causes prices to fall; that augmenting the quantity of it causes prices to rise; you have discovered that the "*lamented*" Mr. RICARDO was in error, relative to the effect of PEARL'S Bill; you have discovered that he, and the rest of them, ought to have taken wheat, and not gold, as the standard. You have discovered that Mr. PEARL did not foresee the effects of his own Bill. You have discovered that there is a difference, when we are talking about changing the value of money, between a country which has a debt, and a country which has none. You have discovered that France and America acted wisely, with regard to their debt; but that our Government undertook that which no Government ever undertook before. You have discovered that the prices have gone on popping up and down, according as the Ministers have changed the quantity and value of the money. You have discovered that the Small Note Bill, of 1822, was a *part repeal of PEARL'S Bill*, but that it gave the system only a *respite*. You have discovered, and this is another striking novelty in your pamphlet, that gold "cannot now sell at more than 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* per ounce, because the Bank is compelled to give it at "that price!" The devil it cannot! Do you say so, Sir James! What a discovery is here! It was well you quoted Mr. TOOME on this occasion, and gave us the assertion in his own words. "*Guramity!*" as the negroes say, to be able to find out that gold cannot exceed 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* an ounce, as long as the Bank is compelled to give an ounce for 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.*! Besides these *discoveries*, which are so astounding, you have discovered that the paper-money increased vastly between 1822 and 1825; that this increase of paper caused prices to rise; that, in spite of good crops, wheat rose in price; that, at last, however, gold began to leave the country, the Bank drew in its paper, the bankers began to break, six London banks stopped payment, credit was at an end, and the currency, which had been increasing for two years, now decreased as much in a few weeks. These are wonderful discoveries, to be sent to us all the way from Netherby, in the month of July, 1826!

Besides these discoveries, however, you have discovered that if the Small Note Bill had not been passed in 1822, the landlords would have been ground to powder; that that Bill was passed avowedly, in order to obtain a *respite* for the landlords. You have discovered that this changing of the value of money, *unjustly gives the property of one man to the other*. You have discovered, that the depreciation during the war

was calculated by some, at one-fourth; but, by others, on the best grounds, at *nearly one-half*. You have discovered, that though a great many taxes had been taken off after the peace, the taxes, in fact, became heavier after the peace than before, on account of the augmentation in the value of the money. What an *original* man you are! How new all your thoughts are! You have discovered that the salaries of the judges, and of other officers of the Government, and that the pay of the soldiers were augmented, during the war, upon the ground* that money had depreciated in value; but that these salaries and this pay have not been lowered since money has risen in value! O! what an *original* thinker you are! You have discovered that Mr. PEARL'S Bill had not got into full force by nine months, when the Small Note Bill was passed! There's a discovery, in July 1826! You have discovered that Mr. HANNING, late Sheriff of Somersetshire, told the Corn Bill Committee that the labourers in that county used to eat bacon and cheese; but that now they have potatoes, and nothing but potatoes; which they *carry even to the field to eat cold*. O! ORIGINAL man! You have discovered, that Mr. PEARL'S Bill ought not to have been passed, *unaccompanied with an adjustment of contracts*. You have discovered that Mr. HUSKISSON has been greatly inconsistent, he having, in 1815, defended the Corn Bill, and asserted that corn must be dear, as long as the country had to pay the existing taxes; and, he now having been an advocate for lowering the price of corn, while he assists in measures to raise the value of money, and while he demands and obtains, an augmentation of his own nominal salary. You have discovered that a man, dying and leaving his estate to his son with settlements to be paid out of the estate, may, in consequence of a change in the value of money, not leave enough to pay the legacies, and send his son to a workhouse. You have *discovered* even this; never, I dare say, in your whole life did you read the letter to TIERNEY of 1818! O! no, you are no *plagiarist*, I'll warrant you! This is all your own discovery; and it was you, brilliant descendant of "John with the bright sword"; it was you, who discovered, the terms, "TAX-EATERS" and "BLOOD-SUCKERS," which you use, in page 36: it was you who discovered "STERN-PATH-OF-DUTY-MAN," which you have, in page 37: it was you who discovered, in page 68, the term "FUND-LORD": it was you, who are the discoverer of all these things; and, in addition to these, you have discovered that the present Ministers are more connected with annuities than with the land. These are all your own discoveries; or else you are the lowest, the meanest, the basest plagiarist that ever put pen to paper. However, the truth is, you are like the rest of your order in general, in whom, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, we find met, character just *as low*, as their pretensions to birth are *high*.

What *your* character is, we do not, however, so clearly see, until we come to discuss *the means*, which you propose to employ for diminishing the burden of the Debt. This discussion must be the subject of another letter, which shall be published in my next; and, in the meanwhile, I leave you to chew the cud, upon what I have here said to you, begging you to be assured, that we will have a famous fight with you, before you shall accomplish the plunder contemplated in your book. Is it possible that you can be such a wretched driveller as to expect to take us in, by your plan of cajolery, laid down in page 64? You will not find ten labouring men, in all England, that you can impose upon by

such miserable cajolery. O! yes, I dare say we are going to be persuaded that you want to rob the fundholders for OUR GOOD! This might have passed before the passing of Ellenborough's Bill, and the *Transportation Poacher's Bill*; before the *hanging of so many men for resisting game-keepers*; before the invention of the *tread-mill*; before the three women sent to the *tread-mill for five pheasant's eggs*; before the *Sunday Turnpike Toll Laws*; before the Highway Act, which *shuts road-surveyors out of the park*, and lets them *into the field*, if it be but a quarter of an acre; before the New Trespass Law, which sends the *poor person to jail, for a trespass amounting to a penny*, and which does *not touch* the trespasser who commits *damage to the amount of five pounds*. Before these things, and many others, that might be mentioned, never forgetting the *Select Vestry Bill*, the mass of the common people might have felt differently, in a struggle between the *land and the funds*. As things now stand, it would be monstrous, indeed, if the labouring classes were to back those who made the new Game Laws, and the new Trespass Laws. Unnatural, indeed, and base, beyond all description, would it be, if the common people, the working classes, were to join the landowners, *in ruining three hundred thousand families in the middle ranks of life*; a thing which could not fail to add greatly, to the power, the haughtiness, the insolence, and the cruelty, of those landowners; and for which reason, amongst many others that I shall notice, before I have done, I trust, that the people, in all parts of the country, will be upon the watch, with regard to this subject.

WM. COBBETT.

TO

SIR JAMES GRAHAM, BART.

On his Pamphlet, entitled "CORN AND CURRENCY;" which Pamphlet is addressed to the "LANDOWNERS," and which Pamphlet contains a proposition for (in fact) robbing the whole Nation, and the Fundholders in particular, for the purpose of upholding the Aristocracy and the Established Clergy.

(Political Register, September, 1826.)

"But, they (the Boroughmongers) have now an enemy to deal with, whom they will never subdue: that is, the DEBT, which, of course, is our *true friend*. The wars against America and France, the chief object of both of which was to *prevent a reform of Parliament*, could not be carried on without *loans*, or without *giving up* the offices, pensions, sinecures, grants and other emoluments; and (mark well) to be able to retain these was *the object in preventing reform*. Yet, it was impossible to raise money enough in *taxes* to continue these emoluments, and to carry on the wars too. Hence the Debt, the Funds, the Paper-money, and those *rivals* of the borough gentlemen, the *fundholders*. This is a serious business for the high-blooded order; for either they must *give up their emoluments and their estates into the bargain*, or the *Fundholders must go unpaid, in part at least*. This is the real state of the thing at this moment. The borough system

approaches its crisis. Have patience, my worthy countrymen; only a *little patience*, and you will see that these *borrowers* and these *lenders* will, at last, do like most other borrowers and lenders; that is to say, come to an open quarrel, after having long cursed each other in their hearts. **THAT WILL BE THE DAY FOR THE PEOPLE**; and, in anxious expectation of that day, I remain most sincerely your friend, WM. COBBETT."—*Register dated Long Island, 4th July, 1817. Vol. 32, p. 704.*

LETTER II.

Burghclere, 22nd August, 1826.

SIR,

After again observing, that I use the word "*Sir*," as applied to you, merely for form's sake; after repeating that I call you "*Sir*," saving my right to call you what I please besides; after this, I proceed, as I proposed, at the close of my last letter, to take a view of THE MEANS, which you point out to the LANDOWNERS for what you call preserving their estates, and "upholding their rank and dignity."

These means consist of a double-handed robbery; that is, a *tax on bread* and a *reduction of the fundholder's interest*, and both at one and the same time! We have heard of, and we have witnessed, a great deal of aristocratical insolence before now; but, never, I verily believe, have we, until this day, heard of insolence *equal to this*. Saucy, impudent, proud, inflated, empty, conceited coxcombs enough have we amongst the "high-blooded" folks; but, it remained for the descendant of the "Earls of Monteith" and of "John with the bright sword" to be guilty of insolence at once so disgusting and so provoking, as to make the stomach heave at you, while the foot instinctively moves upwards towards that part of your body best calculated to receive its blows; and, I'm the greatest rogue that ever lived, if I do not feel the toes of my right foot itch while I write. What! *tax the bread* of us all, and *reduce the interest of the Debt too!* Where is the honest hand, which, at the bare sound of the words, does not stretch itself out to get hold of a broom-stick or a cowkin! If your pamphlet could be read in an age or two hence, the readers would certainly believe that there were, in your time, no hedge rows or coppices to grow *sticks*, and that people had no use of their *fists* or *feet*. What! *tax our bread* and *reduce the interest of the Debt too*; and do this *avowedly*, for the purpose of preserving the dignity of the aristocracy and the clergy! However, let us now take your *own words*, lest the public should suppose, as it well might, that I have misrepresented you. Your proposition is, then, in the following words. Horrid words they are; and more profligate than ever before came from the pen of man.

"The course, therefore, to be adopted by them (the landowners) is to consent to a revision of the Corn-Laws, to consent to free importation with a moderate protecting duty (15s. a quarter for wheat, as stated in page 96); but to force also at the same time a revision of all other monopolies, and to carry a *reduction of taxes to a very large amount*.—The sinking-fund of five millions annually is, in the first place, *available*; and then, inasmuch as I have proved, that Mr. Peel's Bill, in full operation, will be a bonus to the annuitant of more than 30 per cent., I *strenuously and boldly contend*, both for the *equity* and the *necessity* of imposing a *direct tax to a considerable amount on all annuities charged on land, or payable from the Exchequer*."

The ordinary reader will scarcely believe his eyes when he sees this; but when he once gets well acquainted with the descendants of the "Earls

of Monteith"; when once he gets amongst these a little while, and has heard them for a reasonable space bragging about "John with a bright sword," there is very little in this way that will surprise him. The above must, however, be understood by the reader. It means, that "*all annuities charged on land*" are to be reduced, at the same time that the interest on the National Debt is reduced; that is to say, all rent-charges, all allowances, all marriage-settlements, all jointures, and all mortgages! Here is a pretty piece of robbery; for, observe, rents are not to be reduced; leases are to be binding upon the poor tenant; and, all debts due to *landlords*, whether of common contract, bond, note, or bill, are all to be paid in full. To illustrate this monstrous piece of aristocratical infamy, suppose Sir GRIPE JOLTERHEAD to be a landowner; suppose Farmer Stump, who is a warm fellow, to rent a farm of Sir Gripe; suppose Stump's lease to bind him for ten years to come to give 500*l.* a-year for his farm; suppose him to have a mortgage on Sir Gripe's estate to the amount of ten thousand pounds, at five per cent. interest, which interest would, of course, amount to 500*l.* a-year. Now this would take from STUMP, 500*l.* a-year, and would give him 500*l.* a year; but, what would be his situation if your infamous proposition were adopted? Why, you would take thirty per cent. out of his interest on the mortgage, and you would still make him pay the full nominal amount of his rent! So that he would still have to pay 500*l.* a-year, and receive only 350*l.*! Monstrous iniquity!

But, it may be said, that STUMP, in his capacity of mortgagee, *may take in his mortgage*. This cannot be the case with the owner of the rent-charge, the settlement, the jointure, and the like; and, as if your impudence were to have no bounds, you propose to take care that even the mortgagee shall not foreclose, and get out of the landowner's clutches. You say: "It would *not be impossible to devise a special remedy for this difficulty*; since, even *without* any legislative interference, the Lord Chancellor, during the war, in the exercise of a *sound discretion*, frequently granted to the mortgager a greater length of time for the *re-payment of the principal than the contract stipulated*." — So that this would be something as nearly allied as possible to highway robbery. You say, "an equitable adjustment of contracts must be admitted to be impossible." Must it, indeed? It would puzzle you, I believe, to give any reason for the impossibility, except that such an adjustment would not permit the landowners to rob the rest of the community. Why is it impossible to reduce the rent stipulated for of the lease of a farm, any more than it is impossible to reduce the interest on a mortgage on that same farm? Why not reduce the leases of tithes, as well as reduce the mortgages on tithes? And why, pray, are not annuities, which are payable by insurance-offices, or payable out of any trade, or mercantile establishment; why are not these annuities to be reduced as well as annuities payable out of lands? But, above all things, tell me, thou son of the bright sword, why annuities payable out of rent are to be reduced, and why the rent itself is to remain unreduced!

In short, the injustice is too monstrous to be dwelt upon with patience. All this monstrous injustice is to be committed, for what? Why, in order to *preserve the aristocracy and the clergy*; and this is, as far as I can see, all the reason that you have for your proposition. Speaking of the French in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, you say,

"There was scarcely a proprietor of land who did not see his patrimony melt away, without possessing the slightest means of prevention.—This is the present fate of the landowners of this country; they are striving in vain against engagements which they cannot meet. Creditors in general receive an undue proportion of earnings; and a sure, but *destructive revolution*, is in progress, by which, if it be not arrested, the *ancient aristocracy* of these realms must ultimately be *sacrificed* to creditors and annuitants."

What! *Sacrificed*, do you say! Sacrificed to "annuitants"! O! no: you should not talk at this rate; you, an old Pittite, who talks with such reverence of Pitt and his crew: you should not say sacrificed to *annuitants*: you should say, sacrificed to our excellent friends, our dear good friends, our brother loyalists, who lent us their money to pay Hanoverians and Hessians and others with, in order for us to keep down the "Jacobins and levellers," AND TO PREVENT A REFORM OF THE PARLIAMENT. This it was that the Debt was contracted for. This is what you borrowed the money for; and now, with that aristocratical ingratitude which is proverbial, you call your kind friends "*annuitants*"; and you represent the payment of your debts as a sacrifice. You represent the payment of your debts, "AS A DESTRUCTIVE REVOLUTION!"

Here is retributive justice! Let the Unitarians and the Quakers, with Carlile at their head, now deny that there is a God, if they can. For years and years and years, you, the landowners and the clergy of this kingdom, were urging on war; were causing rivers of blood to be shed; were causing millions of human beings to perish by the sword, or by the consequences of the sword; were tearing children from parents, husbands and fathers from wives and from children; for two-and-twenty years you kept one-half of the country in a state of incessant conflict; your measures gave rise to insurrections, rebellions, imprisonments, transportings, hangings and quarterings innumerable; for those twenty-two years, you rendered miserable every human being in this country, yourselves excepted; and NOW: now, just God! after all your boasts about *victory*; after all your bragging about having *crushed the Reformers*; after all your two-and-twenty years of war to *prevent revolution*, as you called it; after all this you tell us that there is now "a DESTRUCTIVE REVOLUTION in progress"! Is there, indeed! It may be destructive to you, son of the "bright sword"; it may be destructive, also, to insolent and infamous boroughmongers; but the people of England will take care that it shall not be destructive to them.

God, thou art just! always just; but never so conspicuously just as in this case. It is notorious that the Whig Lords, and, in short, that the whole of the aristocracy and the clergy, who hated Pitt, joined him for the purpose of carrying on a war against the French, because the French had put down the *ancient aristocracy* of France; and because they apprehended a similar revolution in England, unless they could put down the revolution in France. Revolution was the thing which they said they wanted to prevent. When they were asked for *reform*, they said in so many words, that there could be no reform without a revolution. Revolution was the thing to be prevented. For this we were called upon to bleed and to pay; and when we thought the payment a little too much, OLD GEORGE ROSE (with two hundred thousand pounds of our money in his pocket), told us that we ought to think ourselves happy to have anything at all left; for that a *revolution* would have taken it all away; and

that, in short, the money that we gave to prevent the revolution, was a sort of *salvage* for what we had left; seeing that *revolution* had, as it were, already taken possession of the whole of it; but one thing, above all others, is a notorious fact, and openly avowed at the time, that the war was begun and carried on, and all to preserve the aristocracy and the Church, and to prevent a Reform of the Parliament! This is a notorious fact. It is notorious that the money was borrowed to carry on the war with: it is notorious that the loans created annuitants; and now you tell us that those loans, *those very loans*, those very debts, which were contracted to keep up the aristocracy and to enable it to trample on the people; you now tell us, that *those very debts* are causing a revolution, destructive to the ancient aristocracy, and calculated to put them under the feet of those of whom they borrowed the money! In other words, that the Jews and jobbers, and all the money-lenders, whom the aristocracy cherished and caressed, in order to get from them the means of preventing reform; that to *these Jews, jobbers and money-lenders* "*the ancient aristocracy of these realms must ultimately be sacrificed!*" These are your own words, and if they contain a true prediction (as I really believe they do), was there ever a more striking instance of the just judgments of God!

You seem to think, that it would be a great pity to pull down this aristocracy. I think, on the contrary, that it wants pulling down; or, at least, putting down a great deal lower than it now is. The picture you draw of the thing is quite ludicrous, when one reflects on the reality. Let us see this picture. Let us see what an amiable description of persons you have made these landlords to be. Speaking of one of these heroes, one of these revolution-haters, one of these jubilee-keepers, you proceed thus:

"What, then, is the alternative which presents itself to him? Either he must drag out a degraded existence on his paternal estate, exercising no more the hospitality of his ancestors, but gleaning from his tenantry their earnings or their savings, *himself the hated steward of the annuitant and mortgagee*; or, unlike the country gentleman of England in a happier day, he must leave his native home, become a wanderer abroad, or a jobber, a share-dealer, a placeman in the Metropolis. He may sell his estate indeed. This would be considered only as a transfer of property; but what agony of mind does that word convey? The snapping of a chain, linked perhaps by centuries; the destruction of the *dearest local attachments*, the dissolution of the earliest friendships, the violation of the *purest feelings of the heart*. Politicians and philosophers may talk coldly of the transfer of old family estates, of throwing immense tracts of the inferior soil out of cultivation, of burying for ever the immense capital expended on it, and of the transfusion of an agricultural into a manufacturing population; but let them remember the *ties which must be broken, the villages which must be deserted, the gardens to be laid desolate, the second nature of habits which must be altered, the hearts which must sink*, and the hands which may rebel under trials such as these."

We see, here, your accustomed originality. You talk of the landlord being the *hated steward of the annuitant*, just as if Sir Thomas Beevor had not, in his address to the public of January last, made use of the *very same words*. You are the most scandalous plagiarist, perhaps, that ever put pen to paper; but, your robbery, or intended robbery, of the lessees and the annuitants, is a crime of a more serious description. So, then, you can feel for this landowner, can you? You can feel for men of this description, who are sent wandering over the earth; you can talk of the destruction of the "*dearest local attachments*" in their case; and do you not think that poor people have attachments as well as these inse-

lent landowners? Are not their attachments, their friendships, their feelings to be attended to? And are they attended to by those laws which these landowners have got to be passed within the last twenty years only, and of which laws I spoke to you in the close of my last letter? Those must be pretty "*purest feelings of the heart,*" that could dictate Sturges Bourne's Vestry Bill; that could give a rich man six votes to the shop-keeper's or farmer's one vote; that could alter the law; that could make this alteration even in the Poor-laws of three hundred years standing; those must be "*purest feelings of the heart,*" indeed, that could give rise to the passing of a Bill like this! Almost as pure as those feelings which actuated the yeomanry cavalry at Manchester on the 16th of August, and which actuated those who could find no means of getting Bills of Indictment upon that occasion; and who could approve and applaud to the skies, thanks which were given to those yeomanry cavalry. Away, then, with your flummery stuff, about "*purest feelings of the heart*"; and about the "*ties which must be broken*" by the transfer of estates. You say nothing about the ties that are broken, when militia-men are forced from their homes; and when even local-militia-men have their *skins broken*; or, at least, had them broken, at the town of Ely, under a guard of Hanoverian troops.

But, now, leaving this soft nonsense to amuse fools, let us come to the assertions made at the close of the above paragraph. You say, that there must be *villages deserted* and *gardens laid waste*, by this transfer of property. Why should these take place? In page 86, you extend this notice still further. Your words are these:

"But the ancient landlord's position is still more hopeless: *in addition* to the public burthens, he is required to meet with a reduced rental an increased charge: ruin *must* be his fate: *his tenants and his labourers will sink with him*; the former from the weight of their fixed engagements; the latter from want of employment, and a fall of wages greater than the reduction of taxation. In such a state of affairs we must come to a tenantry without capital or leases, and to a *population eking out existence by potatoes.*"

How anxious you are to make us believe, that if this old aristocracy be not supported in all its present power and dominion; with all its present boroughs and its present sinecures; with all its present pensions, grants, and emoluments; you would fain have us believe that, unless this aristocracy be supported in this same way, we shall all of us, somehow or other, fall into decay, become poor and miserable, if not perish outright. Now, Sir James Graham of Netherby, what sense is there in this notion? Why should such a thing be? The land will not go away, nor any thing appertaining to the land. The land will be just as productive as it was before. If all the lords were to die to-morrow morning, and the parsons too, the sun would rise, and the earth would teem with vegetables just as before. Why, therefore, should the villages be deserted, and the gardens desolated? It is a monstrous mistake of yours, too, that the tenants and labourers must sink with the landlord. The tenant need not sink because the landlord sinks. It is curious enough, that having asserted that the tenant must sink with the landlord, in page 86, you take care, in page 87, to prove that, as far as the tenant is concerned, what you have said in page 86 is false. It is very clear, that if the tenant be a *tenant at will*, the fall of the landlord cannot hurt him; and you yourself have acknowledged, in the following words, that the tenant cannot be injured by the fall of the landlord, in case the former have a lease. The words to which I allude, are these:

"A lease is now a *gambling policy of insurance* on the value of the currency for a given period, and, in fact, the loss eventually and *invariably falls on the landlord*; for if, during the currency of the lease, the coin be depreciated, the tenant adheres to his bargain, and derives the entire profit; if the value of the currency be restored, then, as we have lately seen in 1821 and 1822, the strict letter of the lease is of no avail to the landlord: the tenant becomes insolvent, and the *contract is abrogated*; or the force of public opinion, in this country more powerful than law, compels the landlord to reduce the rent to the full amount of the altered value of money; and every such alteration, therefore, is certain loss to him."

Hence, then, it is clear that the tenant suffers nothing by the fall of the landlord; and, as to the labourers, what is it to them who is the owner of the land; or, at least, how is it possible for the labourers to be worse off than they now are? The labourers now are impoverished to such an extent, that they can be hardly said to live. Their misery is so great, that there is no man, who has any care for his character, who will say that he believes it possible for a poorer and more miserable people to exist. The poor-rates, intended for their relief, are made use of for the purpose of ascertaining how small a quantity of food they can be made to exist upon; that quantity of food is allowed them, and no more. This is their state, under the present landowners; and, if you can find out nothing worse than this state, how are the labourers to "*sink* with the landlord"! Why, Sir, it is the poverty and necessities of the old landlord, or rather, perhaps, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, his extravagance or greediness, that causes the present poverty of the labourers. What a monstrous thing, then, to suppose, that you can make this labourer look upon it as a misfortune that there should be a change of landowners. Yet, as we shall by-and-bye see, you call upon the common people, and particularly the labourers, to come and assist the landowners to strip the fundholders and the mortgagees of their property.

There is one passage of your book, more insolent, perhaps, than all the rest; and here again I have to repeat the remark, that none but a man who belonged to a class, accustomed to domineer over persons of superior understanding; accustomed to regard the "Earls of Monteith" and "John with the bright sword" as giving their descendants a right to be insolent and vain and stupid and impudent beyond measure; that none but a man, habituated to a way of thinking like this, could have put these pages upon paper; and of opinion with me upon this point, must every one be who reads the following passage in page 16 of your pamphlet:

"It is the boast and pride of the landowners, that the most important establishments of our polity have been founded on their estates, as on a rock from which they cannot be moved. The ministers of our Established Church derive their revenues from land—the poor, the aged, and the infirm, in aid of their necessities, *have a legal claim on land*—the injured and the oppressed, who cannot obtain justice for themselves, or punish the wrong-doer at their own expense, cast the burthen also on land: thus *religion, charity, and justice have the guarantee of landed property in this country, and are its safeguards in return*. All those who value *genuine piety, the pure offspring of our Established Church*, and who, unprejudiced by the abuse of the Poor-laws, still venerate their humane origin, and appreciate their utility, when cautiously administered; all these (and they form the best part of our community), will strenuously resist any change of the security, *any transfer of the charge from land to funds*. The clergy and the landowners, the poor and the proprietors, are *coparceners in the soil*; they must stand or fall together on their existing tenure: they may fall indeed; but *religion, and mercy, and justice, will fall with them*; and they who are buried in these ruins are happier than they who survive them."

Let arrogance itself match that, if it can. Yes, we know that the poor, the aged and infirm, have a "*legal claim upon the land.*" We know that they have this claim; and we know, also, that those who are neither aged nor infirm, but merely poor from want of employment, have a legal claim upon the land; and we know but too well, in what manner that claim is satisfied. We know very well, that the allowance given to these poor, by order of the landowners themselves and the parsons, is, in Norfolk, threepence a-day, to a grown man; in Berkshire, less food than is given to the felons in the gaol; and the Manchester newspapers, now lying before me, say, that the poor in the parish of Colne are allowed one shilling for a grown person, for a week; that is to say, a little less than SEVEN FARTHINGS a-day each, which is not enough to buy three-quarters of a pound of bread per day, with nothing for drink, for lodging, clothing, fuel! So that, the poor are a pretty sort of "*co-parceners in the soil*"; they have a pretty specimen of that "*religion, mercy and justice,*" which you say will *all full* with the landlords; this is a pretty specimen of that *charity*, which you say is guaranteed by the landed property of this country; a pretty effect of that "*genuine piety*, the pure offspring of our Established Church": yes, these seven farthings a-day, the treadmill, the game-laws and the new trespass-laws, these show that the oppressed in England, "*who cannot obtain justice for themselves, cast the burthen upon the land*": these are pretty things for you to say, and a pretty deal of impudence you must have to say them, when the returns before Parliament have proved, that a single gaol has sometimes contained fifty men, confined there for offences against the SPORTS of these merciful and gentle landowners; aye, and when it is equally notorious, from facts founded on official returns laid before the Parliament, that one-third part of the prisoners in all the gaols in England were, only a little while ago, persons imprisoned, and many of them for long periods, because they had committed acts tending to disturb the SPORTS of these landowners; and these gentle creatures, "*the agony of whose minds*" on parting with their estates, you so feelingly describe; of whose "*dearest local attachments*" whose "*earliest friendships*" and of whose "*purest feelings of the heart,*" you speak in a style so enchanting, that one would almost think you were writing the adventures of John with the bright sword. At any rate, one would never imagine that you were writing about the fellows that coolly prosecute men for straggling across a field or being in pursuit of a hare. One would never imagine that you were talking about people like those, who, but a little while ago, sent a woman, more than seventy years of age, to gaol, for taking up a hare that had been caught in her garden, where it came to eat her cabbages. You think all this right, do you? You think it right, that the people should be harassed and punished in this manner, for your sports? Retain that opinion, if you like; but, be not, then, such an egregious dupe to your own vanity and presumption as to believe, that the people will not wish you at the devil! Or, at the very least, will not rejoice with exceeding great joy at any cause, no matter what, that shall bundle you out of your estates. For these twenty years I have been exhorting the landowners to soften their hand towards the common people; not to rule them with a rod of iron, as they have done; to live in harmony with them; to let them be at peace; to let them enjoy something like liberty. On the contrary, during that twenty years, they have grown harder and harder towards the working people; and yet you have the p resumption to believe, that these ill-used working-people, these despised,

these trodden down people, will now join these very landowners ; and that, too, in order to perpetrate an act, which would be outrageously unjust in the first place, and, in the next place, which must do infinite mischief to the common people themselves, by ruining three hundred thousand families in the middle rank of life, and thereby making a dreadful addition to the present mass of poor and needy.

The way in which you speak of the fundholders shows pretty clearly, that you and those whom you converse with in general, think that you shall have little difficulty in committing the robbery which you so coolly contemplate. It is quite evident, that it is a matter about which you have long been conversing in a very familiar manner. You seem to have everything ready cut and dry for it ; and, without seeming to think the least in the world about consequences ; about any blowings-up or anything of that kind, you seem anxious only about the time of doing the thing, which time you seem to desire to come as quickly as possible. "The number of creditors is," say you, "known to be small, the whole body of fundholders not exceeding 280,000 persons ; and the number of debtors is the entire community, composed of all who contribute a portion of a single tax to the interest of the Debt."

Bravo ! What a clever man you are ! So, you have been looking into this matter, have you ? You have been calculating your relative strength ! Now, I believe there to be more than three hundred thousand fundholders. There were more than three hundred and fifty thousand, in 1811 ; that I know. However, for argument's sake, be it as you say. 280,000 is a number greater than that of the farmers ; I mean, the farmers of 100 acres and upwards, in England and Wales. This is my belief ; besides, here are two hundred and eighty thousand proprietors, you will please to observe ; and, perhaps, you may be surprised to be told that this number exceeds the number of freeholders that vote in the whole kingdom of England and Wales, in all the counties, at a general election. There are, then, 280,000 PROPRIETORS. They are, then, the heads of 280,000 families, and, we must suppose, in a case where all are proprietors, about seven to a family, upon an average. You will, therefore, find them, pretty nearly *two millions of people*, none of whom, observe, can now be paupers ! Now, I know very well, that these people are of themselves, if the thing were to come to a fight, nothing at all in comparison to the landlords and the clergy, PROVIDED THESE LATTER HAVE THE PEOPLE HEARTILY WITH THEM. And, incredible as it may seem, you suppose, and you have the audacity to assert it, that the landlords and the clergy *have* the people with them. What you say upon this part of the subject is truly astonishing. It is an instance of to what an extent arrogance is capable of producing infatuation.

You seem to admit, that, *at present*, the people have no very great affection for the landlords and the parsons ; but you seem confident, that the people are to be gained by them in a moment ! If this were so, it would be a valuable secret to the makers of the Game Laws. You say, that the landlords, "*must win back the kindly feelings of the people*"; and, what is more, you point out the way for them to do it. In his way, this mode of winning back the people's affections ; this mode of putting all to rights again, of making the poacher's father forget that his own was transported for endeavouring to catch a hare ; this mode of making the people at Manchester forget the yeomanry cavalry ; this mode of making the small occupant of house or land forget Sturges

“Bourne’s Bill”; this mode, in short, of obliterating the recollection of thirty years of ever-hardening laws, of new punishments before unknown to Englishmen, of suspensions of Habeas-Corpus Acts, of Power-of-Imprisonment Bills, of Sidmouth’s circulars, of new Treason Laws, of SIX-ACTS, one of which dooms to banishment for life any man that shall utter what has a *tendency* to bring either House of Parliament into contempt; the mode of doing all this is the most simple in the whole world! It is nothing but such an alteration of the Corn Laws as would give us “*free importation*,” with only *fifteen shillings fixed duty upon each quarter of wheat!* and fifteen shillings, let it be observed, is three-fourths of the price of foreign wheat now in the river Thames! Faith, Sir James Graham of Netherby, you have to be taken down many a peg yet, before you are brought to the standard of the times which you will, I hope, have to live in.

But, let us now, by way of a concluding extract, hear what you have to say upon this subject of aid and assistance to be given by the people to the landowners. It seems monstrous to suppose, that the working-classes should wish to see 300,000 families of the middle class of life stripped of their all. It very soon would be their all; for though you do not positively say that you would take, even 30 per cent.; still, it is very clear that you mean that, over and above the constant fifteen shillings duty upon wheat. If you were to take, even 10 per cent., the funds would fall down to the price, even of Colombian bonds, and, very soon, of Spanish bonds; so that, in fact, you would take the whole: you would totally ruin and bring to poverty, and add to the misery of the working-classes, that of 300,000 families, now proprietors in the middle rank of life; making, altogether, about 2,000,000 of persons. And now, let us hear, how it is that you have persuaded yourself, that the landowners would be backed by the working classes in this enterprise. The whole passage is well worthy of the attention of the public; for, silly as it may be, and as it is, it expresses the sentiments of the landowners in general. It expresses the sentiments of those, who, as you say, have all the legal power in their hands, if they have but the *pluck* to make use of it; it being always understood, however, that, though legal, it may be exercised, in a ticklish case like this, at some risk. The passage is as follows, and it is the manifesto of the landowners against the fundholders and against the Ministers.

“This concession [letting corn come in with a *fixed duty of 15s. a quarter of wheat*] will win back the kindly feelings of the people; and let not the landowners lose this great advantage,—let them rivet the gratitude of the community to their cause; let them exert all their power, and insist on the revision of Mr. Peel’s Act of 1819,—an act no less fatal to the landowner than to the payer of taxes,—an act now about to come into full operation,—an act which, from its first introduction, goaded the people to insurrection; and the returning influence of which has not failed to produce the same alarming consequences. Here the landowners may, with safety, make their stand: the position is impregnable: the payers of taxes, the productive classes, are ready to defend it: *substantial justice is on our side*: and who are they that are against us?—the *Annuitants, the Fundholders, and the Economists*; a body which the landowners, IF TRUE TO THEMSELVES, and in concert with the people, cannot fail to defeat. * * *

“* * I have shown the terms on which, in my humble judgment, it would be wise to capitulate; I have proved both the policy and general equity of these terms, and the power possessed by the landowners to obtain them; but, to be successful, the nobility and gentry must act in the strictest union: they will be opposed by the monied interest, as by one man; they will be opposed by the present

Ministers, few of whom are connected with land, or with the Aristocracy—some of whom, by far the most able, having risen, by their talents, from an humble origin, are disposed, very naturally, to envy the existence of any power in this country which genius cannot win, and which birth alone bestows. The landowners will be strenuously opposed, but they will be powerfully supported; they will be supported by every payer of tax throughout the kingdom,—by the peasant and the artisan, by the merchant and the manufacturer. Then, indeed, they will fight on the right ground; they will be backed by the great body of the people. Interests will be re-united, which ought never to have been severed; a nation will be arrayed against an administration; millions against thousands; and the issue of the contest will not long be doubtful."

Here it is: here is your grand reliance for success. The Corn Bill was passed with soldiers drawn up round the Houses of Parliament; it was passed in spite of *thousands of petitions* against it; it has caused a mass of misery indescribable; and after all this, this law is not proposed by you to be repealed; but it is to be so altered, as merely to make the duty upon a quarter of wheat fifteen shillings, which is, upon an average of years, one-half as much as the whole price of the quarter of wheat in France! This you represent as a most gracious act on the part of the landowners; an act "to win back the kindly feelings of the people," and to "rivet their gratitude to the landowners." Having settled the point, you proceed to describe the nature of the contest and that of its issue. Your position is impregnable; you have justice on your side, you have the aid of the people; and you cannot fail to defeat the enemy! The "nobility and gentry" must act, you say, in the strictest union; they will be opposed, you say, by the monied men; they will be opposed by the present low-born Ministers, who envy you your high birth; but, the landowners, you say, will be supported by every payer of tax throughout the kingdom! Indeed! Why, then, they will have plenty of support; for, where is the creature with a mouth to swallow or a carcass to be covered, that does not, in this land of taxes, pay a tax? The landowners, you say, will be supported by the *labourer and the artisan*. That is your mistake, I can assure you. You seem really to contemplate a battle: you say that the landowners will then *fight* on the right ground; that they will be backed by the great body of the people; that a nation will be arrayed against an administration; that millions will be arrayed against thousands; and that the issue of the contest will not long be doubtful!

Faith! This is coming to the point: this is fulfilling my prophecy as expressed in my motto. The open quarrel is taking place; and be you assured, that you lose your estates, or that we have reform of Parliament, one or the other! Towards the close of the last quoted passage, you say, that the great body of the people will join the landowners; and that then "*interests will be re-united which ought never to have been severed.*" Now this is a very important concession; and the fact is most interesting to the whole kingdom. The people, you say, the main body of the people, "*have been severed from the landowners.*" I have said this in print five hundred times, I am certain; and it was with the Register lying open before you, that you wrote all that you have said about reconciling the people to the landowners. I have always said that the landowners could never save themselves, except the people were reconciled to them first. Thus far, then, you have repeated my sentiments; but you have omitted my *method*, by which the landlords were to win back the kind feelings of the people. My method was, putting all the laws as to game, as to tres-

pass, as to the matters of Ellenborough's Act, as to treason, as to libel, as to punishments ; my project was, to repeal all laws upon these subjects, passed since George the Third came to the throne ; and I have always insisted, that, unless this were done to begin with, and that unless all which is stated in the Norfolk Petition were most fully and amply agreed to by the landowners ; and that especially unless there were an efficient and radical reform of the Parliament, the people of England would be the most stupid as well as the most dastardly wretches upon the face of the whole earth, if they were not to resist, by every legal means in their power, every attempt to deduct, though in the amount of only one single farthing, from the interest of the National Debt. I am fully persuaded that the people in general are decidedly of my opinion ; and, therefore, Sir James Graham of Netherby, if you are really for a fight, you must e'en bring out "John with the bright sword" ; for, without such supernatural assistance, to a certainty you will be defeated.

I have, for three-and-twenty years, been an advocate for a reduction, for a very great reduction, and, indeed, I am now for an annihilation complete of the funded debt. But I have never been for this vile robbery of the fundholders, though I have been constantly accused of it by the ruffians of the London press ; and though, while they accuse me of this intended robbery, they had before them those writings, which always protested a desire to do whatever was done upon principles of equity. Before the date of the Norfolk Petition, I had been abused, for just twenty years, on account of my opinions relative to this National Debt. I had always been misrepresented, belied ; I had always had my statements and arguments garbled. In short, there were three hundred villanous newspapers, and fifty magazines and reviews, or thereabouts, constantly at work, some or the other of them, to disfigure and mar all that I have said upon this subject. I several times put forth explicit and formal declarations, in order to counteract the effect of these villanous publications. But they were merely literary articles of my own ; they were my assertions and opinions, and nothing more ; except in the case of the Hampshire Petition, agreed to, on Portsdown Hill, on the 10th of February 1817. At the Kent County Meeting, which was in June, 1822, I moved, and the county agreed to, a prayer for a *just* reduction of the interest of the Debt. This got regularly before the House of Commons ; but, there was no time to draw up anything at any length. When the county of Norfolk was about to meet, that was another matter. I, therefore, in the petition which I had the very great honour to submit to that county on the 3rd of January 1823 ; in that petition, I endeavoured clearly and fully to express what I meant on this important subject. That petition was passed by that great and public-spirited county ; that petition is recorded in the journals of the House of Commons ; I have read that petition a hundred times since it was passed, and each succeeding reading only tends to confirm me in the truth, the justice and the wisdom of every part of it. No robbery does that petition contemplate : it contemplates a complete deliverance of the country ; but, always by just, by honourable, by reasonable and by merciful means. That petition scorns to touch the interest of the Debt, until all other means of reduction have been resorted to, and particularly until the aristocracy of the Church have been made to refund that which they have unjustly received out of the taxes. By this petition, which, in fact, only repeated that of HAMPSHIRE, will I abide. "Here will I hold ; if there be a God, and that

“there is, all nature cries through all her works, he must delight in *justice*; and those whom he delights in must be happy.” If there be a Devil, and there is, the existence of Boroughmongers proclaims to all the earth, he must delight in *injustice*, and those whom he delights in must be damned. As clear as day-light is the justice of the Norfolk Petition; and not less clear is the injustice, the cruelty, the infamy of those who would plunder the widow and the orphan, while the landowner should be left in quiet possession of his estate and his sinecures.

And now, Sir James Graham, let me, by way of adieu, just ask you, what could induce you, after writing several pages (not less than forty) with the *Register* open before you all the time; what could induce you, after writing so many pages upon the fatal effects of Peel's Bill and upon the evils arising from **NOBODY HAVING FORESEEN** the consequences of that bill; let me ask you, son-in-law of the seventh Earl of Galloway, what, after all this, could induce you to put into print the following sentence in page 84: “every man, of *any degree of authority*, has admitted, distinctly, that he underrated, in 1819, the pressure which the “return to the ancient standard would occasion?”—You wrote this with the *Register* open before you, and what could induce you to say, that “every man of *any authority*, each admitted,” and so forth? What could induce you to say this, when you had the gridiron prophecy before your eyes and under your hand? I will ask you no more questions about it; but will conclude by observing, that if you have not named me, I have not been backward in naming you.

Now go Sir James Graham, of Netherby: invoke the shades of the great “Earls of Monteith” and of “John with the bright sword,” and prepare for that fight, the plan of which you have so judiciously laid down. If you have only a small portion of sense left, however, you will, in future, hold your tongue, learn to entertain modest desires, and think yourself well off if you preserve a fragment of your estate, which, however small it might be, would exceed the deserts of him who has had the audacity to propose to lay, for the sole interest of his own order, a heavy and perpetual tax upon the bread of all the rest of the community, and to suggest, at the same time, the propriety of withholding from the lenders of the money to carry on the war, that interest which he, amongst others, has contracted to pay, and which withholding would plunge 300,000 families from the middle ranks of life down into the depths of poverty and despair.

WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

TO THE DISTRESSED MANUFACTURERS.

(Political Register, January, 1827.)

MY FRIENDS,

Kensington, 24th January, 1827.

The subject of the Corn Bill being one of the first which the Ministers have pledged themselves to bring before the Parliament when it shall assemble next month, it may be useful to you, or, at least, you may like to have my opinions relative to such measure, before the measure be brought forward; and, I have so anxious a desire to do you good, or, even, to give you any trifling pleasure, that I set about this task with singularly great satisfaction. To be sure, it would seem to be next to impossible for me to lay down any principle, or to use any argument, which has not been laid down or used by me heretofore. But, besides that the circumstances in which a thing is said, have some effect upon the saying of it; besides that men who have their private avocations to pursue, forget and stand in need of being reminded; besides these, there is, every year, a certain portion of mere children who become boys, and of boys who become thinking young men. Therefore, repetition, in such a case, and in a work like mine, is no more to be found fault with than are new editions of spelling-books or catechisms.

Before, however, I enter upon the subject of the Corn Bill itself, let me request your attention to some of the strange things which we now behold. In some parts of the north, particularly, and in several parts of the kingdom, theft and robbery are become so common, that, at last, men seem to begin to doubt whether society will not be dissolved, even in this way. In the meanwhile, severity of punishment has gone on increasing; the gaols enlarging; new sorts of prisons; new sorts of prison-discipline; and, let those nations hear it, whom Mr. CANNING threatens with the "moral force," as he calls it; let those nations hear that, in some cases, and, particularly, in the county of Surrey, to such a degree of refinement, to such mathematical precision has the punishment of criminals been reduced, that the prisoners are actually WEIGHED, at certain periods, in order to ascertain the effect which the punishments, of various sorts, have upon their bodies! In my last *Register* I mentioned, that the hellish Scotch writers, those pests of England and disgrace to all honest Scotchmen; those detested wretches, had published a proposition for selling the dead bodies of paupers from the poor-house, to the surgeons for dissection, in order to lighten the burthen of the poor-rates! To be sure, the monstrous wretch who put this upon paper, did not put his name; but, it was published in the London newspapers, and I have not perceived that it has anywhere met with reprobation. The malefactor who robs on the highway, who breaks a house, who commits any felony short of that of murder; short of that of deliberate, wilful murder; any criminal short of this receives from the law no infliction of disgrace upon his dead body;

It is only the wilful murderer and the traitor, whose body the law consigns to the hands of the dissector. But, here is a monster, or, rather, a band of monsters, who, in the capital of that country, in which the courts established by ALFRED still exist; here are a band of monsters to propose to sell to the surgeons for dissection, the bodies of those, who, after enduring all the various degrees of anguish which are found on the several steps to the poor-house, die in that poor-house, not only without having committed crime; but, possibly, having been reduced to poverty, having actually been brought into that very poor-house in consequence of their forbearance to enrich themselves at the expense of others, in consequence of their generosity, and, perhaps, in consequence, even, of their tenderness, their compassion and their charity.

Why, my friends, did our ancestors ever dream that England would come to this pass? That lying devil, ANNA BRODIE,* is endeavouring to make the public believe, that I am a Roman Catholic, and the woman, drunk or sober, has the audacity to assert, distinctly to assert, that I have had my daughters educated as Roman Catholics, and that they took letters of recommendation to the chief of the Jesuits at Saint Omer's, last year! In the Wife of Bath's words, I say of her: "All this thou sayest, and all thou sayest is lies." ANNA has recently appeared two or three times in the Court of King's Bench, and, in one case, particularly, for her infamous slanders respecting the private affairs of a family. ANNA is surprised, I dare say, that she, "notwithstanding her coverture," is thus handled by judges and juries; but, ANNA should remember the observation of SWIFT, namely, "That when women depart from the softness, the mildness, the modesty belonging to their sex; when they talk loudly, impudently, and clench their fists and stamp their feet, they ought to be considered as bullying men, and ought to be kicked down stairs accordingly"; and, if I recollect rightly, the Dean goes on very wisely to observe, that to look upon such women in any other light, and to bestow on them any other sort of treatment, would be to do gross injustice to those women who conduct themselves in a manner suitable to their sex. Remember this now, Anna: you have got a Doctor of Divinity for your husband, and he is rector (that is to say, *ruler* of the souls) of the parish of East Bourne, in Sussex. Ask your Doctor of Divinity whether the Doctor of Divinity that I have just quoted is not right. Whether he will be man enough to tell you what he thinks, is more than I can say; but, I shall be at East Bourne some time in the month of May, and then I will take the liberty to ask the Doctor how he makes shift to get on with one who has been so very foul-tongued with me, and so monstrous a liar into the bargain.

But, though I am a Protestant, and all whom I have had the educating of are Protestants, it would be not only to discover great ignorance, but great baseness, too, if I were not to recollect, and to remind my readers, also, that, when the Roman Catholic religion was the religion of England, a wretch, or set of wretches, who should have proposed, who should even have talked of, condemning people to be dissected, because they died after having lived some time upon alms, would have been torn to atoms.

* Mr. COBBETT used to apply this name to the *Times* newspaper, which was registered at the Stamp-Office as the property of ANNA BRODIE and two other ladies. Mrs. BRODIE was the wife of the Reverend Dr. BRODIE of Eastbourne in Sussex.—ED.

O, no! such thoughts as these never entered men's minds until these *enlightened* days of funding and free-trade! Nor did it ever before occur to the mind of man, that a King of England would issue instructions to the Archbishops and Bishops to cause collections to be made from door to door for such of his labouring subjects as were in distress. The law of the land was, for pretty nearly a thousand years, that the poor were to be maintained out of the titles and other endowments of the Church. Since that, the law of the land has been, and it is now, that every indigent person shall have a suitable maintenance out of *the land*. The law is, also, that men shall *not beg*; that they shall be *punished for begging*; that to beg is a *crime*; and, while there are boards stuck up about almost all the parishes in England, forbidding begging, stating the punishment which begging is to receive; while these notices every where stare us in the face, the parish-officers and others, even in some cases with the beades to precede them, are actually going a begging from door to door! It may be worth your knowing, that this begging work has met with but a very cold reception in London and Westminster. The begging agents have been distinctly told, in many, many places, that money would not be grudged to the *poor manufacturers*, but that it was not easy to perceive why the tradesmen of London should give their money to pay poor-rates *due from the landowners in the North*.

It is impossible for any man in his senses to believe, that a state of things, that can have engendered the above-mentioned novelties, should be of permanent duration. It must have an end; and that end may be not very distant. We find the distress, as it is called, to extend itself all over the kingdom. At Sheffield, at Paisley and Glasgow: all over Yorkshire and Lancashire, in Nottinghamshire and in Norfolk: everywhere do we hear of distress; and, excepting in the lying columns of newspapers, no man can see the smallest chance of a change for the better. There are some persons, however, who are of such a hoping disposition, that they are always expecting that some change for the better will take place, without ever being able to give the smallest reason for such an expectation. Some poet says that hope sticks to us to the last; and hope is a very good thing; but, hoping and *wishing* are things very different from each other. For there to be hope, there must be some *reason* as a foundation. A man may wish with or without reason, as I may wish that I could fly over the moon; and this sort of wishing it is, that assumes the name of hope in the politicians to whom I have alluded. These hopers rely, amongst other things, upon the effects of a *change in the Corn Laws*; it is worth while, therefore, for us to consider, before this grand expected measure can be adopted, what reason there is for believing that such change, if it take place, will have a tendency to remove the present distress.

First, however, is it certain that any change at all will be made in the Corn Laws; next, what sort of change is it likely to be, if it take place; and, if a change take place, such as to admit even of a free importation of corn, what effect will that produce with regard to those who are now suffering distress?

Some people think, that, after all the talk about it, no alteration at all in the Corn Laws will take place. The subject must be brought forward, and there must and will be a great deal of discussion. The result may be, a Bill passed in one House and rejected in the other; but, I do not think that this will be the result; because then all the blame, coming

from a very numerous class of persons, would rest distinctly and visibly upon the Lords; for though, as to all practical purposes, the two Houses are one and the same, all the world does not see that: the forms indicate the contrary: and forms, in cases like this, pass for substances. I, therefore, think, that a Bill will pass, and that an alteration will be made.

As to the sort of alteration; or, rather, the degree, I suppose that it will consist of a little, and a very little, lowering of the price of English wheat, at which foreign wheat will be admitted. There will be a monstrous deal said about remunerating prices: poor WEBB HALL* will seem to have been conjured up from the grave. All his doctrines will be repeated; and we shall hear, from one end of the country to the other, of the necessity of giving to the land such prices as shall enable it to pay the tithes, the poor-rates, the county-rates, and some other burthens, which, as the land-people are always asserting, "*fall exclusively upon the land,*" which phrase is, I verily believe, the foolishest that ever issued from the mouth or dropped from the pen of mortal man. It is curious to observe, that this notion of tithes, county-rates, and poor-rates falling *exclusively* upon the land, is a thing wholly new. Tithes have existed in England about twelve hundred years; and, until since the time of Pitt, and during his time, there never was such an idea in existence as that of the tithes coming out, finally, of the pocket of the farmer; or, as he is now-a-days called, the "*agriculturist,*" which accursed hard word seems to have been made for the express purpose of rendering this new batch of doctrines even more harsh and disgusting than it otherwise would be. I wonder that it does not come into the head of my neighbour Tucker, the tallow-chandler, that the tax upon his candles falls *exclusively upon him*. Mr. Tucker is not such a fool: he knows very well that those who buy his candles pay the tax and not he; and if he were a landlord or a farmer, would not he say that those who eat his wheat paid the tithe, in the same manner that those who burn his candles pay the tax? Would not he say, that, as all the candle-burners in England pay all the tax upon candles, so all the wheat-eaters in England pay the tithes upon all the wheat that is grown in England? This is what he would say; because this is what would be said by every man of common sense. It is hardly possible to believe that any one would be so foolish or so perverse as to say that there is a difference in the two cases, because the tithe can be taken in kind, while the tax is taken in money; for, in the first place, the tithe is taken in money in nineteen cases out of every twenty; and, in the next place, if the candle-maker were to give one candle out of ten to the tax-gatherer, instead of giving him one penny out of ten on the price of the candles, where would the difference be? Seeing, therefore, that no candle-maker, no maltster, no currier, no tobacco-man, no cotton-printer; seeing that no creature upon earth who has to pay taxes upon the article that he makes for sale; seeing that no one of these has ever been beast enough to pretend, that the tax falls *exclusively upon him*, upon what ground is it, I wish to know, that the land-people believe, or affect to believe, that the tithes fall exclusively upon them?

Precisely the same argument is applicable to the poor-rates, the road-rates, the county-rates, and all those charges, if there be any others,

* Mr. WEBB HALL was a large farmer, or yeoman, of Somersetshire, and an active supporter of the "agricultural interest."—ED.

which the land-people pretend fall exclusively upon them. When a pot of beer is put into the hands of the drinker, and he is called upon for sixpence in the way of payment, there is, perhaps, a penny for barley, a halfpenny for hops: all the rest is for tax on malt, tax on beer, tax on the iron of the barrel, tax on the barrel-staves very likely, tax on the house that the beer is sold in, tax on the brew-house, tax on the harness of the horses that draw out the beer, tax on the landlord's house that sells the beer, tax on his permission to sell it, tax on the candles that he burns in serving it out, tax on the fire that he burns to warm the drinkers, tax on the tawdry gown of the dirty wench that brings it up out of the cellar, tax on his windows that give him light when he does not burn candles, tax on the deal-boards that make the benches for the drinkers to sit upon; in short, the whole is tax, all but three half-pence at most, and this, too, you will observe, exclusive of all the farmer's taxes upon the barley and all the tithe which he has paid or yielded on that barley, and also exclusive of both tithe and tax which the hop-grower has paid upon the hops. The truth is, that if there were no tax at all upon the barley after it left the farmer, and through the whole progress of the malt to the lips of the drinker, beer of the present average strength would come to the drinker's lips for even less than three halfpence a pot; and, if it were such good stuff as that, a pottle of which I intend to send to Doctor BLACK* one of these days, and which pottle, if he drink it in the course of two hours, I pledge myself shall give him ten hours of the soundest sleep that he ever had in his life; even a pot of such stuff as this would not cost three-pence. Very well, then: if the beer-drinker, when he gives a sixpence for a pot of beer, gives fourpence half-penny for tax, and three half-pence for beer, what would he say to the publican who should affect to believe that all the tax upon beer fell exclusively upon the publicans? And, if this would be a gross absurdity; if it would be a piece of ignorance or impudence unparalleled in the publican, what is it, I pray, in the farmer, to pretend that the tithes, the poor-rates, and so forth, fall exclusively upon him? When he comes with his bushel of wheat, and asks six and sixpence a bushel for it, which is much about what he gets at the present time, "What is that for?" says the miller: "why, you get forty of these bushels to an acre, and you only scratch the ground about a little and throw in a few seeds!"—"Aye," says the farmer, "but I have rent to pay."—"Yes," says the other, "what, thirty shillings an acre, and you ask two hundred and sixty shillings for the wheat of an acre!"—"Well," says the farmer, "but you do not consider that the parson has taken away a tenth part of my wheat in tithes; that I have paid poor-rates to the amount of thirty or forty shillings an acre; that I have paid road-rates, county-rates; that I have paid tax upon my leather, tax upon my iron, tax upon my windows, tax upon the rotten cotton that my wife and daughters wear, (and, rotten cottons they must have, or they will plague me worse than the couchgrass); tax upon my malt; tax upon my own fat after it is turned into candles; that I have paid all the taxes that all my labourers pay, and a part of all the taxes that my blacksmith and wheelwright have paid; so that you see, my friend, that my bushel of wheat, though I sell it for six and sixpence, leaves

* Mr. JOHN BLACK, many years Editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, and to whom Mr. COBBETT gave the addition of "Doctor" so completely that he was familiarly called Dr. BLACK ever afterwards. —ED.

“me devilish little for myself.”—“I see it clear enough,” answers the other, “and, therefore, here is the six and sixpence, which I shall make the baker pay me, and which he will make the weaver, the spinner, the shoemaker, the blacksmith, the hod-man, or the chimney-sweeper, pay him: this is all true; but, pray, my good honest farmer, never let me hear you again pretend that the tithes, poor-rates, road-rates, and so forth, ‘fall exclusively upon the land!’”

After this, I will not insult you, my good friends, by saying another word upon this part of the subject. It must, now, be clear to you, if it were not before, that, out of a certain place, which, for reasons easier to be understood than safe to explain; out of that certain place, a man ought to be regarded as a born idiot, or possessed of idiotism acquired by infinite pains, to be capable of being persuaded, that the land bears any burthen exclusively; to be capable of being persuaded that any sum of money or any portion of produce taken from the owner or occupier; that the amount of these do not distribute themselves throughout the community, and finally fall in exact and due proportions upon all the consumers of all the produce of the land. The pretence, therefore, that the land bears exclusive burthens is wholly groundless; and, the notion is, as I said before, one that never entered into the minds of our forefathers. Poverty and misery have always a tendency to bereave men of their sober senses, and, particularly, of their sense of fair-dealing and of probity. The funding system has, at last, bereft the land-people of their senses. They see their estates melting away; and they find out this pretended cause for it; namely, that they do not get a *remunerating price* for their produce. It is strange that it never entered into their heads to carry this principle of theirs further than the wheat-stack, or, at least, the corn-stack. The corn does not form above a third or a fourth part; nay, not a fourth part, in amount, of the produce of the land. The baker is a poor thing, compared to the butcher, not to mention the clothier and the linen-draper, and divers other persons who sell us the produce of the land. Get upon a hill half a mile high and look round you: see what the corn-land is in extent, compared with the woods and the pastures of various descriptions. It is, comparatively, but a little patch here and a little patch there. How happens it, then, that the wisecrates of remunerating prices never say a word about the price of *wood* or of *meat*? Why do they not call for a wood-bill or a meat-bill? For, observe, they fall in price as the corn falls in price: not caused by the fall of the corn; but falling from the same cause that makes the corn fall. Poor WEBB HHALL was strangely puzzled, when, at a time when he was bellowing for a Corn Bill that would drive the bonded corn back to foreign countries; he was strangely puzzled when he was asked, how the price of *coppice-wood* came to fall, even in a greater degree than that of the corn had fallen, when it was notorious that coppice-wood had never been imported, even to the amount of one hundred of limekiln faggots. This puzzled the head of poor WEBB exceedingly. He was, at last, the subject of general laughter; but, those who laugh at others, do not always take care to avoid being laughed at themselves; and, accordingly, we shall now hear as much bleating about remunerating prices as ever; and, some miserable attempt will be made to pacify those who are crying for an alteration in the Corn Laws, and, at the same time, to *keep up the price of corn*.

This, however; this last, namely, to keep up the price of corn, which means, if it have any sense at all in it, keeping up the price of all the

produce of the land ; this last is impossible to be effected, without driving the gold out of the country ; without repealing the Small-note Bill passed last year ; without again returning to Bank-restriction, or without producing another " Late Panic" ; without one or the other of these, it is as impossible to make corn dear in England, or to keep it any length of time even at the present price ; this is as impossible as it is for Mr. CANNING to utter one single sentence of common sense upon any of these subjects. There would appear to be a sort of predestinated blindness upon this subject. Noblemen, commonly called Lords, in a lump, are, as a sort of fashionable talk, generally represented as men that never think at all. I will not apply the term which is commonly applied to them ; and, as far as my very limited personal knowledge of them has gone, I must confess that I have discovered nothing in them to justify this vulgar opinion. But, at any rate, they have sense enough to be trusted to walk about without leaders ; they do not, when they ride out, plunge into rivers, or go down chalk-pits ; they can be trusted to cut their own victuals at dinner without danger of laying open their cheeks with the knife, or running the fork into their eyes. One may suppose all this, to be sure, without implying any great degree of elevation in the scale of intellect. Yet, it implies humanity ; what my American philosopher calls the species, *homo sapiens*. Let it be on the lowest scale, if the disputant will insist upon it (but which, observe, I myself by no means admit) ; let it be on a scale but one degree above that class of negroes who do not know what causes the smart when they are cut with a knife : that is quite enough for the present purpose ; quite enough to excite astonishment in me, that any one nobleman in England should not see that it is impossible to keep up the price of corn without producing one or other of the effects which I have enumerated at the beginning of this paragraph.

They have seen the corn continue steadily to fall in price from the year 1819 to the middle of 1822, while they most carefully excluded grain of every description from the country. They have seen a Bill passed that caused an increase of the paper-money, and they have seen the wheat rise gradually with that increase from an average of about four and sixpence to an average of about nine shillings a bushel. They have seen " Late Panic " come, and the paper drawn, in part, in again, accompanied by a law, which is finally to have the effect of Peel's Bill ; and, in the course of twelve months, they have seen the wheat come down from nine shillings a bushel to six and sixpence a bushel. They have seen a crop of corn so short (this last year, taking the crop altogether) that the Government thought itself justified in opening the ports for some sorts of grain, merely by an Order of the King in Council. They must know that when other sorts of grain are scarce or short in crop, wheat is applied in numerous cases so as to supply the place of those other sorts of grain. They must, therefore, know that wheat would have been dearer this year than last year, according to all ordinary rules and calculations ; yet, they actually see that it is cheaper by one-fourth, at the least. Between harvest and Christmas is the time when wheat is, generally, and, indeed, always, at a lower price than at any other time of the year. Yet, their Lordships have seen that the wheat was at fifty-seven shillings and sevenpence a quarter on the twelfth of August last ; and, that, last Saturday, the price was fifty-three shillings and tenpence, it being to be borne in mind, too, when we are comparing the prices of this year with the prices of about a year ago, that the new measure makes a difference of about

two shillings upon a quarter of wheat, supposing the price to be about fifty-six shillings the quarter; so, at this time, the price of wheat, according to the old measure, is, according to the average return, about fifty-two shillings the quarter; and, it is equally true that, at one time, within the last eighteen months or thereabouts, only just before "Late Panic," it was between seventy and eighty shillings a quarter.

Now, my friends, I ask if it be possible for any of the species of the *homo sapiens*; any creature rational enough to be set up by the side of a table with an edged instrument in one hand and a pointed one in t'other hand, who has been viewing all these changes, not to perceive, that the Corn Bill, which, with regard to wheat, has been equally in force during the whole of the time; I ask if it be possible that any creature fit to be intrusted with those instruments in its hands, can want the capacity of perceiving, that it is not the Corn Bill that is the great cause affecting prices; and that it can fail to perceive that the *main* cause, and the only cause worth the landlord's thinking about, is the *paper-money*? If you do think that this be possible (and I have a great opinion of your judgment in such cases), then no more of your edge-tools, say I. Great, blunt silver forks for your life, with a bit of bread in the other hand, and let them lick up their dishes like the beastly French, wiping round their chops with the remnant of their bread, and then stick that into their mouths as a finish. O! by heavens, no more English knives and forks! no more English joints of meat; nothing that wants cutting; nothing that cannot be torn to pieces with the hands or pinched off with the fingers; these latter were made before forks, and, in God's name, let them have them and have nothing else, who can now stand up and bawl like Stentor for a "*Corn Bill to give them remunerating prices*"!

Well, then, respect for our "pastors and masters," decent reverence for our "betters," must, my friends, make us presume that we shall never, any more, hear such abominable nonsense come from their lips. Nevertheless, it must be allowed, that the introduction of foreign corn would, *at this time*, somewhat lower the price; and, therefore, a strong endeavour will be made to prevent it being introduced. If foreign corn had been introduced in July 1822, it would not have lowered the price one single penny per bushel. In short, it would not have been brought in, for it was selling as cheap here at that time, as it was, on an average, selling upon the continent, taking the quality and the expenses of importation into view. If Peel's Bill had gone into full effect, corn would have been at as low a price here as it would have been in France. That Bill has now been, in effect, RE-ENACTED. The law now stands just as it stood in 1821. At that time, the law was suffered to go on towards coming into full effect, which period of full effect was the month of May 1823; but, in July 1822, nine months before the period for the Bill going into full effect, the Bill was, as to its most material parts repealed. That repeal, however, though it sent up prices, produced "Late Panic." The snails at Whitehall, feeling the effects of "Late Panic," just as snails do the approach of hot lime, drew in their horns: they saw that one-pound notes were the devil, and they enacted that one-pound notes should cease in three years.* One year of the time will have passed on the fifth day of April next: we have only had nine months of the three years yet; but, these nine months have brought down the wheat, even in a season of scarcity, one-fourth lower than it was before the

* By 7. Geo. 4. c. 6, passed 22 March, 1826.—Ed.

re-enactment of Peel's Bill took place. It is notorious : it is a fact, that even the silver-fork gentry must be acquainted with, that the far greater part of the currency, in almost every county in the kingdom, consists of one-pound notes. Go to any farmer in Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, anywhere : ask him how he thinks he should get on if the one-pound notes were to cease to circulate. He will tell you directly that he could not go on at all : he will tell you that it is absolute madness to think of it.

Therefore, my friends, let them do what they please about the Corn-Bill, corn must, if they keep the Paper Bill in force, come down to the price of the corn in France ; and lower price than that of French corn, at *this time*, because to supply the place of the one-pound notes, gold must be brought from other countries, and amongst the rest, from France, and that will cause a falling in the price of French corn. The difficulty of the landowners, that is to say, of our law-makers, is this : if they repeal the Paper Bill which they passed last year, without, at the same time, making a Bank restriction, they produce another "Late Panic." Bank restriction is in other words, an issue of *assignats*, two prices in the market, and a total blowing up that way. Another "Late Panic" I need not describe the effect of : he that does not, as to this, recollect the past, and anticipate the future, is not fit to be trusted, even with a blunt silver-fork. There remains, then, nothing for these landholders to do but to let the thing go on as it is going ; to let the one-pound notes cease to exist ; to reduce the corn in price, so that a bushel of wheat shall sell for about three and sixpence ; and then, the landowners may go, take a last kiss of their domains and bid them adieu for ever ! It must be confessed, my friends, that this is a pretty pickle to be in, and might well bring a very rational creature to be unfit for the use of edge and pointed tools ; but you and I at any rate, have the consolation of reflecting, that no part of this difficulty of these our betters, is at all ascribable to us. We have besought them, time and often, to make provision against this day of danger. A million and a half of us, in 1817, prayed to them, implored them as if we were begging for an alms, to adopt measures for the prevention of this danger. They turned a deaf ear to our prayers, they scouted our implorings, they called us designing and seditious, and they enacted that the Secretaries of State should send to dungeons those of us whom they might think proper to suspect ; to dungeons, there to be kept from the sight, if they chose, of relations, friends, or associates, and there to be deprived of the use of pen, ink and paper, and of the use of any book except such as our keepers might choose to allow us to read. While, therefore, we view the pickle in which they are now placed, if we refrain from exulting at their trouble and their peril, if we, at last, begin to feel compassion for them, and that we shall feel, after all (for some of them, at least), if they enforce the law which they last enacted ; if we thus feel (and I have no objection to any one feeling thus), let us always remember that their suffering will not be ascribable to us ; and let us always remind them, that, if they had, in 1817, listened to our humble and dutiful prayers, instead of enacting that a dungeon might be our lot, they never would have seen the present day of trouble, of doubt, of fear, of anxiety and of real danger. For my own part, I have no desire to add wormwood to the bitterness of their mess ; but I must remind them that when we met on Portsdown-hill,* to beseech them

* A Public Meeting called by Lord COCHRANE and Mr. COBBETT, in the year 1817, on Portsdown-hill in Hampshire, to petition against the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.—ED.

to provide for our safety and their own, they had provided troops of yeomanry-cavalry, mounted, ready to surround us, with swords by their sides and carabines loaded with bullets. Let the landowners, who were then our bitterest enemies, now read the petition signed on Portsdown-hill, on that day ; let them only read that petition, and that is the utmost stretch of that revenge which is sought for by

Your faithful friend,
WM. COBBETT.

TO THE KING,

ON THE INTRIGUES NOW ON FOOT, AND ON THE MEASURES
NECESSARY TO RESTORE THE NATION TO HAPPINESS, AND
TO SECURE THE STABILITY OF THE THRONE. *

(*Political Register, April, 1827.*)

“ Quand il est question d'estimer la puissance publique, le bel-esprit visite les palais du prince, ses ports, ses troupes, ses arsenaux, ses villes ; le vrai politique parcourt les terres, et va dans la chaumière du laboureur. Le premier voit ce qu'on a fait, et le second ce qu'on peut faire.”—ROUSSEAU.

When the business is to make a just estimate of the public resources, the shallow pretender visits the palaces of the Prince, his ports, his troops, his arsenals, his cities ; the true politician traverses the land, and goes amongst the country people, and visits the cottage of the labourer. The first sees what *has been done* ; and the second sees that which *can be done*.

Kensington, April, 25, 1827.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

Amongst all your Majesty's subjects there is not one who has, in this season of *advice-giving*, fairer pretensions to offer you advice than I have. No one has addressed himself to you so many times, and no one has ever been proved, by time, to have been so correct and so sound in the advice which he has offered you. If your Majesty could now read the *volume* (and a large one it would be) of that advice, you could not but exclaim : “ If I had listened to *this*, my people could not now have exhibited to “ the world that mass of ruin and of wretchedness which they now “ exhibit.”

I might, with no very great impropriety, beseech your Majesty to look at the motto to this paper, and then to say whether the observation contained in that motto does not give me some pretension beyond that of any man, who has been in your Majesty's councils for many years past. The sort of knowledge which is there pointed out as belonging to the “ *true politician*,” has been proved to be possessed by me, to a very great extent, at any rate ; and the correspondent who has pointed out the motto to me, takes the opportunity of saying that in that motto are described the character and talents, or rather, sort of knowledge possessed by the man whom your Majesty has chosen for your Prime

* LORD LIVERPOOL, in 1827, became imbecile, and Mr. CANNING became Prime Minister in his room.—ED.

Minister; and, on the other hand, the sort of knowledge possessed by me. Mr. CANNING can see that which has been done; but, if he could have seen, as I have so frequently seen and so frequently pointed out, that which can be and which ought to be done, your Majesty would not have met with so many hard rubs as you have already had to encounter, and your Minister would not have found himself in that deplorable state to which he has now been reduced by being possessed of ambition, without being possessed of reputation for knowledge to justify the gratification of that ambition.

But as I shall, in the latter part of this Letter, take the liberty to offer your Majesty my advice with regard to the measures necessary to restore the nation to happiness and to secure the stability of the throne, it becomes me, out of respect to your Majesty, as well as from a sense of what is due to myself, to state some of the particular instances in which I have offered your Majesty my advice, and in which the nation has experienced the fatal consequences of that advice having been rejected. While your Majesty was Regent, both parties in Parliament concurred, and that, too, by unanimous votes, to enter into a war with the United States of America. Upon that occasion, I, being then shut up in prison, in a felons' jail, for two years, with a thousand pounds fine upon my head (which thousand pounds were paid to you on behalf the King), with heavy bail for seven years after the termination of the imprisonment; and all this for having expressed my indignation at the flogging of English local militia-men in the heart of England, under a guard of Hanoverian troops; all this for having expressed my indignation at a thing which would have driven our forefathers to madness but to think of: I being then shut up in such prison for such cause; seeing that both parties in Parliament were bent upon compelling the Americans to yield to our unjust pretensions; I, thus situated, wrote a series of letters addressed to your Majesty, proving to you that the parties in Parliament were wholly ignorant of the nation which they had to contend with; stating to you most respectfully, but most urgently, the reasons to prevent an entering into that war; stating to you that the war must be enormously expensive; that it was next to impossible that it should be attended with success; that all the accounts of disaffection in the American people were false; that they would beat your armies by land, and drive them from their shores; that they would beat your fleets by sea, if they met them with equal force; that the war would finally end with having actually created a navy for America and laid the ground of a maritime power equal to our own; and that all this disgrace and this future danger would be purchased by the people of England by an addition to that enormous Debt, which was already so great as to leave not the smallest probability of its suffering the nation to remain many years without a terrible convulsion of some sort or other.

I am not relating, may it please your Majesty, any thing said by me in conversation; I am not referring to a talk of a Cornelius Agrippa's man; I am referring to papers *written and published*, and now making part of volumes which will be read, I trust, long after I shall owe allegiance to any body. I am referring to that which many thousands have in their possession; and, if I had written it at the end of the war, instead of having written it before the war began, the description of the consequences could not have been more correct than it was; that war; that heap of disgrace intolerable, added *seventy millions* to the Debt. The

interest of that seventy millions is, probably, equal in amount to all the tax which your poor subjects now pay on their *soap, candles, and leather!* It would have been something, then, to have prevented the necessity of continuing to impose these taxes; and this, to say nothing about the disgrace and the creation, the actual creation of a great navy in America; to have prevented the continuing of these taxes would have been more than your Minister, Mr. CANNING, is, even if he were well disposed, able to accomplish during the remainder of his life, be that life as long as it may. It is curious enough, too, that this very Mr. CANNING treated with the utmost contempt, sent off with the brightest of his jokes, all the apprehensions of danger from a war with America. His memorable witticism on the half-dozen of fir frigates with bits of striped bunting flying at their mast-heads was, perhaps, together with other observations from him and men like him in the same strain, the real source of all the mischief. This bantering; this contemptuous talk with respect to America, blinded the nation; they could see no danger in a war with such a contemptible power; and, hence the war was as popular as it was unwise and unjust. That war has not even yet ceased to *draw new sums from us*; and, it will continue to draw new sums from us for a good long life-time yet to come, if this system can be kept on foot so long.

Many other are the occasions on which I have thought it my duty to address your Majesty; but, I beg to refer, particularly, to three letters addressed to your Majesty from Long Island, in the year 1819. In those letters, I took the liberty to explain to you the nature of the paper-money; to show you how a mere company of merchants had been enabled to take from you in reality the greatest and most important of all your prerogatives, the making and issuing of the measure or standard of value. Your Ministers, and this Mr. CANNING amongst the rest, did, a little more than a twelvemonth ago, put forth this very doctrine of mine as their own. They pretended to have discovered, all at once, that your prerogative had been invaded; but, they took care not to remind you that this had been pointed out to you seven years before. In a subsequent series of letters, published towards the close of 1819, after the Speaker of the Commons had congratulated you on the passing of Peel's Bill, I besought your Majesty to believe that that Bill never could be carried into effect, without endangering your very throne. There are the letters now: every line of them is a, now, *verified prophecy*; and, if your Majesty would now condescend to read them through, you must and you would exclaim: "Had I followed this man's advice: had I listened to this, none of the present horrible distresses and miseries would have afflicted my people, and I should not have been called upon to issue something approaching to a command to cause one part of the people to subscribe their money to save another part of them from dying of hunger."

In the course of the letters here referred to, I described to your Majesty, all those means, and the intention and effect of those means, which had been made use of to *keep your Majesty at a distance from your people!* I described to your Majesty the natural tendency of a regulation which prevented your subjects from approaching your person. I described the object of those regulations. I described the intention of the New Treason-Bill, made for the avowed purpose of giving your Majesty's person *protection against your subjects*, greater than any king ever had before your father; and I asked you, whether it were you that

thought that you stood in need of this. I observed, at the same time, that it has been made treason, high treason, to do any thing in order to induce the two Houses, or either House, to act against their will. I expatiated upon all these things, and I showed as clearly as day-light, that they all arose from a desire to play off the King against the people and the people against the King; and, your Majesty may, perhaps, never have heard it, but, it is nevertheless true, that the reformers, in all their petitions, complain of a body of men, who *rule both King and people* at their pleasure, who must continue to do this, who must, finally, totally ruin the people, and bring the crown into jeopardy, unless the King, on his part, were restored to the full and free exercise of all his prerogatives, and the people, on their part, to a free choice, an uncorrupted choice of the Members of the House of Commons. I besought your Majesty to think well of these things while there was yet time to act; I besought your Majesty to recommend by message to the Parliament, a radical reform of the Commons House; so that, before the paper-money had thrown all things into confusion, and had produced general convulsion, the people might be rendered patient and docile by the confidence which they would undoubtedly have in a House of Commons freely and honestly chosen by themselves.

For the want of such a House of Commons; for the want of any real power in the people, in their present unrepresented or partially represented state; for the want of this it is, that we now witness all those intrigues, all that caballing, all that conflicting; all that uncertainty, all that chopping backward and forward, both as to men and as to counsels, which must now give to your Majesty such exceeding embarrassment. You have not your people at your back; for, though they are with you in their hearts, they have no channel through which to make their approaches toward you, and no organ honestly to declare their will. The thing would be settled in a moment. The choice of your servants, which unquestionably belongs to you, would be the affair of a day, without any intriguing, any paragraph-grinding, any negotiating; all would be over by the declaration of your will, if you had your people at hand to declare their will too. Against King and people, no combination or conspiracy could be successful; but, as things now are, it must be extremely difficult, even for your Majesty yourself to be able to foresee what is to take place as to the appointment of your own servants, who are to bear your seals, to treat with foreign nations, to propose Bills to the Parliament, and to do all other important acts in your name.

The present scene is quite enough to convince any rational man, that this country must fall into something very much like anarchy, unless some very great change take place in the system of governing the country, and, particularly in managing its pecuniary affairs. We are, now, at the end of a whole month since a Prime Minister was appointed, and at the end of that month, it is matter of rumour and guess of what persons the Ministry shall consist. A great body of great men, in point of property and station, oppose themselves to your choice. The people, having no organ through which to make their wishes known, are the same as if they were dumb. The political parties shun Mr. CANNING: all sides seem to say, that they will not be under Mr. CANNING. One of two things, it appears, must take place; he must give way and go out altogether, or must take or keep an office *under* some other Minister. That he will do this, under one of those queer personages called Whigs, rather than under one of

his seceding and satirising former colleagues, is likely enough ; but, even this would only show that he can be spiteful though he cannot be powerful. It is impossible to conceive a situation of greater embarrassment, greater peril, as to character, than the situation in which he now is ; and, he has not the consolation of reflecting, that this situation was *unavoidable*. Not only might he have avoided it ; but, it is clear that he sought it, not reflecting that he had not the people at his back ; and, above all things, not reflecting that he had a Debt, a dead-weight, a poor-rate debt, and an enormous military establishment to provide for ; not reflecting (when he looked back to the days of Pitt's triumph) that the nation was, then, in a state of prosperity ; that it was then really recovering from the injuries of war ; that PITT was a *maiden* politician ; that Pitt stood upon the reputation of his *father* ; that Pitt was able to propose to save millions to pay off the then trifling Debt ; that the whole of the taxes then amounted to only sixteen millions a year, and that the present expenditure cannot be faced with much less than sixty-four millions a year, including the expense of collection.

He did not perceive that which I told him, a few weeks ago, he would perceive, that, though place-hunters were still as fond of salaries as the sparrows are of wheat, though they have changed nothing of their nature, they would see that the wheat was now beset with twigs covered with birdlime ; and that they would be as shy as sparrows are, when they see those twigs surrounding the food which they are so anxious to get at. We are told of negotiations with the Marquess of Lansdowne and Mr. Abercrombie. Grand accession to a minister ! Mighty rock of strength ; but, even these *negotiate* ; they do not fly down upon the grain without hesitation ; and, as to Lord GRAY, the newspapers tell us that he will have nothing to do with the matter. Thus, that very state of things has arisen, which I in my letters from Long Island told your Majesty would arise. The concern is become such, that men will not like to have anything to do with it ; and, if the seven ministers retired for the mere purpose of getting out of the concern, they acted a part pointed out by worldly wisdom, however disrespectful their conduct might be towards your Majesty.

If Mr. Canning should, at last, form a junction with the Whigs, as they are called, and it is evident that he can carry nothing without such junction, then, heterogeneous, indeed, will be the mass of principles which will here be brought together. Those Whigs must be consigned to everlasting infamy, unless they immediately adopt measures of *retrenchment*. This word has been constantly on their lips for the last twenty years. As great enemies of Parliamentary Reform as their opponents ; as great enemies of reformers as those were whom they called Tories ; but, always calling for "*economical Reform*" ; always calling for retrenchment in the public expenditure. Mr. CANNING just the contrary ; defending every item of expenditure, and carrying the extravagance of his language to that extent, that he asserted, at the opening of the present Session of Parliament, that times of national embarrassment and distress were suitable times for expending large sums of money on palaces and other public works of ornament. He is a man, who has invariably defended, with every argument at his command, every species and every degree of expenditure ; and who has, with the most biting jests within his reach, with all the sarcasm that he could muster up, ridiculed those who called for a husbanding of the public resources. Will the Whigs, then, join with a man who will make

no reforms in point of expenditure? Will they keep in place and keep up the present enormous establishments in time of peace? Will they suffer such immense sums to be expended in the department of ambassadors, envoys and consuls, sums exceeding those expended, I verily believe, by all the other nations in the world put together? Will they not overhaul this enormous dead-weight, and condescend to let us know the reason for a man who is a parson receiving pay, at the same time, as a military officer? Will they not call upon the enormously rich Church of England, to pay back those many hundreds of thousands of pounds which were voted to that church out of the taxes? Will they not institute an inquiry into the cause of old half-pay officers being permitted to sell their commissions to young men, and of the people being called upon to pay taxes to maintain the widows and children of those young men? Will they not institute an inquiry into any of these things? Will they not *reduce the taxes*? Will they not make good any one of the expectations which they endeavoured to convince people that they might entertain, provided that they came into power?

If they do not; if they take no step of this sort; if they merely come to pocket the money that others pocketed before them, your Majesty will have a Ministry more odious, more detested by the people, than any Ministry that ever existed since your family came to this throne; and the worst of it is, it will be called a Ministry of your choosing. They will endeavour in vain to amuse us with that very pretty, very indefinite, very unmeaning word, *liberality*. I have heard a great deal about this liberality; about liberal principles, and about the liberal principles of Mr. CANNING in particular. This is a very fine word; but we must look to the *acts* to which this word is applied, before we look upon it as characteristic of anything that is very good to us. In common conversation, to be liberal means to be generous, to be free in letting others share in any good that you possess. Now, the way for Mr. CANNING and the Whigs to show their liberality towards the people of England; the way to convince us that this liberality is a good thing, would be for them to begin by *reducing their own salaries* nine-tenths, or thereabouts, and thereby leaving more of our money in our own pockets, to be spent by ourselves. They have two ways of showing their liberality: one by cutting short the expenditure, by giving less of our money to other people than they now give; the other, by continuing to raise as much in taxes as ever, and to give, as largely as they can, to all manner of persons out of those taxes; or, in other words, being excessively liberal at our expense. This latter is a species of liberality most detestable in itself, loudly calling for our reprobation, and this is precisely that species of liberality which, I verily believe, the Whigs most admire, and which I also believe, they would resolutely put in practice, and with all the brass not only of conscious innocence, but of acknowledged merit.

If we were to be guided in our judgment by what we hear and read every day, we should imagine that the *Catholic question*, as it has been called for the last seven-and-twenty years, is the great obstacle to Mr. Canning's obtaining suitable colleagues. Those who have any sense know that this is no obstacle at all; that to abandon the question would be popular, rather than otherwise; that it has been abandoned over and over again by those who had pledged themselves to it; that, after Pitt's famous shuffle of 1804, no one can ever be at a loss to abandon that question, and that, too, without the smallest scruple or the smallest dan-

ger of loss of place. That, therefore, may pass for nothing. That keeps no man aloof from place, patronage and emolument. But, there is *another matter*, a matter that is never mentioned by any of the political expounders of these intrigues; a matter that seems to be as carefully kept out of sight, the mention of which seems to be as sedulously avoided, as the mention of halts are said to be in a house where one of the family has been hanged; or, which, perhaps, is a still more complete case, the mention of which is avoided as carefully, with as much anxiety as the pronouncing the word *Portugal* has been, during the last four months, avoided in the House of Commons, though we have an army in that same Portugal, and though several millions of our money, screwed out of a really starving people, have followed and must follow, that army, and for a purpose, which any fellow in Bedlam can explain as clearly as I have, yet, heard it explained.

This other matter, the very naming of which is avoided with such tender concern, is, Mr. Canning's *one-pound note affair*! Many of the Whigs are very foolish men; very shallow coxcombs; but, there are some amongst them cunning enough to see that the devil himself is safer to face than wheat at four shillings the Winchester bushel. To face that, your Majesty's new Minister is firmly pledged; for if he persevere in the bill which he is pledged to persevere in, to four shillings a bushel the wheat must come. The Whigs are also pledged to this bill: they gave it their support; they urged the Minister on to adopt the measure. They cannot retract without being hooted through the world, and they cannot go on without blowing the whole system into air, without demolishing the whole fabric of the paper-money; without spreading ruin and real desolation over the whole country. They cannot push on this bill without ousting every man from his estate. They will finally see half a million of human beings in this metropolis without bread to put in their mouths; and, after having produced every evil with which a nation can be afflicted, they will only have to contrive and determine what they shall do with themselves.

There are men amongst the Whigs, though I do not believe Lord Landsowne to be one of them, who would not like to be in place when some landlord should move for the *repeal of the Malt-tax*: not for a preventing of the supplies from going out of the Exchequer, but merely for preventing the taxes from going into it. The repeal of the Malt-tax would, in a very short time, operate as a repeal of the beer-tax, the spirit-tax, the tea-tax, a cutting off the licenses for selling these, and, in short, would lop off *twenty millions* of taxes in a year. There goes the system! There goes off Mr. Canning and his new allies in a spare beer-barrel, sailing down the Thames, chanting the blessings of free-trade out of the bung-hole! The landowners will not stop the supplies. They will not vote against issuing money to pay the army and the navy and the fundholders. There they would have the people against them, for the money being in the Exchequer, the people would say, "Pay it out, to those whom you owe it to." But, for a repeal of the Malt-tax, all the people would be clamorous. Every man who brews a bushel of malt, and every man, indeed, who drinks beer, and, bad or good, it is drunk by every body, would be for this measure; and, to this measure the landlords will resort, to this measure the landlords must resort, if Mr. CANNING push on his bill, or every landlord must lose his estate.

Now, may it please your Majesty, this is the great matter of all. Your Majesty wonders, I dare say, what can make any body, and, especially, a Whig, backward to come into office. Your Majesty knows, from long experience, that these are gentry who have no doubt of their talents; that they all look upon themselves as *CRCILS* and *WALSINGHAMS*; that they think they are, every man of them, the greatest statesmen of the age; and, that they have great affection for the *public money*, it were blindness worse than Egyptian to doubt. In plain words, your Majesty knows that it is just as conceited and greedy a set as ever scrambled for place or pelf. You must, therefore, have been very much surprised at their wonderful abstemiousness upon this occasion; but, when you come to perceive that Mr. *CANNING* and the colleagues whom he retains stand pledged to the extirpation of the one-pound notes, or, in other words, to make wheat sell for four shillings a bushel, you will feel less surprise at this great disinterestedness on the part of your own friends. If he were to break his pledge and they to break theirs along with him, their situation would be very little mended. The short statement of the case is this, may it please your Majesty: the wheat must come to four shillings a bushel, or the gold will go out of this country, if gold payments continue at the Bank. To avoid either, the Ministry may return to paper-money and legal tender. That would be a breaking of the pledges of Mr. *CANNING* and his Whig associates; but even that would not prevent a blowing up of the paper-system. Those who are wise, who have, indeed, but a very small share of wisdom, avoid touching any thing so ticklish as this. Hence it is that there is a difficulty in filling up the offices: hence it is that Lord *GRAY* and others stand aloof, and wish to have nothing to do with the matter.

As far as I am able to judge, Lord *GRAY* is the most likely man to be able to form a Ministry fit to effect any thing for the good of the country; but, even Lord *GRAY* can effect nothing without a total blowing up of the paper-system. He must take the petition of the county of Norfolk in his hand, he must resolve to adopt measures consonant with the prayers of that petition; or, he is unable to do any thing to rescue this country from its distresses and its dangers. I dare say, that your Majesty would think that I, now, for instance, would think it a great prize to be made your Minister, and that I should be by no means scrupulous about the means and the terms; but, if your Majesty would make me every thing that *WELLINGTON* was the other day, and make me as rich as the *CHANCELLOR* is, I would not be your Minister, without your solemn assurance, without your word as a King, to stand by me while I carried into effect every proposition, all and singular the propositions, contained in the Norfolk Petition. The truth is, self-preservation would be my teacher: if I, knowing what I know, and the nation knowing what I know, or, at least, what I have inculcated with so much industry and earnestness; if I were to attempt to carry on the present system, I must be, notoriously, a perjured counsellor of your Majesty, and if I were not to be hanged, I should deserve it. This is the real state of the case. There are men enough, who would accept of offices upon the present occasion; but, they think as I think upon this all-important question; they are my disciples, though they have not had the courage to avow it: still less have they the courage to do or to propose to your Majesty to do that which they know ought to be done. They are like proselytes in secret; they want the courage to avow their conviction; but they see the danger, and they wish to keep out of it.

There is, therefore, in my firm opinion, no remedy for the evils that oppress the country; no safe path for your Majesty to pursue; no mode of putting an end to these disgraceful intrigues, so embarrassing to the country and so little honourable to the throne: there is nothing, in my firm conviction, short of an adoption of the prayers of the Norfolk Petition, which, it ought to be remarked, has been imitated by several other counties, and by numerous bodies of men not assembled in county meetings. One of the prayers of that Petition is, however, that there may be a *constitutional reform of the Commons House of Parliament*. This must be, too, a *previous* measure; it must be a first great step; for, until that step be taken, no other, efficiently, can be taken. Nothing but a reformed House of Commons would be able to effect the objects contemplated by the petition. In such a House of Commons the people would have perfect confidence: all men would submit to its decisions without grumbling and without cavil. Great arrangements are to take place, and must take place. An adjustment of hundreds, nay, thousands of millions, can never be effected without the hearty concurrence of the people at large; and that hearty concurrence never can be had unless the House of Commons be chosen by the people themselves. With such a House of Commons nothing would be more easy than a perfectly equitable and peaceable adjustment: this terrible load would be shaken from the shoulders of your suffering people: the saucy, insolent drones would no longer devour the fruit of the labour of the bees. The prayer of the prophet would be realised, happiness would reign throughout the land, crime would be reduced to its ancient standard of quantity, the idle would be punished with hunger, the industrious rewarded with plenty, public virtue would have its reward, and your Majesty's throne would be established in righteousness.

And, as I took the liberty to ask you, in one of my Letters from Long Island, why, *why* cannot this be done, and that, too, immediately? Mr. CANNING has, it seems, a "*budget*" to bring forward. That vulgar word, applied to so important a concern, is truly characteristic of the whole system. He has a budget to bring forward. Instead of a budget, if he were to bring a message from your Majesty, recommending to the House to make a reform of itself, seeing that in its unreformed state it appeared to be unequal to the task of rescuing the country from its dangers. If he were to do this, and bring forward his budget afterwards, the nation would have a much higher opinion of his judgment than it now has. It has been a favourite assertion of his, that, be the House constituted as it may, it is a House that "*works well*." He will not, perhaps, find it to work so well, in future, as he has found it work in past times. If he get before this House as a Prime Minister, and there really appears to be an *if* in the case, he will not find it work quite so smoothly as it used to do. For his own sake, therefore, he ought to endeavour to change it. However, this is too much to expect: he must still contend for Gatton and Old Sarum; for, were he to do otherwise, he would be abandoned, even by the Whigs.

After all, then, there is no ground to hope for a just and peaceable result, except your Majesty be the chief mover; and I will now, in very plain language, tell your Majesty how I would act, the advice which I would give, if I were in your Ministry, and being resolved to give that advice, really giving it, and standing by it, I should not be afraid of all the

boroughmongers, both the factions, everything that could be mustered up against me, I would answer for success with my life, and I should have the inexpressible pleasure of seeing your Majesty the most justly popular sovereign that ever reigned upon the face of the earth. My first step would be, humbly but most urgently, to press upon your Majesty the necessity of issuing your Royal Proclamation, fully and frankly stating to your subjects, the situation of the nation's affairs; describing the several evils that oppress them, and tracing those evils to their immediate causes; then tracing them to their more distant causes and stating the great cause of all to be a want of sufficient sympathy and community of feeling between those who make the laws, and those who pay the taxes; calling upon them for mutual forbearance towards each other in their pecuniary affairs; calling upon the rich to be kind and benevolent towards the poor; enjoining most strictly on magistrates to see the laws well and duly enforced, for preserving the lives and health of the people of the poorer sort; promising to all, everything in your power for their relief and for their speedy restoration to happiness, concluding with telling them that you would immediately suggest to your Parliament to make such a change in the representation as would be likely to repair the injuries inflicted upon the country.

The next step would be to advise your Majesty to send a message to both Houses of Parliament, recommending them to pass laws for making a constitutional reform of the Commons House; observing to them that you had examined into the source of the evils which now afflict your people; telling them that history informed you that, of all the people in the world, the English people had been, for numerous ages, the happiest, the best fed, the best clad, the freest, the most virtuous; that a long list of melancholy but undeniable facts now convinces you that they are, with the sole exception of your still more miserable subjects in Ireland, the most unhappy, the worst fed and worst clad people upon the face of the earth. Telling them that you had diligently inquired into the several causes which had produced this disgraceful, this deplorable change; that, when you looked round the kingdom, and saw, everywhere, new gaols, new modes of punishing criminals: that, when you saw that a greater quantity of food was allowed to the convicted felon than to the honest labouring man, you could not but inquire into the causes of all this misery and degradation; that, after long and diligent inquiry, you had traced this mass of evil, this fearful change, this change which seemed to have destroyed everything of England but its bare name; that, in every instance, you had traced back the original cause to *some act or other of the Parliament*. That, to confine yourself to recent instances, the miseries of the year 1822, the agricultural distress of that year; the panic of 1825; that these you found, came immediately as the effects of two Acts of Parliament; that, therefore, it could not be doubted that there must be something wrong in the manner of electing those who imposed the taxes; that this had been told you by your people a thousand times over; that Earl GREY, then Mr. GREY, presented a petition to the House of Commons in 1793, in which the petitioners declared, that they were ready to prove at the bar of the House that a decided *majority of the House were returned by only one hundred and fifty-four persons*; that you find, upon inquiry, that the petition was received, that it now lies upon the table of the House, and that it has never, from that day to

this been taken into consideration ; and that, therefore, you recommended to the House of Commons to *take that petition into their consideration, without loss of time.*

There is no man in his senses who must not be well assured that, if your Majesty were to take these steps, an effectual reform of the House of Commons would be the certain and speedy consequence. With such a House of Commons, and with the hearty concurrence of your Majesty, everything would be speedily done which your dignity and our happiness demanded. This load would be taken from our shoulders, the uncertainty as to the value of property would cease ; your corn, like that of your ancestors, would be the only money known to your people ; wealth, wherever it existed, would be solid ; men would seek to live by industry and not by trick ; no fortunes of half a million would be made by watching the turn of the market ; the cursed Jews must flee the land, or would be flung into the sea, and England would be once more a really Christian, a free and happy country.

There are people, so wrapped up in this Jewish system as to believe it not to be possible for us to live without it. The monster has worked in such a way as to debilitate men's minds, as to make them think corruptly from their very infancy ; but, Sir, every thing portends a great change. If not gentle, it must be violent ; and gentle it cannot be unless you be graciously pleased to take the lead in the effecting of it. In such a state of things, a leader is always wanted ; a leader in effecting the change. If the leader be an inferior person, he is very likely to be crushed : if a man of high rank, he creates envy and division ; but, if the King take the lead, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the people are with him ; and for this very good reason : that, if rightly advised, if he act wisely, he must do that which is for the good of the main body of his people ; because, without them he is nothing, any more than a common man. This is, indeed, the great advantage of hereditary, kingly government : the King, and all his family, and all that are to come after him, have no fortune, no possession, not bound up with the fortunes and possessions of the people. Common sense, therefore, instinct, almost, leads the people to think that the King must mean for the best. In the present supposed case, there would not be a soul to gainsay ; the discontented would be so few in number and so insignificant, that they would neither be seen nor heard of : the whole would be set to rights without a single breach of the peace proceeding from the change. No rank, no class, no description of persons would be called upon for any sacrifices but such as would be barely necessary ; and, for my part, I can see no reason why every thing might not be adjusted and the nation starting in a new career of prosperity and happiness in the course of six months from this very day.

I do not like to describe the opposite picture : that of a reform brought on by dire necessity and originating in another quarter very different from that of the King. If this paper-money system be suffered to work on, till it can work on no longer ; if it produce, at last, so menacing an attitude on the part of the people ; if it plunge things into confusion ; if something very nearly resembling a dissolution of society take place and if reform then come as a last resort, how different will be the situation of us all, and, especially, how different the situation of your Majesty ! It signifies not what may have been the secret wishes of your Majesty ; it signifies not that you may have been friendly to reform in your heart all

the while. It signifies not what gratitude your people may owe you for the desires which you may have entertained in their favour: the fact will not be notorious; your conduct will not have been open and your acts visible; you will not have been the leader in the great work; and, to say nothing about dangers; to say nothing about losses from such a cause, why not act now, and secure the gain!

I beg your Majesty to be assured, that nothing which man can do can preserve this paper system for any great length of time, in any form or in any degree; that it must come to an end, and that its progress towards that end must be marked by shock after shock, ruin after ruin, great misery here to-day and great misery there to-morrow, with a steady and constant general increase of poverty, degradation, and crime. There is no way that man has it in his power to proceed which can prevent this, if the paper-system be suffered to proceed to its natural termination. It never can end in that way, without producing a reform of the Parliament, or something of a nature which every good man would wish to see avoided. To the great, to the monopolizers of power, to the seat-sellers, the very smallest evil that can happen, in such a case, is, a radical reform of the Parliament. For them, therefore, it would be better to consent to such reform now. To every body else, and particularly, to your Majesty and your family, beyond all measure, would it be better. However, I simply say what I would do. Mr. CANNING, the Whigs (as they are called), the seven sages or whoever else may have the power, must do what they please. Difficulty upon difficulty will they have to encounter. They will merit the compassion of nobody, and more especially of

Your Majesty's most faithful and obedient
Subject and servant,

WM. COBBETT.

SETTING THE THING AT REST.

(*Political Register*, June, 1827.)

"The Minister told us, that he wished the debate on the Bullion Report to come on, that the matter might be SET AT REST.—Set at REST! Mercy on us! Set at REST! And so said OLD GEORGE ROSE, too. But, what did they mean by setting the matter at rest? Is it possible, that they could imagine, that this matter was to be *set at rest*; that this great question of paper-money; is it possible, that they thought that this matter was to be completely set at rest by a vote of their majority! No, no; this is one of the things, which, I thank God, that band of people cannot do."—REGISTER, 6th July, 1811.

Kensington, 27th June, 1827.

MY FRIENDS,

I am going to notice what passed, relative to the paper-money, during the debate, or, rather, the *talk*, upon Mr. DAVENPORT'S motion of the

14th instant, which I mentioned in a former Register, but on which I had not then time to remark at any length. Mr. DAVENPORT, who is, I have heard, a member for some place in the North, wished, it would seem, to have a Committee to inquire into the causes of the *distress of the country*; and, in his speech, he expressed a most anxious desire to see the QUESTION OF THE CURRENCY SET AT REST!

My friends, look at the motto. There you will see, that the *then Minister* (little SNAP PERCEVAL) expressed, just sixteen years ago, the very same anxious desire; and, you will also see, that I then told little SNAP, that this was one of the things that his majority could not do. When PEEL'S BILL was passed, our present profound Minister (*Æolus Canning*) exclaimed: "There, now" (the vote of the big House having been *unanimous*), "the question is SET AT REST FOR EVER!" Indeed, he called for an *unanimous* vote, *in order* that no man should ever again attempt to stir the question! But, alas! the question would stir itself. And, in 1822, it required to be SET AT REST AGAIN. Then, however, it was done "*effectually*"; and Prosperity Robinson had soon to reproach us Reformers with having dared to suppose, that the big House was not equal to the task of SETTING THE QUESTION AT REST! In less than sixteen months from the date of this reproach, "*late panic*" came; and *that* did, in reality, very nearly SET THE QUESTION AT REST FOR EVER AND FOR EVER! By almost a miracle the thing escaped from a total blowing-up, which was provoking enough, after the big House, after the "*Imperial Parliament*" had, *three several times*, set the question at rest, and once, at least, out of the three times, set it at rest, *for ever*! After "*Late Panic*," a law was passed for totally abolishing one-pound notes after the fifth of April, 1829. That law is now in force; and that law was, and the Ministers now say is, *to set the question at rest for ever*!

But, now comes Mr. DAVENPORT, who does not seem to regard the question as set at rest at all, and who wants to have it set at rest by a Committee of the whole House, appointed to inquire into the matter. Of Mr. Davenport's speech, I shall only say, that it contained a great number of truths, every one of which he would have found, and, I am sure, he did find, stated more than five hundred times over, in the pages of this Register. You must have all most heartily laughed, if you read this speech, to perceive that he uttered not one single observation worthy of being attended to, that you had not read in the Register as often, perhaps, as you have numbers of joints in all your bones. All that he said about paper-money augmenting prices by its increase; about its diminishing prices by its decrease; about its augmenting, in reality, the amount of the taxes by its decrease; all that he said about the silent robbery committed upon tax-payers by Peel's Bill; about the real augmentation of salaries by the diminution of the paper; about the fluctuations in the value of property occasioned by the operations of the Bank; every observation, every word having any sense in it, you had read before, over and over again, in the Register. What he was actually driving at, I do not gather from the speech itself; but Mr. Huskisson, who was present and heard him, appears to have thought, as we shall see by-and-by, that he was making an attempt to renew Mr. Western's motion and project about a lowering of the standard of gold and silver.

Every thing said during this debate, was so wide of the mark of wisdom, except by mere accident; every project that appeared to be afloat, was so far from containing any thing like an efficient remedy; and the

several speakers seemed to have notions so different from those of each other, that the *talk* would be, by me, deemed wholly unworthy of notice, did I not think it right to put you in possession, as far as I am able, of the views which these people have of the matter; if, indeed, they can be said to have any views at all. In this place it is, that laws must be passed, if passed at all; that laws have been passed and that laws will be passed, relative to this paper-money; and, therefore, it is useful to know what sort of thoughts are afloat in the minds of those who are to pass such laws. Mr. LEYCESTER, Mr. R. KING, Mr. FYNER (I suppose it should be *Fyler*), Mr. PEARSE, the Bank Director, Sir FRANCIS BURDETT, Mr. MABERLY, Mr. HUSKISSON, Mr. WESTERN, and Mr. MATTHIAS ATTWOOD, were the speakers upon this occasion.

Mr. LEYCESTER seconded the motion. He ascribed the distress to the misconduct of the Bank of England. He was for correcting the law regarding the currency; but, did not say *how*! He was for destroying the Sinking Fund, and for regulating the power of the Bank of England. Mr. R. KING regarded Peel's Bill as a *robbery on the prospects of the people*; but observed, that the late changes in the Ministry had opened a *bright prospect for Ireland* and for humanity in general. Mr. FYLER observed, that the real remedy for the distresses of the nation, was a *wise regulation of the corn trade*; for that, high prices of corn made high prices for every thing else. Mr. Fyler seems to have forgotten that the price of corn was regulated by two things, and by two things only; namely, the quantity of the money in circulation and the seasons, over the first of which the Parliament have had some control; over the latter, no control at all; and Mr. Fyler may be assured that, be the regulations of the corn trade what they may, the regulations relative to the paper-money will determine the price of corn, in spite of all other regulations. Next came Sir FRANCIS BURDETT, whose speech I shall notice somewhat in detail; because it contains observations of a nature that let us at once into the views of this lauded Baronet with respect to the diminution or augmentation of the quantity of paper-money; and which also give us the means of judging pretty fairly of the extent of his knowledge of the subject, and of his capacity to devise measures for putting things to rights. Soon after he began, he proceeded thus:—

“It was a great fallacy to imagine that the question had been set at rest. The evil had been brought upon us by mal-legislation, and the question would never be set at rest until the matter should be settled on the true and right basis. The subject had been at first taken up by Mr. Horner, and several other persons of great talent and industry, and an elaborate report had been produced, and upon the whole there had been no want of attention to it. The subject, however, still required examination. When the Bill of 1819 was under discussion, it was said by several persons that it was impossible the Bank could pay in gold. But he had then stated, that the question was not whether the Bank could pay in gold, but whether the country could bear that it should. It now appeared that it could not at that time immediately resume the cash payments without great injury to the country.”

So, then, here we have Mr. Canning's great supporter, asserting that it was a great fallacy to imagine that the subject had been set at rest! This Baronet not only says that the subject has not yet been set at rest, but says that it never will be and never can be, until it be settled on a true and right basis; of which true and right basis the devil of any description does he give us. He reminds us that there was a Bullion report, many years ago, brought in by Lawyer HORNER, and he here says that

Horner and those that assisted him, were persons of *great talent and industry*. Now, my friends, a man is not, merely because he has twenty thousand acres of land, to make assertions like this, when there is not a shadow of proof to bear him out in such assertions. Horner and his brothers of the Bullion Committee Report, were a covey of as great block-heads as ever made their appearance before the public. Great industry the creatures might have, industry as great as that of ants, or of cock-roaches; but, talent they had not, as applicable to a subject like this, more than any pismire or any cock-roach that crept about upon the face of the earth. Differing in everything, I hope in God, from this many-acred Baronet, I differ from him more especially in this, namely, that I delight in producing proof of my assertions, while he never attempts to produce any proof at all. What, my friends, was this "*elaborate report*" of which the Baronet speaks as the "*product of great talent and industry*"? Why, Gentlemen, it was the "Bullion Report": it was a Report in which Horner and his associates recommended the absolute resumption of cash-payments at the Bank, at the end of *two years after the winter of 1811*: and that, too, observe, though the *war should still have continued*! I wrote "*PAPER AGAINST GOLD*" to show to my readers the folly, the madness, of this proposition. Events have clearly proved; the Baronet's own statement now is sufficient to prove; it is notorious that an attempt to do the thing ten years later than Horner and his stupid associates recommended it to be done, has produced calamities not easy to be described by tongue or pen; it was proved to Horner and his set, at the very time that they made their Report, that the consequences would be just such as we have since seen them be; and, with all these facts before us, with all these facts completely undeniable, this man of twenty thousand acres, presuming in the protection which those acres will give him, stands up and tells the Parliament that Horner and his associates were persons of "*great talent and industry*"! We next come to the eulogium which the many-acred Baronet is pleased to bestow upon *himself*! He tells us, relative to Peel's Bill, that, when it was under discussion, some people thought that it was impossible for the Bank to pay in gold, but that HE (now mind him!); that he THEN stated, that the question was not, whether the Bank would pay in gold, but *whether the country could bear that it should*. Well, this was sagacity, if it existed; but, the misfortune is, that it never has had any existence except in the confused mind (for I will not ascribe it to anything else) of this ancient Reformer and now principal backer of Mr. Canning. Never did he say a word of this sort, during the discussions on Peel's Bill; never did he object to the Bill, or criticise the Bill, in any one of its stages. Three years ago, when he was finding fault of the consequences of Peel's Bill, Peel himself reproached him with his dead silence during the time that the Bill was under discussion; and the Baronet uttered not a word in defence against this charge of Peel. Here we are, however, upon a question of *fact*: I say that the Baronet never opened his lips in the way of objection to Peel's Bill: he says he did: let him or some of his base and prostituted adherents point to the day, on which he, in his place in Parliament, made the objection. The truth is, that the Bank Directors, in their memorial to the Government, while Peel's Bill was under discussion, said that very thing which the Baronet now says that he said. It was a good thing: it seemed to be going astray: it seemed to be forgotten by its right owners; the Baronet as Lord of the Manor, has impounded it and made it his own.—The

next passage of this speech gives us the Baronet's notions of the proper *manner* of returning to cash-payments. He tells us that he does not mean to say that we ought *always* to rest contented with a depreciated currency, very far from it (wise man !); but he would return to cash-payments *gradually*! The Baronet is famous for many things; more particularly, however, for his *originality*; for the newness of his thoughts, and for the newness of his manner of expressing them. Next to these qualities in the Baronet, is his very apt manner of *timing* what he has to say. Of all these qualities we shall see a most luminous and happy display in the following short passage:

"There was a period during the war, before the death of Mr. Pitt, when the *cash payments might have been resumed* without injury to the country, but that period had not been *taken advantage of*. Mr. Pitt, like many others, was in a great error on this subject, and thought that the question depended on the balance of trade, and that cash-payments could never be safely resumed till a period of peace. These notions had been now exploded; but such being Mr. Pitt's opinion, that accounted for the fact, that there was no serious attempt to return to cash-payments during the continuance of the war. The issue of too great a quantity of paper had been an evil, but the increase had taken place so gradually, that the people were not aware of it. A rash step had been taken in the *sudden* resumption of cash-payments, and those who proposed it, and many *other able men, such as Mr. Ricardo*, had no idea of the extent of evil which followed upon it. They said that the change would not make a difference of more than 5 or 10 per cent. But the *difference was much greater*; for when you contracted your currency by five millions, this made a difference in the state of prices to the extent of *fifty millions*. Prices were diminished, and incomes were diminished, and a very serious injury was done to many classes of the community. After the state of society produced by the high prices, the idea of payments in gold at length produced sensations similar to what the sight of water occasioned in cases of hydrophobia. *He did not mean to say, that we ought always to rest contented with a depreciated currency. He only said, that the return to cash-payments had been too sudden, and that the first efforts ought to have been to prevent the currency from being further depreciated, and that the return to cash-payments ought to have been much more gradual than it had been.*"

He does not tell us at *what* period of the war PITT might have resumed cash-payments *with advantage*. He does not tell us how it could have been done during the war; how the taxes could then have been doubled by the diminution of the currency; he does not tell us how the nation could have met an expenditure of more than a hundred millions in *gold*; he does not tell us how the nation was to bear the raising and expending of more than a hundred millions a year, with a currency two-thirds reduced in quantity: no; I will say that for him, he is not mad enough, he has no harum-scarum wildness mixed with the most sodden stupidity; I will say that for him, he has not enough of this compost in his mind to attempt to show us HOW PITT could have resumed cash-payments with advantage, Pitt having died eight years before the end of the war.

But, we now come to the Baronet's profound remarks as to the *manner* of returning to cash-payments. The resumption, according to him, was *too sudden*. It ought to have been *more gradual*. As Peel told him three years ago, he, if this were his way of thinking, ought to have said it at the time that the Bill was under discussion; and he never said one word about the matter. Of all things in this world, however, of all the thoughts that ever entered into the mind of man, the most foolish; I do verily believe, that the most foolish of all is that of supposing that the evils of resumption would be avoided by a gradual advance in the work of resumption. If this man of many acres had read my Letter to TIERNEY,

who now sits cheek-by-jowl with him at the back of Canning; which Letter was written in Long Island in the month of July, 1818; which Letter he had had opportunities enough of reading before Peel's Bill was put under discussion; which Letter has been republished by me several times, and, the last time, no longer ago than the thirty-first of March last; if the Baronet had read that Letter, or had memory to recollect what he has read, he would, I think, in spite of the hardihood communicated by his numerous acres, have refrained from putting forth this blundering stuff about a *gradual* return to cash-payments. In that Letter, I told the old veteran politician and placeman, TIERNEY; he whose office it now is to supply us with gold when we can catch it; I told him, "if the paper be drawn in gradually the approach of the misery and ruin and uproar will be gradual, that is all. The want of employment will come on gradually, but, it will come. The convulsion will be the end of the scene, but, there will be a convulsion." I then proceeded to show to my old veteran that we had experience to guide us as to this matter; for that, the Bank had been proceeding gradually, ever since the termination of the war. And, now, Daddy Burdett, do pray answer me, and answer me, with something like plainness, if you can: what do you mean by *gradual*? What do you mean by *sudden*; and what do you mean by GRADUAL? Be plain, for once, now; and let us have no hubble-bubble stuff, such as we had on the 23rd of May. Do you want anything "more gradual"; do you want anything less sudden than the provisions of Peel's Bill? It was passed in the month of July, 1819; it allowed FOUR YEARS before the Bank was to resume cash payments. And it allowed TWO YEARS MORE to the country bankers to take in their one-pound notes. What do you want less sudden or more gradual than this? Yet it drove the nation half mad. Nine months before the time of full payment came, the most efficient part of the Bill was rescinded. Prices got up again; but these brought a "late Panic"; and then another three years' extension was given to the tether. We have now been TWELVE YEARS at peace; we have not returned to cash-payments yet. A time, is, indeed, appointed for returning to them: that time will make the whole space more than fourteen years; and, yet, you find this too sudden, and would fain have it to be more gradual! From such a man, let the stupid Ricardo receive the praise due to an oracle; let him by such a man be called able; and let the twattler, while he is calling Ricardo an able man, say "that he had no idea of the extent of the evil which would follow the measures that he recommended." One may see here that this man of many acres has been reading the Register relative to the effects of Peel's Bill and relative to the errors of Ricardo; but one may see, at the same time, that his memory is too frail to enable him to repeat with fidelity; and thus he makes wild work of it: right as far as his reading will guide him; wrong whenever he depends upon his understanding or even upon his memory.

The next passage that I shall quote, exhibits the Baronet in a light more advantageous, in some respects. His memory appears better: he trusts less to his own understanding; repeats with greater fidelity, and talks less nonsense.

"The mischief had certainly not arisen from over-production, or too much wealth. Up to the close of the war, commerce and manufactures had flourished in a very high degree. What was it then which brought on the distress? Nothing but

the sudden alteration in the state of the currency. It was then that the agriculturists were reduced to the greatest distress, and did not know the cause. They felt quite out of their element, and were like fish in the channel of a river, from which the water had been withdrawn, gasping for breath. Then they solicited Corn Bills as a remedy for their distress, but no relief could be afforded by such means. A free trade in corn, while it would be advantageous to all, would be particularly so to the agriculturists. It was, indeed, a great absurdity to talk about prices at all, until the currency should be settled on a proper and permanent basis."

Now, as to manufactures and commerce *flourishing* up to the end of the war, the people engaged in them did not flourish, at any rate, except by fits and starts. It was all a commerce of trick and of hazard, and it could be no more called flourishing; it could be no more called a flourishing state of things, than the partial gain of the lucky candidates in the gambling hells of St. James's and Pall mall can be said to be a proof of the flourishing state of things in the said hells. But, while we have the Baronet here repeating, with pretty great fidelity what he has read in the Register about the folly of soliciting Corn Bills as a remedy for the distresses of the landlords; while we find him repeating with fidelity enough what I have so frequently said, and what I said at the time when Canning brought in the new Corn Bill, that it was absurd to talk about *prices* at all, until we were certain what the value of the money would be; though we find the Baronet repeating what I have said a thousand times about the land-people being reduced to distress without knowing the cause; though we find him commendable thus far, what the devil does he mean when he says that the distress, which came on, as he says, *as soon as the war was over*; what does he mean by ascribing *that distress* to a *sudden alteration* in the value of the currency? Why, man, you will make me crazy, if thus you proceed. There was no alteration in the state of the currency at the close of the war. The war ended in the year 1814, and, no alteration was made in the currency until 1819; and even that was not to take effect until 1823. The war ended in 1814, and the Bank-restriction actually continued without any law at all to alter it until 1819, and even that law was not to have FULL effect until 1825. The Bank was to pay in gold in 1823; but the one-pound notes were to circulate until 1825. What dost thou mean, then, thou man of many acres, by talking of the sudden alteration in the state of the currency *which took place at the peace*? Verily, thy memory; thy historical knowledge; thy legislative common-place book, are equal to the profundity of thy mind; to thy penetration into causes, and to thy foresight as to effects. Right worthy art thou of the honour of being a supporter of ÆOLUS, and right worthy is ÆOLUS of being an object of thy support!—"Glad of a quarrel," says the poet, "straight I shut the door." No quarrel here, to be sure; but, glad am I, and gladder will you be, my friends, to see so nearly approaching the close of this desultory, this hobble-gobble, this heterogeneous and senseless harangue, which cannot leave off, it seems, without giving us, and quite gratuitously, the sublime notions of the Baronet, relative to the BANK CIRCULAR recently put forth, upon which notions, when I have inserted the passage, I shall offer you a few remarks.

"The Honourable Baronet then referred to the letter lately published by one of the Bank Directors, recommending the substitution of Bank of England notes for those of country banks. Great fault had been most unfairly found with this gentleman, because he had put forth this paper, with the *view of feeling the sentiments of the country as to his proposition*. He (Sir F. Burdett) could not

onceive how blame could attach to this proceeding of the Bank Director, if that gentleman thought his plan likely to prove useful to the country. The paper itself was very ably written, and full of sound, good sense. For his own part, he was of opinion that it would be a happy circumstance if the paper currency could, by such a plan as this, be secured from those perilous incidents to which the paper of the country bankers was liable; and this advantage would be still further augmented, by substituting the paper of the Bank of England, the circulation of which was immediately under the control of Parliament. The country bankers issued with reference to no principle but their own private interests. But the connexion of the Bank of England with the Government necessarily compelled it to regard higher considerations than those of its own immediate benefit. The objection taken to this plan, on the ground of monopoly, was misapplied. Where, for the sake of abundance of supply and lowness of price competition was desirable, monopoly was undoubtedly mischievous. But in this case the object was a small supply and a high price, which were the very reverse of what was wanted in ordinary cases. The restoration of the metallic standard had produced not only distress in agriculture, but in all the classes who were dependent on prices. By the contraction of the currency they had been as much defrauded as the fundholders would if the interest of the National Debt had been reduced. He agreed that no effectual remedy could be devised to remove the distresses of the population of England, while the excessive influx continued from Ireland: nor was he altogether friendly to the scheme of emigration, by which the most skilful, enterprising, and industrious portion of the population was carried out of the country. Upon the whole, as there were so many topics, of the deepest interest to the public welfare, which might advantageously be investigated, he should support the motion."

The Baronet is decidedly a friend to this new scheme of the Bank. He finds the paper to consist of able writing and sound good sense; for his own part, he should be happy, he tells us, if the paper-currency could be rendered secure by these means; and, he goes on to say, that he would like the paper-money the better, if it proceeded from a body which is in connection with and under the control of Government! It is very curious, that, when the Bank was established, every possible pains was taken to prevent it from being under the control of the Government; and this the Baronet would see, if he would but refer to the Act of Parliament itself. It is, also, perfectly notorious, that all the eminent men who have written in favour of this banking establishment, have insisted on the necessity of keeping the Bank wholly independent of the Government. BURKE laid it down as a maxim, that the Bank-paper would not be worth a straw if the Bank were not completely free of the control of the Government. He said, and he said truly, that if the Bank were once completely under the control of the Government, Bank-paper would be no better than the assignats of France. PAINÉ said, in answer to Burke, that the Bank of England was getting daily and hourly more and more under the control of the Government; that its notes would, in the end, be found to be the notes of the Government itself; and that it would not at all surprise him if Pitt, or some of his successors, should PROPOSE TO FUND THEM, in which case, he said, they might probably be worth about a shilling in the pound; and to this it will come, as sure as the Baronet has lost the title of "Westminster's Pride and England's Glory," and is looking sharply for another in its stead, if this Bank-circular project, or anything at all resembling it, shall be put into execution. So much for the Baronet's notions about the currency. Let us now, by way of taking our leave, come to the close of the passage that I have just cited. After all his brilliant ideas relative to the currency, he can see no remedy for the distresses of the English, unless the excessive influx of labourers from Ireland can be put an end to; and yet, he is not altogether friendly to the scheme of emigration; though, as my readers must all well recollect, he was,

only two or three years ago, not only friendly to the scheme of emigration; but, wanted to have it upon the "OLD ROMAN PLAN," my remarks upon which caused as much laughter throughout the country as was occasioned by that Intense Comedy which exhibited DON QUIXOTE and SANCHO getting rid of THIMBLE and COWHIDE by pretending that victuals was so scarce in the country that the village baker had actually been starved to death. What! and shall this same man now tell that same assembly that he is not altogether friendly to the scheme of emigration. For God's sake, good Mr. Canning, do make him a lord; for, to stand this, under the title of "Westminster's Pride and England's Glory," is a little too much, even for my patience. He, poor man, can see no remedy now at all; for, he can see no remedy while the excessive influx continue from Ireland, and he can see nothing but evil in emigration. Poor soul, he was looking about for a public, in vain, for a great many years: he would have found a public if he had met his constituents in the open air at Westminster the other day; and, indeed, he did find a public on his own dunghill at the Crown and Anchor, on the 23rd of May. Now, however, that he has found a public, he can find no remedy for the sufferings of that public. *Formerly*, indeed, he had always remedies enough at hand. He had the one great remedy: the one thing needful, as he used to call it: a PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, which, he said, would put an end to the plunder committed on the public; would restore to the people their liberties and the right use of their properties; would take them from under the domination of the "great families"; would tear the leaves out of the "accursed red book"; would drive away the herd of devouring encroachers and trespassers, who were living at the "public crib"; and would do every other thing necessary to make the people free and happy, and to render the nation powerful and glorious. Alas! poor man, he can see no more of this remedy now; and, there he sits, at the back of Mr. Canning, whom he calls his "right honourable friend," while that "right honourable friend" declares and vows that he will oppose Parliamentary Reform to the last hour of his Parliamentary life, let it come in whatever shape it may!

After our Westminster Baronet, came Mr. MABERLY, who is reported to have spoken as follows. The words of this gentleman are singularly important. He is, generally, pretty well acquainted with facts connected with the subject. As to causes or consequences, I would not give much for his judgment; but he is not a loose asserter, and his facts are worth attending to.

"Mr. Maberly was of opinion that no sound system of currency could be established, while the Bank of England had the power of contracting and enlarging the circulation at pleasure. He trusted this question would be fully considered before the Bank Charter was renewed. Looking at the course recently followed by the Bank, it was, he thought, quite clear that one of two things must soon occur—and perhaps before the next Session—either the metallic currency would be discontinued, or we should have another Restriction Act. In 1825, it was known that the Bank were very nearly driven to that measure; they had hardly the means of keeping open their doors for six hours. As to the Bank-paper, to which the honourable Baronet had alluded, neither did he quarrel with the matter of it; but he contended that when it was publishing, day after day, in the newspapers, as a Circular from the Bank of England, the Directors ought to have come forward at once and denied its authenticity."

There must be some mistake in the report, here; because, discontinuing the metallic currency, and making another Bank restriction, are

one and the same thing. Most likely he said that there must be another panic or another Bank restriction. Be this as it may, it is quite evident that Mr. Maberly looks upon it as impossible to carry the law, as it now stands, into effect. He seems to be perfectly convinced that a change of some sort will take place. And, though Mr. PEARSE, the Bank Director, said that he had no apprehension that the Bank would be obliged to suspend cash-payments, the reasons he gave were not worth a straw, and Mr. Maberly's opinion remained wholly unshaken by what this Bank Director had to say. Mr. HUSKISSON talked about everything but the thing to be talked about. He assumed (for it appears to have been nothing but assumption) that Mr. Davenport wanted to have adopted Mr. WESTERN'S Little Shilling Scheme. Having assumed this, Mr. Huskisson proceeded to make some not very good-natured remarks upon that famous scheme of Mr. Western, which, by a curious sort of coincidence, is, like the bad copper-money, of Birmingham origin, the favourite child of the family of Attwood, who seem so uncommonly fond of it, that if you do but merely curl up your lip when it is mentioned, they fly at you as if coming to tear your eyes out. Mr. Huskisson, not, perhaps, aware of this violent partiality for this scheme, spoke of it in the following, it must be confessed, disrespectful terms :

"The motion before the House was in reality an attempt to renew the motion made by the Hon. Member for Essex (Mr. Western) in 1822. He (Mr. H.) had at that time assigned at too much length the grounds upon which he opposed that motion, and he should not trouble the House with a repetition of the arguments which he had then used. If it were wrong in the year 1822 to depart from the system by which the currency was settled in the year 1819, it would be much more wrong, he apprehended, to attempt to unsettle that system in the year 1827. There was no part of his (Mr. H.'s) public life upon which he looked back with more satisfaction, than the occasion on which he had opposed the attempt of the Honourable Member for Essex to break in upon the system adopted in 1819, by which Parliament was pledged not to make any alteration in the *fineness, weight, and denomination* of the currency. Five years had elapsed since the House had come to that resolution; and they would now, in his opinion, *be guilty of something which would almost amount to insanity, if they were to attempt to alter it.* He should therefore give his decided opposition to a motion, of which the object substantially was, to introduce a doubt whether *Parliament ought to adhere to the standard of currency adopted in 1819.* No measure, in fact, would be calculated to create more alarm throughout the country than the one which suggested the probability of an attempt on the part of the Legislature, either now or at any other period, *to alter that standard.* It was a proposal fatal to all the landmarks of property, and calculated to destroy all the securities upon which the interchange of property was founded."

For my part, I was quite disappointed at Mr. Huskisson's saying nothing about the Small-Note Bill; not telling us whether he and his friend, Mr. Canning, were *still resolved to drive the one-pound notes out of circulation!* This was what I wanted to know, and not whether they meant to change the gold and silver *standard.* The standard had nothing at all to do with the present question. The question was, whether the Ministry meant to adhere to the law about the one-pound notes. The *standard* may continue the same, though the paper be depreciated ever so much. It continued unaltered during the whole time of the Bank Restriction, when a guinea sold for eight-and-twenty or thirty shillings in paper; and it might continue unaltered, though the paper were actually to become a Government paper, and though a gold sovereign would buy ten pounds' worth in that paper. It was not the standard that was

in question; it was the one-pound notes that were in question; but it suited Mr. Huskisson a great deal better to talk about the standard than to talk about the one-pound notes. Mr. Huskisson, who is, generally, a very mild and pretty-spoken gentleman, seems not to have been aware of the tender cords of affection that he was touching here. Mr. Western flew with parental solicitude to the protection of that measure of which Mr. Huskisson had spoken so unkindly. He said, that he ascribed all the difficulties of the country to Peel's Bill, which had not settled the currency; that the currency was not now settled; that it was still in a fluctuating state; and that he was satisfied that the country could never know prosperity until Parliament retraced its steps; that is to say, until Parliament went back to a paper-money, not payable in gold.

But, if Mr. Western felt solicitude for the measure so disrespectfully, and, I must say, contemptuously spoken of by Mr. Huskisson, what must have been the feelings of Mr. Attwood! I feel myself inadequate to a description of those feelings, the effects of which have, however, been described by an abler hand. The reporter of the *Morning Chronicle* speaks of what passed between Mr. Attwood and Mr. Huskisson in the following words, which I insert without any alteration, it being particularly desirable that I refrain from meddling, either directly or indirectly, in a matter so delicate.

"Mr. ATTWOOD contended that the whole of the fluctuations in the condition and trade of the country, particularly in the state of the shipping and agricultural interests, which the right honourable gentleman the President of the Board of Trade had ascribed to different causes at different times, all arose from alterations in the currency. Not to reduce the salaries of all the servants of Government when the standard of the currency was altered, was, in his opinion, to impose great additional burdens on all the productive classes. At one time the right honourable gentleman had contended that distress was caused by over-trading, at another by over-production; but, in his opinion, the distress, at every period since the close of the war, had been caused by alterations in our standard of value. It was impossible to reduce the quantity of bank-notes in circulation without raising their value; and it was the alterations in the quantity of bank paper in circulation which had occasioned the variations in the value of the currency. The honourable gentleman concluded by some remark on the President of the Board of Trade; which, from the honourable Member speaking from under the gallery, we did not hear.

"Mr. HUSKISSON replied, however, that he never had, as the honourable Member had accused him of doing, treated the majorities of that House with contempt. He would, however, treat with sovereign contempt the tissue of misrepresentations which made up the speech of the honourable Member, and would not trouble himself to contradict them.

"Mr. ATTWOOD explained, and retorted upon the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Huskisson) the expressions which he had applied to his (Mr. Attwood's) observations, desiring to assure the right hon. gentleman, that there was no degree of contempt which he had thought proper to express—that he (Mr. Attwood) did not equally feel towards the statements of the right honourable gentleman."

Here ends, then, the efforts of this session to bring the Ministers to some explanation upon the subject of their intentions as to the paper-money. Mr. Canning said nothing; and, for his own sake, it were well if he more frequently observed such a line of conduct. From Mr. Huskisson we should have had something bold; some confident statement, if the Ministers had been at all confident with regard to the line which they intended to pursue. I am satisfied that they have no such confidence. Schemes of all sorts are afloat. It is evident that something is intended

to be done to take from the country bankers power of again plunging the Government into so much peril. This is apparent in all the movements that are taking place in London. The talk, too, of a Finance Committee, early in the next session; the Bank Circular, applauded by so many persons in Parliament; and, above all, the most terrible danger of another panic; every thing has a tendency to make me believe that some measure or other is in contemplation, the main object of which is, to take away the power now possessed by the country bankers, of plunging the country into confusion. It is very true that they have that power; it is very true that they thus place the Government in continual danger; but it is not less true, that, to get rid of this danger, the Government must do those things which will, in a short time, bring wheat down to four shillings a bushel, Winchester measure; for, at this moment, nine-tenths of the currency of the country, exclusive of London and its environs, is country bank-paper. Take away that paper, and down comes the wheat to four shillings a bushel. The choice, therefore, lies between constant liability to panic, or wheat at four shillings a bushel. Let the Ministers take their choice; and, choose which they may, they have my hearty good wishes, knowing, as I do, that whether they stand still or whether they move, their system will go to pieces.

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

ON THE GREAT GOOD TO THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL, AND ESPECIALLY TO THE PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND, WHICH WILL ARISE FROM HIS MEASURE RELATIVE TO THE SMALL NOTES.

(*Political Register, July, 1828.*)

Because 'tis lordly not to pay;

QUAKERS and Aldermen in state,
Like Peers, have levees ev'ry day
Of duns attending at their gate.

A baited Banker sore desponds,
From his *own hand* foresees his fall:
They have his soul who have his bonds;
'Tis like the writing on the wall.

How will the caitiff wretch be scar'd,
When first he finds himself awake
At the last trumpet unprepar'd,
And all his grand account to make?

SWIFT. *Run upon the Bankers.*

Barn-Elm Farm, 14th July, 1828.

MY LORD DUKE,

It was my intention to address you, this week, on the END, or, what I think will be the end, of the paper-money affair; to lay before you, in

detail, what I think will be its *last workings*, and to suggest, *while we have time, the means of bringing the country out of confusion, without consequences very, very fatal*. But there is no very great cause for haste here: in all probability, this subject will suffer no injury from a week or two of postponement. For as long as wheat shall continue to be higher than four, or *four and sixpence*, the Winchester bushel, you will not listen to my prescriptions: when it come down to about that mark, you will all listen; and happy for the country will it be, if you *act on*, as well as hear, the advice.

In the meanwhile, I owe it to you and to the public, to produce the proof that I have in my possession, that the measure which you have persevered in with regard to small-notes, and especially Scotch small-notes (and which I verily believe no other man, now in either House of Parliament, could have persevered in); I owe it to you and to the public to produce proof, that this measure is one of the most wise and most beneficial that ever was adopted.

I am about to insert here a letter from Scotland, which, though in a humorous and, apparently, fabulous strain, does, I am assured, and I firmly believe, contain the relation of a real fact. This letter, the truth of the statements of which has been vouched for to me, in a letter written to me by a Scotch gentleman in London, who tells me that he can swear to the truth of those statements; this letter, together with another that will follow it, cannot fail to add, if possible, to the strength of the resolution that you expressed, to put an end to the one-pound notes, those instruments of oppression the most galling on the industrious part of the people, while they are the cause of incessant danger to the State. Merely as a *piece of writing*, this letter would be worth your perusal: its Scotch gravity (dated, too, on *Sabbath morning*) is exquisite; but it contains *truth* the most important; and you may, from it alone, gather how popular is the measure, to which you have had the courage to adhere.

“ARBROATH, *Sawbeth Mornin*, June 22nd, 1828.

“DEAR WILLY,—You are *commin* to our help at last: we, in this country, have been *lang, lang* in shackles; not of iron, or steel, or *ony ither* metal; but we have, for nearly a hundred years—we, and our fathers, and our fathers' fathers, been tied together, hand and foot, by *notes*.

“Now, Willy, I must tell you a story. In the year ninety-three, my uncle, *Andrew Wilkie*, merchant, Arbroath, was about to set out for Rotterdam, where, by an article he could purchase there, he could turn his *twall-pennies* into a *groat*. Before his departure, a meeting took place of all the clan of Wilkie in the county of Forfar. My uncle *Tam*, and my *auntie Tibby*, the *two* great oracles of the *faemely*, determined that uncle Andrew should go. This expedition, by which *two* hundred and *fifty* pounds were to be made a *thousand*, was well canvassed; and, amongst other determinations of the wisdom of my ancestors, it was agreed, that, in the troublesome times of the French revolution, it would be better for *uncle Andrew* to draw *gowden guineas* out of his *coosh cruddat*, than *Banck notes*, as *mabie* the Dutchmen *wadna* like *notes*. Application was accordingly made to the agent to the Bank, to write by the first post for *two* hundred and *fifty* *gowden* guineas. In the mean time, my *uncle Andrew* provided himself with a dozen pair of new hose, and other articles of substantial dress; and, amongst them, a pair of new corduroy *breeks*, with large leather *pouches* to *haud* the *gowden* guineas; my *auntie Tibby* observing, that when *uncle Andrew* clapped his hand on his *pouch*, the Dutchmen would hear the guineas clink; and, that the size o' his *breeks* wad let them *ken* there was better *gear* there than *notes*.

“*Sawbeth's* post arrived; and *uncle Andrew*, anxious to set out for Holland, went to the agent after the *kirk cam out*, to inquire if the guineas were *commin*; the agent had *nae* answer from the *Banck*. *Monnanday's* post arrived, but *nae*

wird o' the gowd. Tuesday and Widdonsday's post arrived, but the agent heard naething frae the Bank. The Scotch, Willy Cobbett, are very patient. Foorsday's post brought the answer for uncle, but not the gowd: it brought a foogæ warrant to a WRITER (attorney), with instructions to apprehend uncle Andrew, at the instance of the two kaetioners to the Bank for uncle Andrew's *cosh crud-dal*: for, you must know, that every one who obtains a cash credit with any of our Banks, or their agents, give the bond, in addition to their own, of two or more-approved and responsible persons as security (cautioners) for the re-payment of the money (*nots*) that is advanced upon this blank cash credit, as it is called.

"Puir uncle Andrew never went to Holland: the WRITER (attorney) sent him to the Tolbooth (jail at Edinburgh), upon the foogæ: and the family of the Wilkies have ever since preferred *nots* to gold! Auntie Tibby, who is now very auld, has, notwithstanding, preserved the corduroy breeks with the large leather pouches; for she says, the *nots*, *mabie*, may go out of fashion, and THEN the large leather pouches will be very convenient to haud the gowd.

"MARY HUME, shopkeeper, Montrose, and Mither o' JOSEPH, was one of the bail to release my uncle Andrew; and as Joseph was then at haeme, you may call upon him, in one of the squares of your muckle toon, and he will tell you a' the rest o' the story.

"Mr. Tamson has told your *Parliamenters* in London, that we Scotch *boddies* prefer paper to gold. Don't believe him, Willy Cobbett; he is a leer. If your Bank of England would send, and why should they not, its *branches* to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen, and give us the REAL option to look our beloved Sovereign in the face on gold, instead of handling Scotch *nots*, without the fear of the foogæ, every Scotchman, from the laird to the cotter, would wear large leather pouches, and it wadna be thought a disgrace to be big about the thighs.

"Look up, John Knox, frae 'mang the dead;

"Look up, and shak your auld grey head:

"Look up, the *nots*, can they be fled,

"And gowd the go?

"There's Willy Cobbett and the Duke;

"They're baith for gowd, and curse the Rook;

"It's time that Scotchmen in a nook,

"Haud fast the gowd!

"Guide day, Willy Cobbett, till anither opportunity.—Your obedient servant,

"AUDEM DONALDSON.

"GLOSSARY.

"Twall-pennies—one penny sterling, is twelve pennies Scotch.

"Fourpence—is a groat.

"Foogæ warrant—fugæ warrant, or, a writ of *ne exeat regno*.

"N. B. Asking a Bank for gold, is, in Scotland, a *prima facie case*, that a man means to depart the kingdom."

Another Scotch correspondent informs me, that, at another place in Scotland, a respectable small manufacturer "was actually banished from Scotland for urging a bank to give him gold for *nots*." And I repeat most solemnly, that two Scotch mechanics informed me, in 1823, that, for urging a demand for gold, they were taken up by the *police*, and detained some time, and got no gold at last. The letter of the last-mentioned correspondent, who lives in London, and who gives me his name and place of abode, is in the following words:

"SIR,—Living within the sound of Bow-bells, and having been the constant reader of your Register for the last twenty years, there is no subject you have touched upon that gratifies me more than your observations upon my countrymen, the Scotch bankers, and our native *nots*. I am very glad to see you have a correspondent at *Arbroath*; because there is a tale told there, as connected with asking to exchange *nots* into gold, that ought to be told; and, if publicity is given to that story, it is probable it may bring to light another story of a

similar sort, which happened at another place, from which a respectable sma^l manufacturer was *actually banished* from Scotland, for *urging* a bank to give him gold for *notes*. The agitation of this Scotch banking system will do great good, particularly to *the Scotch themselves*, who, generally speaking, have the same respect for their bankers, as prisoners have for their gaoler: they dread, hate, and despise them."

And this, my Lord Duke, is the far-famed and eternally eulogised system of *Scotch banking*! No wonder that "MALAGROWTHER"* was called forth and hired to threaten the Government with *open rebellion*, as he actually did, if a law were passed to put an end to small notes in Scotland. It was high time for the Government to put an end to this system of terror and of tyranny, and it has adopted an effectual way of accomplishing the object; namely, banishing one-pound notes from England, though the same law ought to have banished them from Scotland and Ireland by *direct* means. However, the indirect will do; for if gold be the *currency of England*, as it will and must be after April next, the Scotch people will not long labour under this tyrannical and barefaced robbery.

The Scotch bankers asserted, in their *evidence* that the people *preferred* the notes to gold; but at the very moment when the audacious pamphlet appeared, throwing out the menace of *resistance* on the part of Scotland, the people of Paisley sent a petition to the House of Commons, *praying for a gold currency*. These were poor manufacturers, who could not be poorer, and whom the vengeance of the bankers could not reach; but, my Lord Duke, the same feeling animated a vast majority of the people of Scotland, especially the people *in trade*, who have actually been the mere *agents* of the banks, collecting *profits for them* and not for themselves; and never did Minister do a people a greater favour than your present measures, as to this matter, will do the oppressed people of Scotland, who have, by sets of greedy paper-money makers, been actually *withdrawn from the protection of their sovereign*.

Nor has it been in Scotland only that this tyranny has existed, and still exists. In Ireland it has been and is much about the same; and, in England, *very little better*, especially in parts *distant from London*. The Rooks here hold the farmers and traders, and even the clergy and land-owners, not in the bonds of "*cash-credits*," but in those of bills, personal bonds, mortgages, deposits of deeds, and of various other sorts. Only think of a fellow making paper-money, and, by that means, *without being worth a shilling in the world*, getting a mortgage on a man's farm, and, finally, foreclosing and actually taking it away from him! And this has been the case in thousands of instances. It is no justification to the Government to say, *that it is the borrower's own fault*: it is not his own fault any more than it is his fault to drink poison that a big brewer may put into his accursed beverage. The law interferes here, and why not in the case of bank-notes! It prohibits the big brewer to use the poisonous drugs, and even to have them in his possession: and why, in a matter of an importance far transcendent, are the people to be left without protection from the law? Never, until these latter days, were the people thus abandoned to the insatiable maw of avarice. The King was the maker of money for all men; and, when avarice began to put in use its invention of *notes*, the law came and forbade these to be under the amount of *five pounds*, which law was in force until the disgraceful year 1797.

* SIR WALTER SCOTT.—ED.

The Rag-rooks in England have not been so *barefacedly* tyrannical as those in Scotland: they have not been able to *combine* so completely: the affair here was too large for that; there were too many men independent of their power, and too many of unbending tempers, to permit them to form a combination like that in Scotland; but, they have tyrannized to a great extent, and especially over the little farmers and traders, with regard to whose affairs they have exercised a control and a *surveillance* nearly equal to those exercised by their brethren in Scotland. They have had their *runners* to look after the shopkeepers' *stocks* and to watch the state of farmer's *ricks* and *mows*: the flail has not been permitted to give many strokes without their knowing *the reason why*. These runners are seen, even yet, in all the *fairs* and *markets*, dogging both the buyers and the sellers; watching all their movements, and almost making them "stand and deliver" upon the spot. In many cases the Rooks have been, and are, *big brewers* or *gin-distillers*. Judge, my Lord Duke, of the quality of the stuff which the slaves under them have been compelled to retail! I know one market-town, which has in it *twenty* public-houses, *seventeen* of which are the property, or held in lease by, one band of *Quakers*, who are the only *bankers* of the town, and who are also, *brewers* and *spirit-merchants*! They take a *bond* from each of the *seventeen* poor publicans who rent under them, binding him to retail no beer or spirits *not got from them*; and I have been assured, that they make these wretches pay *forty per cent.* more than the stuff could be purchased at of other persons. If Sir JAMES GRAHAM had got his *committee*, I was resolved to apply to it to receive evidence of these facts. Here is a whole town and neighbourhood given up to be devoured by these ravenous Rooks. In many, very many, other cases, the Rooks have been *attorneys*! O, God! What man's means or estate could resist powers like these united? In not a few cases the Rooks have been *magistrates*, county as well as corporate. Is it not to set reason and nature at defiance to affect to believe, that the people could have any chance of happiness under such a system?

Men like Ministers, who never see nor hear anybody but the rich and those who think that *all is well*, because it is *well for them*; men like you, my Lord Duke, who cannot possibly *see* anything but the prosperity, the signs of which are blazing around you, can have no idea of the oppressions exercised on the people by the Rooks, in the parts *distant from the metropolis*. If, in the course of your military life, it have happened to you, as it has to me, to see a cat squatting down and spreading out her claws upon a parcel of *cock-roaches*, you must have observed how the poor affrighted creatures all endeavour to take shelter *under her belly*, and how they thus escape, while she gluts her maw with those on the *outskirts* that come in contact with her *claws*. Thus the people, in all countries, where mis-rule of any kind exists, fare less badly as they approach the *seat* of the mis-rule. The people of London have known comparatively little of the tyranny of the Rooks: they are too numerous and too thickly packed to be watched and singled out: they have had no idea of the slavery of their fellow subjects in the country; and they have, therefore, felt little for them.

And, my Lord Duke, what must have been the power of the Rooks with regard to the *political* conduct and even political opinions of men! I have known *scores*, yes, *scores* of men, who have actually been refused loans by the Rooks, *because they read Cobbett's Register*!

Judge, then, to what an extent this tyranny has been carried. To be or to be thought to be, a *reformer*, has been sure to expose the party to the vengeance, often the ruinous vengeance, of these usurpers of the King's greatest prerogative. This tyranny has, however, worked for good in many cases. It has made a great many men, farmers as well as traders, keep aloof from all Rooks, *rely upon their own solid means*, and live with *great frugality*; and these men, many of whom I personally know, in every part of England, now *laugh at the coming storm*, and enjoy, with me, the confusion of the Rooks, their abettors and their slaves.

Some Ministers have, I dare say, said, that, if the Rooks ruined men for *reading Cobbett's Register* and for being *Reformers*, they were *good Rooks*, and merited the *favour of the Government*. Good for a while, my Lord Duke; "*strength in the beginning, but weakness in the end*;" for, at last, the Rooks, by the use of the very paper-money which gave them the power to check the circulation of Cobbett's Register and to ruin men for being Reformers; *by the use of that very paper-money*, the Rooks have acquired the power of *shaking the Government itself*; for shaken it was, when we were, according to its own confession, brought to within *forty-eight hours of barter*, which means a dissolution of society and a beginning anew; and, let me beseech you to believe, that the danger of *shaking* is not yet passed away. In this case, as in all others, a just God has decreed, that evil deeds shall, in the end, bring their own punishment; and that the oppressed, if not impatient or slavish, shall triumph over their oppressors. How many, many thousands of virtuous and patient and steady men, in this kingdom, will feel the truth of, and exultingly say AMEN to, that sentiment!

Before I conclude this letter, I must, in justice to you as well as to the people, and to my readers in particular, look back a little to the year 1826, when the English *Small-note Bill* was passed. A circumstance occurred, at this time, which must have convinced any man of common sense, that there existed, in fact, no such thing as a *convertibility* of paper into gold on demand. The old law was, that, if any one refused to give gold or silver for a note under 5*l.* the refusing party was to be brought before a Magistrate, and if he did not pay within three days, have his *goods seized and sold* to pay the amount. This was, too, the law of 1797. But when, in 1826, it was proposed to revive this *summary process* by a clause in the Act of that year, the bankers all cried aloud against it, and said, that *no man would be a banker under such a law!* Why not? Many men had been bankers under that law for a great many years. Why not? when, to avoid the process, the banker *had only to pay in gold or silver on demand*: he had only to *obey the law*. But this was precisely what he wished not to do: he wished to retain the power of refusing, with impunity, payment to poor men *unable to go to law with him!* Flagrant as this was, the then Ministry had the culpable weakness to yield to it; the clause was rejected; and the poorer classes have remained ever since exposed to the insolent injustice of these harpies. The Ministers proposed to make the measure general *for the whole kingdom*, as was pointed out by reason and justice and even common sense. But, the Scotch bankers, aided by those of England, who thought that they, by means of the Scotch notes, should, in the end, preserve their own, obtained an exception for Scotland and Ireland. This was very weak on the part of the Ministers, who actually abandoned their own conviction

in consequence of the clamours and menaces of the Scotch; and these menaces, to which *you*, I hope and believe, would never have yielded, were the most audacious that ever were thrown in the teeth of any Government. How many men, how many scores of men, have been ruined and brought to an untimely grave, on the charge of *seditions language* and *incitements* and *designs*, not a tenth part so flagrant as those in the pamphlets of "MALAGROWTHER"!

The resistance was made "in behalf of the *people* of Scotland"! It was "the *people* of Scotland that were about to be *robbed* of their currency"! And Mr. CURTIS, who, about two months ago, talked of a *motion for a repeal* of the Bill of 1826, observed, that the Scotch *people* SAVED their currency by coming forward, "*man, woman and child, in its defence*"! O! it was a great shame, my Lord Duke, that the Ministers did not, upon that occasion, obtain correct information relative to the treatment of the Scotch *people* by the Rooks, and relative to the *feelings* of that *people* on the subject. If they had obtained this information, they would have prevented all the trouble that you have now experienced. Of all his subjects none stood so much in need of the King's protection, against this monstrous oppression, as the middle and lower class of the Scotch; and none will be more cordially grateful to you for the measure in which you have so laudably persevered.

If anything, coming from the partisans of paper-money after the panic of 1825 and 1826, could surprise one, it would be the *praises* bestowed, in the House of Commons, and particularly by Mr. HUME, on the *American banking system*—a system of open, and even *avowed* fraud. The system does not produce *panics* there, because the fraud is so open that it deceives nobody. The notes *pass*, sometimes at a *discount*, and sometimes not: nobody *confides* in any bank. There will always be people to *borrow* anything that will pass at any rate; and, therefore, if the Government permit it, there will always be people to *lend* that which costs them nothing, and by the means of which lending they get hold of something of real value. Then, there are *several separate governments*, trying to surpass each other in "*prosperity*," the general Government having no restraining power in this respect; but always taking care to be *paid all its own taxes in hard dollars*. It thus protects itself; but the *people*, happy as they are on the score of taxation, are scourged most cruelly by the wickedness or folly of the State-Governments, in permitting the infamous swindling of the banks, which *all break in their turn*. In 1819, there was a *QUAKER*, named JACOB BARKER, at New York, who had a bank there, and also one at *Newark*, a town in New Jersey. His notes of one bank were signed with *red ink*, and of the other with *black*. He broke at one, and did not break at the other; Jacob's *red notes* were *good*, while the black ones were worth only *one dollar for five*; and in this way I, as well as many of my neighbours, took them and passed them! And, to make the thing complete, he used, at his red-note shop to *discount his black notes*; and then, he would, and did, *discount his red notes for dollars*! But, in the midst of all this, no panic comes to endanger the Government, because the notes pass for awhile at a discount, and they then *die away by degrees*; so that no *alarm* is ever excited; and as to a "*run*" upon a bank, no such thing is ever heard of; because there is not the least idea of ever getting *hard money* out of it, when once its notes begin to fall in reputation.

Dreadful, however, is the havoc of private fortunes made by this sys-

tem. Men's farms are frequently taken from them by scoundrels who never possessed a shilling of their own. Their practice is to lend their paper, before it begins to be at a discount, to farmers, or owners of houses, and to take, as security, a mortgage with a *judgment entered up*; so that the bankers can, at any moment, seize on the property; and this has been done, in thousands of instances, while the borrowers were *ready to pay off the mortgage in the notes of the lenders*; but which notes, become worth nothing, they had to keep, while they had to surrender their estates! In short, this is the great scourge of the United States. The Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania, wishing, in 1816, to put an end to those evils, passed a law to make all bank-notes, issued in future, *worth nothing*; that is to say, to make them *no evidence of debt*, and giving the holder *no legal claim* upon the issuer. This was expected to deter people from taking bank-notes, and, of course, to put an end to the swindling. It had an effect *precisely the reverse*. New banks instantly started up; and, in one particular county, called *Fayette County* (at about 250 miles from Philadelphia), the swindlers, who were chiefly Scotchmen and Englishmen, stripped no small part of the farmers of their estates. The villains themselves were compelled to decamp; but they had transferred their title to the property, and they *left the law to take its course*; and thus were hundreds of families totally ruined, and bands of villains enormously enriched, without one single *hard dollar* ever having been advanced by the latter.

The Legislature ought to have *prohibited the issuing of small notes*: it would have done it, but, as several of the members declared, it *dared not*: the people were too much blinded by the love of borrowing and gambling: they thought that that was "prosperity," which was only a false glare; and the Assembly could not venture on the *prohibition*, which, as events have proved, there, as well as here, is the only remedy for the evil. And, even *you*, my Lord Duke, would not now have *dared* to venture on the prohibition, if, fortunately, the small notes had not been previously banished from the *metropolis*, leaving the Government *immediately surrounded by a population who have a currency of gold*.

The evils of a small paper-money are endless in number, and boundless in their extent; as, indeed, they must be, when that false and fraudulent medium causes the people to be withdrawn from the impartially protecting arm of the sovereign power, and to be abandoned to the mere mercy of selfish private individuals. However, my Lord Duke, thanks to your firmness, this rag-rook tyranny now approaches its termination. We have a king with high prerogatives, given him for the protection of his people; and we have a band of fellows, called bankers, who have, by unseen degrees, been suffered to usurp the *most important* of these prerogatives; and, besides the direct robberies in the case of *breaking*, constantly exacting a large share of all the profits of trade and agriculture. These bands cannot *create capital* by their presses and paper. They cannot thereby *add* to the *real capital* of the country. They create nothing *useful*, they add nothing *real*: they invent a *fiction*, but, by the means of that fiction, they lay the whole community under contribution; and, whenever they carry the fiction beyond certain bounds, which their interest incessantly prompts them to do, they endanger the State.

To enforce the salutary law of 1826, you, my Lord Duke, were bound by one consideration, which, with you, was superior to all others; namely, to prevent the *overthrow of the State*, which was constantly liable to take

place, in consequence of suffering others to usurp a great prerogative of the King, whose just authority and power it was your first duty to uphold, and from which the safety of the people was inseparable. You are told, and it *may* be so, and I say it *will be so*, that great and terrible embarrassments, to some classes, will arise from your measure, *unless a great reduction of taxes take place*. But it is for the Parliament to see to that: let them look to the ability of the people to pay the taxes: it is your first and imperative duty, to take care that the people do not suffer from the mis-use, or the non-use, of the prerogatives of the King.

I should not do my duty, if I were, on any occasion like this, to omit to state my conviction, that this measure cannot be carried into effect without dreadful ruin, *unless a very great reduction of taxes take place*. Knowing that what I write is read by a great number of persons, who rely much upon my judgment, I should deem myself almost a traitor in intention, if I were to applaud this measure, without, at the same time, declaring my opinion, that, if it be enforced *without a great reduction of taxes*, it will lead to a terrible convulsion. But, at the same time, I am convinced, that a return to the paper would be still *more dangerous*; that it would lead to a *more terrible convulsion*; for, at any rate, this measure will give us A MONEY; whereas the paper would leave us in the case of convulsion, without any money at all; the paper would instantly become worth nothing; it would purchase nothing; there would be no sign of value; and all must be confusion, violence, and devastation. So that, in every view of the possible, or probable, consequences, this is the course which duty to King and to people pointed out to the Ministers to pursue.

Here I should have stopped; but, the newspapers having just brought me a PROTEST of two peers against the passing of that Bill, which I petitioned for, I think it right, first to insert, and to remark on, that PROTEST.

PROTEST AGAINST THE THIRD READING OF THE SCOTCH AND IRISH SMALL NOTES BILL.

DISSENTIENT.—Because, to a *wealthy* and commercial State, *encumbered with a great debt*, a paper currency, *measured by a metallic standard*, is the safest, as well as the most advantageous circulation.

It is the *safest*, because in times of panic, or of adverse exchanges, a metallic currency is the *first to disappear* and the *last to return*.

It is the most advantageous, because, in a State so circumstanced, an *extended* currency is an essential part of the *machinery* necessary for *production*; and to compel the producer to use a more *costly*, instead of a *cheaper*, circulation, in the same thing, in effect is to *prohibit the use of improved machinery in manufactures or husbandry*.

(Signed)

FERRERS.
CARNARVON.

July 9, 1828.

Now, let us forbear from ridicule, however strong the temptation to indulge in it. This is the first time, perhaps, that "*wealth*" and "*the encumbrances of great debt*" were ever stated to exist at one and the same time, in any concern, public or private. To be a "*great debt*," it must be *great in proportion to the means of the party owing it*, and if it be thus *great*, and if it "*encumber*" the party, it remains for these noble persons to show *how it is possible* for such party to be "*wealthy*."

For paper-money to be the "*safest*" currency in times of panic and adverse exchanges, it must be *legal tender*, and not convertible into gold *on demand*. Then, indeed, it is safe from "*disappearing*"; but, these noble persons say, that they mean a paper-money "*measured by a me-*

talic currency"; that is to say, of course, *convertible into metal*, if this phrase have a meaning. How, then, can it be *safe* in "times of panic, or of adverse exchanges," when we all know, that, in such times, metal will instantly be demanded for it; and that the paper must come to nothing? And, then, the strange assertion, that, in such times, metal is the "*first to disappear, and the last to return*"! On the contrary, the metal never moves; it remains in circulation; and, with it *alone* there can be *no panics*, and no adverse exchanges which it will not *soon correct*.

What those noble persons mean by an "*extended currency*," I shall not take upon me positively to say; but, from the curious context, we may gather, that they look upon paper-money *as capable of adding to the power of creating valuable things*; which, though a very fashionable notion, is not, on that account, less absurd and monstrous. How is it to give, or to add to any such power? Suppose (a case put by me several years ago) a gentleman, living in a village, to issue in paper (in no matter what form) 100,000*l.* a year for several years, over and above his usual income and spendings; and suppose it to circulate from hand to hand; no doubt that his village, and the country around, will wear the appearance of *greatly increased prosperity*; that new houses will rise up, and all manner of things called "*improvements*." But he *must do, at last*, one of two things; namely, *break*, and totally ruin and crush the neighbourhood at a blow; or, pay off his paper-debts slowly, *out of his usual solid rents*; and thus reduce the puffed-up neighbourhood to beggary, it being now *deprived of the benefit of those usual rents*, which benefit it formerly enjoyed. His paper-money has, indeed, caused, for a while, superfluous production of some kinds; but, in the end, it *takes just as much from adequate production*.

Thus it is on a national scale: new streets, new palaces, new roads, new bridges, new canals, arise out of paper-money; but, at last, come panics, come blowings up; and, while the nation is plunged into misery, the smooth roads, the gently gliding canals, the lofty domes, the bridges over, and the tunnels under, the rivers, these useless things remain, to remind the beggared people and the sinking State of the cause of their ruin.

And, then, for the *analogy* which these noble persons find, between the "*machine*" of paper-money, and the "*machines employed in manufactures*"! Great are the grounds for *doubting of the benefits* even of these; but what *analogy*, good God, is there in the two cases! Paper-money, even according to these noble persons, must *rest on metallic money*: it is, at best, only the *representative* of the metal: in *itself* it contains no powers of production: it must either be *wholly false*, or it must rest on valuable property of some sort: the bits of paper have no *physical* force to move weights, turn wheels, or cause plants to grow; whereas the machines used in manufactures and agriculture do all these things by the physical force that they bring to the aid of man. The power of paper-money depends wholly *upon opinion*: the lightest breath of suspicion annihilates its power; while the powers of the machines used in manufactures and agriculture depend upon no opinion, can be weakened by no suspicion, are well known, fixed, and determinate, requiring only a due application of them to cause them to produce their certain and invariable effects.

Thus, then, I have defended this measure, and, I trust, successfully,

against all its opponents, from the very first to the very last. Ever since I clearly understood the nature and effects of paper-money, I have abhorred the accursed thing, and have done everything in my power to rid my country of it, and of the bands who, by it, fatten on the sweat and blood of the people. When the panic came I *rejoiced*, because I saw that it must lead to an annihilation of the small notes, or to that of the whole system. That my opinion on this subject might be on record, I presented a petition to the House of Commons, *expressing my gratitude* to it for passing the Act of 1826; and I now express my sincere gratitude to you, my Lord Duke, for your firm adherence to that Act, and for the passing of the Scotch Small-note Act, which, as you properly called it, was a *complement* of the former measure.

That the Rooks, that these bands of insolent blood-suckers, should malign me on account of these my endeavours, is natural enough, though they surely would not do it, if they knew the unspeakable pleasure given me by this mark of their malice and rage; but, that the *ministerial papers* should, on this account, pour forth abuse upon me, calling me a "*political bloodhound*," does not seem quite so natural; unless, indeed, on the supposition, that the proprietors of these very broad concerns fear that I am likely to become their *rival* in the enjoyment of those things, after which their righteous souls are continually thirsting. You have seized by the throat a monster more hideous and more destructive than any that HERCULES ever slew: if you succeed in destroying this monster, you will have the lasting gratitude of millions of men, and, amongst all those millions, of no man more sincerely, than of him by whom you are now addressed.

In appreciating the value of my advice, be pleased to reflect, for a moment, on the history and fate of the SINKING-FUND, which I, just twenty-five years ago, *proved* to be what I called it, "*a splendid and mischievous humbug*," and besought the Parliament to get rid of it; for which I was denounced, in the fine old *Anti-Jacobin's* eye, as "*an enemy of the country*," and that, too, in that very House of Commons, where the humbug has now been put an end to by *acclamation*, and one of the Members of which has expressed his hope, that the *w. rds.* Sinking-Fund, will never again be *heard in that House!* Aye, aye, Mr. MABERLY, Member of the *free and independent* borough of Abingdon; not "*in that House*," if you like; but these *words* must and shall be again and again heard, "*out of doors*," as the insolent phrase is: they must be kept fresh in the minds of a people, brought to ruin and beggary, during the existence of a House of Commons that CANNING told us "*worked well*"; and that Mr. ROBINSON told us, caused blessings to be poured out upon us, "*from the portals of an ancient constitutional monarchy*." This was one of the great props of the paper-money monopoly and fraud, which will not long survive this once splendid and applauded, but now beggarly and despised, humbug.

In conclusion of this too long letter, let me beseech you to mark the *rage* which the Rooks evince against you. Their years of abuse on *me* they could safely indulge in, and be, at the same time, the greatest cowards on earth; but to say, and in *print* too, as one of them lately did, in the *GLOBE* newspaper, under the name of "*A SCOTCH BANKER*," that, if you persevered in the Act of 1826,* "*the revolutionary axe, or a*

cross-road grave, would be your fate," was indicative of that sort of fury and despair which fill the bosom of the tigress, when she sees both her prey and her young snatched away, while the toils or the bullet has deprived her of the power of revenge. Safely may you set at defiance the wrath of these bands of tame cheaters, at whose fall all good men will rejoice, while all sensible and just men will remember that, from this cruel scourge, the nation owes its deliverance to you.

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE COBBETTITES,

ON THEIR PRESENT TRIUMPH OVER THEIR STUPID, BASE
AND MALIGNANT ENEMIES.

(*Political Register*, October, 1829.)

"Let the fools and knaves rail on, I know that I am pursuing the thorny path; I know that I am to endure everything that envy and hatred, backed by unbounded power, can suggest and execute; I know that I have to encounter difficulties and dangers of every description; but I also know, that God, in his goodness, has been pleased to give me a sound mind in a sound body; I know that I am pursuing the path of wisdom and truth as well as of thorns; I know that at *time*, which I pray God to give me, will bring me a triumph over all my unjust and savage foes, and that I shall laugh when their knees will be knocking together, and 'mock when their fear cometh.'"—*Register, State Prison, Newgate, 10th August, 1810.*

MY FRIENDS,

Barn-Elm Farm, 14th October, 1829.

Look at the motto, and at its *date*. To you, who in spite of reproach and persecution, have remained firm by my side through all the dismal days that we have had to endure between that date and the date which this Register bears, and under which it comes to your hand and meets your eye; to you more especially I address myself in this day of our triumph; this day of just judgment on our foul, now-fallen and once-insolent foes, of whom, in the same Register, I said: "O! how just will be their punishment! They think, stupid as well as malicious beasts, that their turn is *never to come*. By and by they will begin to *reflect upon the past*. No: they will not do that: they will still persevere. They will go on to the last with their insolent accusations against me, and against all those who doubt of the goodness of that system, which will have plunged them into alarms and distresses. Let them! Let them go on. Let them, since nothing has in so long a time been able to mollify their malignity, be caught at last, with curses on their lips. Let them, as the thing comes on, fry with the continual vexation that it will not fail to engender; and at last, *let them be smothered with the overflowings of their own gall!*" AMEN! Will you all, with a hearty good will, respond now at nineteen years distance from the day of the denunciation; for to you, these have been nineteen years of insolent reproach and of base persecution; nineteen years of efforts to cause your ruin, the destruction of you and your families, for no reason on earth but

that you adhered to truth and to me. And shall we not now triumph; shall we not now feel delight; shall we not now express our satisfaction that events have brought our base and cruel foes on their knees; shall we not call aloud to the whole world to witness this result of our long-fought battle; this victory gained by our wisdom, our industry, our courage, our matchless perseverance? Shall we be hypocrites enough to affect not to feel pleasure; shall we be poltroons enough to suppress an expression of it? Shall we now affect forgetfulness of our long-endured wrongs; shall we accept of the caresses of now-impotent malice; shall we tarnish our fair fame by a compromise with infamy in its agony; shall we, by disguising our exultation, diminish the humiliation of those at whose dismay and degradation honest nature bids us rejoice! O, God! to whose health-giving hand I owe so much, keep the coward thought from entering my heart!

O, no! The *whole world* shall hear of, and all the good part of it shall exult at, our triumph; for, against the evil of tremendous power to contend with, we have the good of perfect notoriety: our foes have been the most powerful in the world, but they are also the *best known*. They were proud of the eminence from which they fought us; but that eminence now serves to expose their shame. Their troubles now attract the *attention of all nations*; and as we, and we only, have laboured to prevent those troubles, *all nations* must, and will, be witnesses of our victory; and it is due to you, as well as to myself, to neglect no means of insuring the universal notoriety. What, then, have been the *grounds* and *nature* of this warfare; and how stands the *contest now*? As to these *grounds*, I have, for twenty-six years, contended for the truth of the following propositions:—

1. That it was, without producing general ruin, impossible to continue to pay the interest of the Debt, in full, and in gold of full weight and fineness.
2. That, therefore, there must be either a reduction of that interest, or a small, and, of course, depreciated paper-money.
3. That taxation was the great cause of the nation's sufferings.

For maintaining these propositions; for urging them on the attention of the people; for persevering in these endeavours, what have I not had to endure, and what have you not had to endure for having avowed your conviction of their truth, and your attachment to their author, whose now long life has been one unbroken series of efforts to serve and to honour his country, and in whose *hundred volumes* there is not to be found one single sentence, containing precept or sentiment tending to make a bad parent, a bad child, a bad husband, a bad master, a bad servant, a bad subject; and in which, at almost every line, something is not discovered evincing a sincere anxiety to mend the lot of the least fortunate, and most laborious part, of the people.

That such a man, resolving to live on the fruit of his own labours, and to resist every temptation to participate in the public spoil; that such a man should be hated by placemen and place-hunters, by pensioners, sinecure people, by peculators of every name and of every degree; that he should be hated by all the endless swarm of blood-suckers, from the giant loan-jobber and army-purveyor down to the killer of bugs; that such a man should be abhorred by all these, and, indeed, by every other who felt that his meals consisted of deductions from those of the payers of taxes;

that such people should detest, and basely conspire against such a man, and though, perhaps, hating each other, should cordially join in efforts for his destruction: that this should have been the case was natural enough. Nor were we to be surprised, that the *press*, too often under the influence of that *envy*, which is its greatest, though not only disgrace, should, in many cases, have lent its powerful aid in the enterprise. But that men, not bound by any such ties; men who had no real interest opposed to my doctrines and endeavours; men whose manifest interest it was to attend to, to support and to give weight to, my exertions; that such men as these, and that, too, in numbers so great, should have volunteered into the ranks of my enemies, and should, in many cases, have surpassed the natural foe in point of black-hearted malignity, can be ascribed to nothing short of that *innate baseness*, which enlists the dirty soul under the banners of power and of wealth, from whatever source proceeding, and for whatever purposes employed.

It is against this combination, extensive as the air, destructive as the pestilence, that I have had to contend, and that you, in your several circles, have had to contend along with me; and is there, in the minds of men or of devils, the capacity of inventing a malignant device, which has not been put in practice against us? Some of these monsters, now that they themselves begin to suffer, accuse me of "gloating on the sufferings of the country." How many years have they gloated on our troubles and sufferings! And that, too, without any provocation; without any cause, except that we stated facts and used arguments, that they were not able to deny or to answer? Have I ever had a cause of sorrow at which they did not rejoice; have I ever endured a wrong without their applauding, and, if practicable, cherishing the wrong-doer; did they not vomit forth a volcano of mirth when imprisonment and exile were my lot; did they feel their joy arrested by considerations for *my* wife and family; did they ever feel one particle of compassion for any one, male or female, grown person or child, that belonged to me? The *history of my life* (which shall assuredly come forth as soon as I have the leisure) is the history of the baseness, the incomparable baseness, of millions of English men, and of English women too; many of the latter of whom, as they have, in this work of base calumny, vied with the other sex, have now to suffer in their company. Tell me not of their "*prejudices*," excited by "*misrepresentations*." The "*misrepresentations*" were grounded on *my writings*: they should have read these: if they did, their hatred was native villany and not "*prejudice*"; it was the antipathy of bad to good; and if they did not, they were guilty of deciding on hearing the evidence only of one side, and were justly chargeable with moral perjury.

Such has been the nature of this long, and to us perilous, warfare; and now let us see what is the *present state of the contest*. During the more than twenty years of its duration, speech-makers, writers in all shapes, ministers, parliaments, have been speaking, writing, resolving and enacting, in hostility to my *three propositions*; and, as it were, for the express, and even the sole purpose of *giving them the lie*. At times they have thought that they had succeeded; and then, O God! how they shouted, how they have exulted! Manœuvre after manœuvre have they tried; but always, at every trial, losing more and more ground; till at last, hemmed up by their own movements, they are compelled to complete the work of general ruin, or to yield to that very opponent, whom they have always affected to despise; and this, too, while having at their

head a chief who has, for years, been the object of the adulation of all our base calumniators and persecutors.

Something they must now do ; some new move must they now make ; and they can do nothing which will not give us the victory, and that, too, in so decided and evident a manner as to leave not a particle of doubt in the mind of any man in the whole world. They must do one of five things :

1. Re-issue the small paper-money.
2. Debase the value of the coin.
3. Reduce the interest of the Debt.
4. Make an equitable adjustment.
5. Push the nation on into a convulsion.

One or the other of these they *must* do ; and, do which they will, our triumph is complete. And now, assured of this, let me beg your attention to the language which other parts of the press is now beginning to hold ; a specimen of which I give you from the *Glasgow Free Press*.

“ Were the PRESS, at the present crisis, to discharge *its duty faithfully*, by constantly urging upon the attention of Ministers those facts connected with the *country's distress*, which are too palpable to escape the notice of even the most blind, our rulers would soon be forced from their present position of indifferent neutrality, and compelled to do something with a view to effect improvement ; but by *one part of the press* still disingenuously making it a question whether the country be actually in distress or not ! all who have the power but not the will to remove that distress, are furnished with a plausible excuse for standing aloof with their hands folded, and permitting the evil to go on to the farthest extent that it may. And no wonder that such an excuse is eagerly laid hold of by *men to whom the present state of things is furnishing a harvest of abundance* ; for by the Act which extinguished the small-note currency, the value of money was in effect *more than doubled*, and thus all *who live upon the taxes*, draw from those who pay them more than *double the amount of produce to which they are justly entitled*. This wholesale exaction (the terrors of the law prevent us from calling it robbery) falls not upon the poorer of the industrious classes alone : it falls with equal weight upon the landholder, the farmer, the artisan, the merchant, the manufacturer ; in short, upon *all who contribute to, but do not draw anything from, the taxes*. And thus it is, that by what appears to thousands an *invisible agency*, the wealth of the country is melting away from the possession of those whose industry and talents produced it, and *becoming heaped up in masses in the hands of Jews, and jobbers, and gamblers in the Funds, and all who either directly or indirectly draw their subsistence from the public revenue*. When, therefore, it is mentioned that there exist many millions who are interested in supporting this state of things, and among others, the entire of *our salaried executive*, we shall, perhaps, have hit upon the secret which gives to the press of London its present tone, and inspires the Ministry with such apathetic disregard of the people's sufferings.”

When you have taken time to breathe, my friends, take pen and ink, and endeavour to calculate how many hundreds of times, even ten or fifteen years ago, you had to read this from under my pen ; and, imagine, if you can, how many blows on the head with a poker, or how many stabs in the bowels with a knife, millions of base and stupid reptiles would have given me upon any one of these occasions for writing, and you, for reading and believing in, statements precisely similar to these. Not from Glasgow, however, where sense and reason are more in vogue than in most other places ; not from amongst the intelligent and spirited part of the people of Scotland do these sentiments now come : they come from every part of the kingdom, not even Ireland excepted. Seldom, indeed, in a manner so pithy and so spirited ; but from all quarters they

come. Innumerable country papers, formerly, and, in some instances even still, the calumniators of me and of you, now join in this general complaint; that the Parliament has doubled the value of the money; that it has thereby, in fact, doubled the amount of the taxes; that the tax payers are giving away their estates and their property to the tax-receivers; that the poor-rates are augmented because the tax-receivers are drawing from the gentlemen, the farmers, the merchants, the manufacturers and traders, the means of paying wages to the labouring classes; and that, therefore, this change in the value of the money is the sole immediate cause of the country's intolerable distress.

In my last Register I suggested, that it might be possible for the Legislature to do a thing, which, according to the constitution, they had no right to do. In *SALKELD* (505) there is an opinion of the famous *LORD HOLT*, recorded in the following words, as delivered from the Bench: "That the authority of Parliament is from the law, and as it is circumscribed by law, so it may be exceeded; and if they do exceed those legal bounds and authority, their acts are wrongful, and cannot be justified any more than the acts of private men." During the last session of Parliament, *LORD HAREWOOD* questioned the right of the Parliament to pass an Act authorizing a sale of the dead bodies of the people; "For," said his Lordship, "if they can do this, why have they not the power to pass an Act to sell the live bodies of the people; and this, I believe, none of your Lordships will contend that Parliament has a right to do." There is, then, a limit to the power of the Parliament; or why may we not contend that the Parliament would have a right, if it chose, to pass a law to put men to death without trial, to have children strangled in their birth, to cause the breasts of women to be cut from their bodies? There is then a limit; and that limit is pointed out not by mere feelings of humanity; not by the mere caprices and the changes of opinion in men, but by the constitution of the country; and though there is no written and specific limit fixed, the power of the Parliament must be supposed to be limited by the uniform principles and usages of the law, existing in this country.

Now, according to what principle, according to what usage in our law, is it that an Act can be passed and enforced, to double, in a manner however indirect, the contribution of any private man towards the revenue levied for the use of the State? That the contributions have thus been doubled, and, indeed, trebled, since the time that the major part of the taxes were imposed, no man of any knowledge and of any reputation will attempt to deny; and if this be contrary to all the principles and usages of our laws, can the Parliament have had a right to pass such an Act?

I am not supposing it to have done the thing wilfully, and with wrongful intention; but this has nothing to do with the matter: the question is, whether the Parliament have a right to pass an Act having such an effect, and to proceed in the enforcing of that Act. Let us take a particular instance here. For every tax there is the authority of an Act of Parliament, emanating from the principle that Englishmen are not to be taxed without their own consent, and that the Parliament represents all Englishmen. Let us take, now, the tax upon servants, and suppose that a gentleman has three pounds to pay annually on account of this tax. The law says, that he shall pay the three pounds; but here comes another Act of Parliament, not making any mention of this tax, and this new Act compels him to pay nine pounds, instead of three. Is it possible for any

man to contend that the Parliament has a right to pass this second Act, without at all adverting to the former, which, in effect, it nullifies? This second Act imposes six pounds on the gentleman clearly without his consent; and this appears to be totally at variance with every principle of the law.

But this right of the Parliament I do not think of importance, except as it tends to illustrate that which has been done; and that by the time that the Small-note Bill shall have produced the whole of its effects, it will have more than trebled the taxes, as those taxes stood in 1814. This has been made so clear, and the elucidation has been so often repeated, that it is fatiguing even to oneself to repeat statements relative to the matter; and this is now no longer necessary, because the whole country does seem, at last, to perceive it. But there is one thing, with regard to which an obstinate blindness seems still to prevail; I mean the effect which the taxes have in the producing of this distress; and the notion that the taxes, whatever may be their amount, are not so much *loss* to the people; because, being spent by the receivers of them, they *return again* to those who pay them. You, my friends, are not to be deceived by fallacies connected with this subject; but many others are, and I will here, therefore, make some observations upon these two matters. To make myself the more clearly intelligible, I will state these two prevalent errors in distinct propositions.

1. That the taxes are not the cause of the distress.

2. That the taxes return again to the tax-payers, because they are spent by the tax-receivers.

With regard to the first of these, how does the distress make its *appearance*? What makes a farmer, for instance, say that he is *in distress*? What, in short, does this distress mean? It means the want of a sufficiency of money. The farmer has not so much money as he wants for the payment of his rent, his labourers, his tradesmen, and other demands, created by the cultivation of his farm and the expenses of his family; and of the want of this money consists his distress. Now, his distress may arise from his extravagance, or from some particular misfortune. But general distress must have a general cause; and, if he take time to calculate, he will find that the present distress arises from the trebling of the taxes. He complains bitterly enough of the weight of the poor-rates; because the poor-rates pass from his own hand in money to the overseer. Yet, in fact, those poor-rates are not paid by him, except in proportion to the amount of his property and consumption; because the amount of the poor-rates, which he is the payer of, is collected back again by him from those to whom he sells his produce. In like manner it is not the farmer who pays the tithes: the consumers of the produce pay these also: he is no more than the channel through which the tithes and the poor-rates pass. He bears his proportion according to his consumption, and no more; but he complains of the weight of the poor-rates, because he sees the money pass from his own hand to that of the parish officer.

That which is received by the poor in the shape of relief and maintenance, amounts to about six millions a year; that which is levied for other purposes, by the Government, amounts, for England and Wales only, to about fifty-five millions a year, including the tax-gatherer's own share. The farmer thinks nothing of these fifty-five millions, while he is fretting and fuming and storming about the six millions. Talk to him about fifty

five millions, and he cannot understand you ; but if he were to take a piece of paper, and put down what he pays in a year for the use of his own house, on his malt, sugar, soap, candles, tea, coffee, pepper, paper, stamps, and all the other endless variety of things, leaving out wine and such things as he ought not to use, he would find that one-half of the whole of the things consumed in his family, that family costing him, perhaps, eighty or a hundred pounds a year, is tax. But this is but a glimpse at what he pays : there is tax on his iron, on his steel, on his leather, his timber, his bricks, his tiles, and on every thing relating to his implements and his buildings. His collar-maker, blacksmith, and wheelwright, have all taxes to pay on every thing which they consume ; and how are they to pay them unless they receive them from the farmers for whom they work ? Of the tradesmen in the towns, of whom he buys his linen, his woollen, and his groceries, his knives, and spoons, and plates, and dishes ; of these, also, he must pay his share of the taxes on all that they consume or wear. Then comes the *labourer* : then comes six, eight, or ten men, who all consume more or less of taxable commodities ; and if they do not get from him the money wherewith to pay the tax, how are they to have the commodities ? Let any farmer take a labourer, and let him *sit down* with him for once, and write upon a piece of paper the divers articles upon which the man has expended, perhaps, his ten shillings in the week. He will find, if he refer to the taxing book, that more than six shillings out of the ten are actually gone to the tax-gatherer. And he will, therefore, find, that, if the taxes were taken off, the man would be better off with six shillings a week than with ten ; and that, for him to become a pauper in the absence of taxes, would be a thing so unreasonable as not to be tolerated except under certain particular circumstances.

The farmer would find, in short, his expenditure diminished much more than one-half by the total removing of the taxes ; but he would find himself sufficiently relieved, and would know nothing of general distress, if the taxes were diminished by about two-thirds ; that is to say, reduced to one-third part of what they are now ; and that, at the present value of money, is about the mark to which they ought to be reduced. Now, as to the other great error, that the taxes, though they be great in amount, return *back again* to those who pay them, because they are spent in the country. This was the curious idea of BURKE, expressed in a pamphlet written just after he had got a pension out of these very taxes of 3000 pounds a year, to last for two lives after his own life should expire. How false the notion is, we are just going to see. In the first place, it is not true that the taxes are all spent in the country : a large part of them, or, at least, a considerable part of them, are spent out of the country ; and if these do come back, their return must be very slow, and their arrival very late. But if this notion were correct, why does the farmer grumble at the poor-rates, seeing that they are not only spent in the country, but in the parish ; yet no one ever pretends that they are not a burden ! All manner of devices have been tried to diminish them : committee after committee, debate after debate, Act after Act, project after project : absolutely no end to the efforts to lighten this burden of the poor-rates, which has been represented as taking from the landlord his estate, and dividing it amongst the labourers ; but the poor-rate is a tax after all ; and if taxes, according to Burke's idea, come back like dew to enrich the land from whence they have been raised, why all these efforts to di-

minish the poor-rates; and why should they, above all other taxes, take from the landlord his estate, when it is notorious that the poor-rates are spent in the parish itself? Why should the estate be taken away by this comparatively trifling tax, while none of our law-givers ever appear to think it in danger from taxes tenfold in amount?

But, how is it that taxes return? By what process do they come back again? Suppose there to be a tax upon a particular farmer amounting to a pound a week, collected weekly, and suppose there to be a tax-eater residing in the village, to whom the farmer pays this tax. Now, this tax shall not only be spent in the country; not only spent in the parish, but spent with the farmer himself. The tax-eater comes on the Saturday night, and receives his pound, and, on the Monday morning, he comes and lays out with the farmer the amount of the pound in meat, butter, eggs, or other produce of his farm, and gives him the sovereign back again. It comes back to the farmer, but it comes to fetch away a part of his property. Suppose there to be a tax-eater thus fixed upon every hundred acres of land in England, the taxes would all come back again, to be sure; but they would come to fetch away property; and, according to their amount, would take just so much away from the farmer, who would have so much less to pay to his landlord, his tradesmen, his labourers, and to enjoy in his own family, or to increase his stores or his stock.

The Scotch *feelosophers* have put the following case; or, rather, laid down the following proposition: that it is nothing to the farmer whether he pay the whole of his rent to the landlord, or a part to him, and a part to the parson; and that, if the fundholder or other tax-eater come and take another share of the rent, it is nothing to the farmer, so long as he pays only the same sum; and this is very true as far as relates to the farmer himself; but it makes a vast difference to the landlord; for it is very clear that the share which the tax-eater receives, he cannot receive; and if he do not receive it, he cannot give the employment which he otherwise would have given, and being less able to favour the farmer than he would have been, the latter cannot be able to give the same employment, and the land must, therefore, be robbed for the purpose of enriching the receiver of the taxes. It is very true that all the taxes that the farmer pays directly and indirectly, must, unless he be ruined, be paid by the consumers of his produce; but *he himself is a consumer*; and, in the general oppression, he must have his share.

It is said, that, if, in consequence of the taxes, the owners of the land have not the means of affording employment; that if they do not, with that money which is paid in taxes, employ labourers, those to whom the taxes are paid *will employ them*; and that, therefore, here is only a shifting of the labourers from one master to another. This, however, is a very destructive sort of shifting; for, if we were to allow that there would be just as much paid for labour in the one case as in the other, we ought to satisfy ourselves that it could be as *productive* in the one case as in the other; and that the removal of the scene of action of these labourers would not be the cause of a destruction, an *absolute destruction*, of human food, and other valuable things. Is it possible for a man worthy of being called a *statesman* to open his eyes, and not to perceive this waste, this destruction, this misapplication of wages, which have now been going on for several years? No man that looks at this WEN and its environs: no man who reflects on the large part of the produce of the

whole of the island that is brought up to this Wen; no man that considers the immense quantities of human food that are absolutely destroyed in it; no man that considers that its population, including ten miles round, exceeds that of the counties of Bedford, Berks, Bucks, Cambridge, Chester, Cornwall, Cumberland, Derby, and Dorset, being eight out of the forty-two counties of England itself: no man that considers that each of the persons here must, on an average, consume as much as two, if not three, in the villages, and who reflects that a *full fourth part*, at the least, of the whole of the produce of England and Wales, meat, bread, cheese, butter, is consumed in this all-devouring place; no man that considers these things, and who has eyes to see the destruction of human food in this place, will deny that there is more of it goes down the common sewers, or into the coal-holes, than would feed the whole population of a considerable county. So that it is of no trifling consequence, that you remove the food from the mouths of those who labour, and carry it to be swallowed or wasted by those who do not labour. The same holds good with regard to every great place, as well as with regard to London, only in a smaller degree.

Then, as to the misapplication of wages. Suppose a tax-eater to live in a village, and to take from the farms of that village, two hundred pounds a year. Suppose him to employ, about his house and gardens, persons to receive altogether just as great a sum in wages, as the farmers in the village would have expended in wages if they had not had a tax-eater to keep, and if the two hundred pounds had remained in their pockets instead of going into his. Is there no *difference*, I pray, between the effect of wages bestowed upon a footman, a groom, a coachman, or a gardener, and the effect of the same sum of wages bestowed upon men who work in the fields? Must there not be less produce in those fields? Will not the footman *waste* more than the field labourer? Will not a part of the wages which would have gone to the labourer, and would have served to give him warm clothes, be wasted upon the back of the footman? Is there, in short, a man in existence so blind as not to perceive the vast difference in the effects of productive and unproductive labour?

Look, then, at the face of the country, including this Wen. Behold the effects of taking property from one man and giving it to another: see the monstrous streets, and squares, and circuits, and crescents; see the pulling down of streets, and building up new ones: see the making of bridges and tunnels, till the Thames itself trembles at the danger of being inarched and undermined: behold the everlasting ripping-up of pavements, and the tumblings-up of the earth to form drains and sewers, till all beneath us is like a honeycomb: look at the innumerable thousands employed in cracking the stones upon the highways, while the docks and thistles and couch-grass, are choking the land on the other side of the hedges: see England, this land of plenty and of never-ending stores, without an old wheat-rick, and with not more than a stock of two-thirds of the former cattle upon the farms: see the troops of half-starved creatures flocking from the fields, and, in their smock-frocks and nailed shoes, begging their way up to this scene of waste, in order to get a chance snap at the crumbs and the orts rejected by the sons and daughters of idleness and luxury: look at all this, thou Scotch *feelosopher*! have the brass to deny the facts, or acknowledge, that of all the destructive things

that can fall upon a nation ; of all the horrid curses that can afflict it, none is equal to that of robbing productive labour of its reward, of taking from the industrious and giving to the idle.

It is a rare thing, as you all well know, for an ox or a wether-sheep to be killed, not in a village, but in a country town, unless it be of the larger description. This devouring place leaves to the country, even in Scotland, little besides the mere offal. That which cannot be sent dead, is sent alive, and, in both cases, loaded with all the expenses of conveyance ; in the one case, with carriage, by boats or by horses ; and, in the other case, with the expense of driving, including the loss of flesh and the deterioration of that which remains. I lived in a village many years, and never knew the butcher kill a wether-sheep ; and, as to an ox, the thing was wholly out of the question. The bad, the lean, the refuse, is left to be consumed by those who raise the whole ; and all this arises from the transfer carried on incessantly by the tax-gatherer : those who raise the food, starve ; those who consume it, wallow in luxury.

The same argument, by which it has been attempted to persuade us that the mass of the people suffer nothing from this transfer of property from hand to hand by means of the taxes ; that argument which would aim at convincing us that the expending of wages is just as advantageous in the hands of the tax-eater as in the hands of the farmer ; that same argument would apply equally well to an army of soldiers as to an army of footmen and grooms, or other assistants in the work of luxury. Yet, if a man, Scotch *feelosopher* or not, were to set about seriously to maintain, that it was no burden to a people to maintain an army in the country ; for that, as they must eat and drink after they are soldiers as well as before, it would be of no consequence to the people, seeing that the taxes received by the soldiers would come back again to them. If a man were to set about seriously to maintain this, he would be considered as in jest or insane ; and yet it is impossible to show that there is, in the *effects*, any difference between the maintaining of an army, and the maintaining of tax-eaters of any other description.

FORTESCUE, in his *De Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, describes the people of France, as being in his day, in a most wretched state, owing to the heavy taxes that they were compelled to pay ; describes their wretched food and wretched drink ; and describes the soldiers as eating the poultry, while the poor people scarcely got the eggs, by way of dainty ; and he concludes by observing that, if a man by chance became rich, he was presently so taxed, as to be reduced to a level with the rest. The picture which he gives of the French in those days, would suit the English at this present day. Causes which are the same produce in all places, and at all times, the same effects : heavy taxes made beggars of the working people of France ; and they have made beggars of those of England.

The REMEDY, then, is, not to return to the miserable and infamous paper-money ; not to take up again that system of fraud, and of every thing that is vile ; but to reduce the taxes ; to make them less, and thereby enable the farmers and traders to give employment for useful and productive purposes. There is no other way in which to arrest the progress which is now going on, and which, if it be pushed to the extremity, must, after beggaring the landowners, and all the productive classes, the merchant, the manufacturer, the trader and all the rest, produce a general and terrible convulsion. We have read of, and some of us have seen, the horrible system of shutting the labourers up in pounds like cattle. The

reason of this is, that they apply to the parish for relief, the farmers being unable to employ them and pay them wages. The overseer having no work for them to do, being unable to find any tax-eater to employ them, shuts them up during the day in the parish pound, like cattle, in order to keep them from prowling about ; and, also, in order to make their life as irksome as possible, and thereby to drive them away to seek employment in some distant part. This has already endangered the peace of two or three counties, and, if persevered in, must lead to fearful consequences. In Suffolk, and in some other parts, there have been dreadful acts of *arson*. At one place in Suffolk, the whole of the produce of the harvest, and amongst other things, a thousand quarters of corn, have been consumed. It is stated in the Suffolk papers, that the perpetrators have been sent to gaol. This is a pretty awful beginning of the season which has just now begun. From isolated acts of this sort, so frightful to contemplate, others and more numerous, it is to be apprehended, must follow, unless relief be afforded. The crime itself is one deserving the severest punishment that the law can inflict, short of that which is due to murder ; but it is useless to depict the crime ; it is useless to reason with revenge stimulated by hunger ; and therefore something ought to be done, and that speedily, too, to give security to those who are so much exposed, and whose situation, not arising in general from any fault of theirs, is so cruelly perilous.

There appears to be a notion, which has gained ground, and has been regularly gaining ground, ever since the hundred from Ireland made part of the House of Commons, that the poor-rates ought to be considered as a positive and unquestionable evil ; that the Act of Elizabeth ought never to have been passed, and, at any rate, not to have received that humane construction, which it did receive for upwards of two hundred years. The broacher of this new doctrine, was the insolent and hard-hearted MALTHUS, who soon made an abundance of proselytes ; and whose doctrines continue to be cherished by almost every one who speaks or writes upon the subject. To lessen the amount of the poor-rates, has been constantly the cry ; to prevent the poor from eating up the estates of the gentlemen ; never looking at the cause of the poor being so very poor ; never dreaming, apparently, that the fifty-five millions of taxes had anything to do with the matter ; and never casting a thought upon the subject of the wishes and inclinations of the poor themselves ; never seeming to imagine that what they might think or do was of any consequence ; but seeming to suppose, that, if told by Act of Parliament, that they must live without relief, they would quietly and contentedly live without relief, or quietly and contentedly die. This was a very great mistake. It seems to have been forgotten, that the forefathers of these poor, compelled the cruel Elizabeth, and the cormorants, grantees, and monopolizers of her reign, to pass the first poor-laws ; these projectors seem to have wholly forgotten, or never to have known, that the labouring people of England inherit, from their fathers, not any principle, not any doctrine, not any rule or maxim relative to this matter, but the habit of regarding parish relief as their right as much as they think the right of the landlord to his land is unquestionable. These projectors ought to have known something of the habit of the people's mind in this respect. Every one of them looks upon it that he has a species of property in his parish ; they talk of *losing* their parishes as a man talks of losing his estate ; and this is very right, the great evil being, at present, that so many of them are really forced to lose

their parishes. Now, men may talk, and do whatever else they please, and as long as they please, they never will persuade the labourers of England, that a living out of the land is not their right in exchange for the labour which they yield or tender. This being the case, the thing to be aimed at, is to give them employment; and this employment is to be given them in sufficient quantity only by putting a stop to the transfer of the product of labour to the mouths of those who do not labour; and this stop is to be put in no way but that of taking off the taxes.

The landowners seem, at present, to be making an attempt to compel the Government to begin in this good work, by petitioning for a relief from the malt-tax. They have so little of firmness in them; they have so often betrayed their want of courage, and, indeed, their want of sense and sincerity, that little, perhaps, is to be expected from them; but, if they persevere in this attack upon the system, they will soon bring the system to terms; because a repeal of the malt-tax would be a virtual repeal of the beer-tax and of the spirit-tax and of a great part of the tax upon wine, tea, sugar, and coffee. The excise would be hardly worth collecting; of the twenty-six millions, or thereabouts, which it now yields annually, it would soon yield, perhaps, not more than ten; and if the salaried people, the dead-weight, the soldiers and sailors were paid, the fundholder would have but a short account.

I expressed my apprehension before, and I repeat it now, that I am very much afraid that this threat relative to the malt-tax has in view nothing but forcing the Ministers to return to the small-paper money; and if that be the object, and that alone, it can only serve to lead to new measures about this same paper-money, to shuffle off the suffering for the present, and finally secure its return, and, at last, to produce a total blowing-up of the system, accompanied with all the terrible dangers, the natural companions of such a result.

However, my friends, be done what will, we are right: there can be no measure adopted now that shall not give us a triumph. I am already paid for all my toils and sufferings in this cause. I shall now be overpaid, particularly in the reflection that you will all be participators in that victory which will be the just reward of your constancy, which has lasted for so many years; and which will not fail to be your pride and your boast to the last hour of your lives. With these sentiments, I remain, my friends,

Your most faithful, most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON
ON THE
SMALL NOTE-BILL.

(*Political Register, April, 1829.*)

"That, if the law, as it now stands, be put into full force, wheat (barring the effect of seasons) cannot, on an average of years, be worth more than four shillings a bushel; and that, then, every person who receives nothing out of the taxes, will, in reality, be paying four times as much in tax as he paid in 1818; that to prevent the present law from going into full effect, nothing will be sufficient, short of making Bank-notes a *legal tender*; and that then, there would be a bankruptcy as clear as any that ever took place in the world. That, on the other hand, if the present law be persevered in, there must be a *general insolvency amongst the people at large*."—REGISTER, 19th JAN. 1828.

Barn Elm Farm, 5th April, 1829.

MY LORD DUKE,

Auspicious day! The *Catholic religion* and the *gold coin*; the religion of our ancestors and "the currency of our ancestors," restored on one and the same day. *Last night* the former question was decided, at the end of a struggle of about *three hundred years*: to-day, the Small-note Abolition Bill comes into effect; and, at the end of *thirty-two years*, gold is to supply the place of snips of dirty paper! These are great changes; they are salutary changes; and these changes we owe to you, who appear to have been made to humble our *domestic* as well as our *foreign* foes.

However, this *small-note* affair is not yet quite settled. You have "settled" the Catholic Question; you have set that "at rest for ever"; on that score we are all comfortable. But this *small-note* affair is not yet quite "settled." At least, so it would appear from the following article, which I take from the *Old Times newspaper* of Thursday last. And this paper is, you know, the *oracle* of all the fools in the kingdom, high and low. It ought to be called the GIPSY; for it never tells a fortune, till it has first found out what the party *wishes* or *believes*. However, let us first hear it.

"Of the depressed situation of trade in this city, to which we have before had occasion to advert, it is scarcely possible to convey an adequate idea; and it is greatly to be feared that its effects extend more or less to every part of the country. What tends materially to keep what is going on from the knowledge of the public, is, that a multitude of insolvencies, which in ordinary times would find their way into the *Gazette*, are disposed of by private compromise among the creditors, because it would only tend to make the mischief greater to reveal its extent; and, perhaps, too, the heavy law-expenses contingent upon bankruptcies, cannot in many cases be afforded. It is remarked by those brokers who are in the habit of making the most extensive sales of produce of various

kind, that there is scarcely a staple article of consumption which has not fallen within five or six months 20 per cent. or more, in value, and yet, by the present ruinous prices none of that demand for the Continent, which is their usual effect, is created. The late immense importations of grain from the Continent, judging from previous experience, had led to the expectation, that from this cause some activity would be given to our spring trade; but even this hitherto has not been realized; and the state of despondency which in consequence exists among the merchants, is beyond anything of the kind, perhaps, ever witnessed. *Even the internal trade of the country, which is still more remarkable, seems to be nearly at a stand; and persons connected with the management of our great canals, observe, that on most of them there is literally nothing doing. It is impossible this state of things can last much longer; for consumption must, after all, go on nearly as usual; but the sufferers are hardly to be consoled with this expectation, which has so long mocked them with the appearance that relief is at hand; and in the meantime, there cannot be any doubt that, under the immediate effects of the present stagnation, the revenue of the country materially suffers.*"

The wisdom of this, the wisdom of believing that "this state of things cannot continue much longer, because consumption must go on nearly as usual." That is to say, that relief must come, because the pressure cannot be much longer borne: the wisdom of this I leave to be discovered by Lord CLIFDEN, who, a few days ago, said that there was no fear of a people being deluded who had circulated amongst them such publications as *The Times newspaper*! But, leaving the wisdom of it to be discovered by his Lordship, I shall say a little about its facts. And, first, let it be remembered, that this oracle of fools here says *precisely the reverse* of what it has been saying for many months past. From the time that the Scotch Small-note Bill was passed; nay, before it was actually passed, this vile newspaper, which is a scandal to the country, contended most vociferously, that that Bill ought to be enforced, that all small-notes ought to be abolished; that, indeed, there ought to be no notes under *twenty pounds*; that it was necessary to restore gold payments completely, and that none but fools apprehended a fall of prices, or any difficulties in trade or agriculture, from a return to the gold money. This was for months the language of this same paper upon this subject, and it has continued to be its language until now. The truth is this: the Londoners in general (and it is they who buy this paper) were fools enough to imagine, that the Small-note Bill would not affect THEM! And they actually rejoiced at your adherence to it. They said, as Prosperity Robinson had, that the country notes were *worthless rags*; they ascribed the "*late panic*" to the country notes; and they laughed at the poor rag-rooks, whose trade was about to be annihilated. Their oracle fell in with their opinions, as it always does; and thus, like the false friend, conducted them to their destruction, they smiling all the while, and ridiculing the rag-rooks.

They have now, even before the Small-note Bill has gone into full effect, found that this is *no laughing matter* for them; that the ruin of the rag-rooks and their customers cannot take place without extending ruin to the Londoners. These latter will find out in due time, that money cannot be sent to them from the country, unless it be in the country. They have not found this out yet; but they will find it out. They have, in the words of their gipsy-oracle, found out that trade is in a "*depressed situation*, of which it is *scarcely possible to form an adequate idea*; but they appear not to perceive the cause"; nor to have the least idea that any part of the "*depression*" arises from your Bill, or rather your, and my, and Prosperity Robinson's, Bill. Their Gipsy

newspaper has just as much sense as they themselves have ; and they will be involved in complete confusion before they will discover the cause. They are now wondering how it is that they *get no orders from the country* ; how it is that the canals and waggons are so lightly laden ; how it is that no money comes from the country ; and they have found out that London is a poor place, unless it can find customers out of itself. All this they have discovered ; but not a man of them ascribes the falling off in his trade to our nice little Small-note Bill ! “ There are no small-
“ notes in London, and *why should there be any in the country ?* They
“ can be of *no use to trade* ; for we have had none in *London* for many
“ years.” This is the way the Wen-people reason, if reasoning it can be called ; and this is the way in which the Gtesy has been reasoning for the last nine or ten months.

That has taken place, and is taking place, which every man of sense expected. It was impossible to abolish the one-pound notes without lessening the whole quantity of the currency ; without causing there to be less money afloat in the country than there was before ; and this could not take place without a lowering of prices generally ; and that could not take place without injury to all persons having stocks on hand, or owing money, or having to pay on a contract for time ; and besides this, as the taxes were to be unabated in amount, the tax-payers (who were not also receivers) must all suffer most enormously from this rise in the value of money. *The taxes amount to more than twice the rental of all the houses, all the land, all the canals, mines, and roads in the kingdom !* Yes, the *rents of all the real property* do not amount annually to *half so much* as the taxes amount to annually ! Let this be borne in mind ; and a sweet reflection it is for the boroughmongers and others who call themselves “ *landowners*.” They, poor fools, are no “ *landowners* !” They are, as yet, suffered to call themselves *landowners* ; but their rents are all the due of fundholders and paupers, and dead-weight and army and navy and civil-list people. Poor spiteful jackasses, who chuckled at the passing of *Six Acts* ; they have *no lands* ! They are suffered to *share* in the rents, as yet, because the people can be made to pay away to the tax-gatherer a large part of *their earnings* in malt-tax, beer-tax, hop-tax, soap-tax, and the like ; but if the people were to refuse (and they may) to part with their earnings thus, not a farthing of rent would there be for the boroughmongers and their like ; for the fundholder, and more especially the *pauper* and all the *soldier-people*, must have what is duly coming to them. Taxes of all sorts have a claim *prior* to that of the landowner ; and when these shall take *all*, he, of course, will have nothing.

If there were *no taxes*, indeed, of little consequence would it be whether the quantity of money in the country were great or small. To change the quantity from great to small, or from small to great, must produce great injury to one part of the community, and great unmerited good to the other part. In the former case, all *debtors* must be injured ; in the latter, all *creditors*. But when once the change had *taken place*, there would be *an end* of the mischief. The ruined parties would remain ruined ; but there would be no *addition* to their numbers ; the fatal progress would not *continue*. It is not thus in the case of a *taxed nation* ; a nation *in debt* ; a nation with a debt to *fundholders*, and *soldier-people*, and *civil-list people*. The *paupers* may be made to vary the nominal amount of their demands ; to take sixpence, for instance, when the quar-

tern loaf sells for *sixpence*, instead of the shilling which they took when the loaf was sold at a *shilling*. The paupers may and will be made to do this; but the devil a bit will the fundholders, or the soldier-people, or civil-list people, *lower their demand!* They will still have the *full shilling*, though the loaf be come down to *sixpence!* And it is in this way that the Small-note Bill is now *working* all but the tax-eaters, whose demand is a fixed nominal sum annually, or quarterly, or monthly, or daily.

And when it is considered that these tax-eaters swallow twice as much as the amount of *all the rents* in the kingdom, it is pretty evident that the *working* must be felt. It is *felt*, but it is not understood, except by comparatively very few persons. The route of the money, paid in taxes, is so round-about and in-and-out, that the farmer, for instance, does not know what becomes of the part which he pays. He is too base, nineteen times out of twenty, ever to entertain a thought of endeavouring to make the Government *take less from him in taxes*. He therefore thinks about nothing but getting the money to pay with. He cares nothing about *standing armies*, and about the *liberties of the country*; this is all nonsense to him, so long as he can get great heaps of money for his crop by means of high price; and he is not to be made to see, that the paper-money laws have any thing to do with his prices; or that these laws can possibly make his taxes heavier or lighter, when he sees *the amount of them always the same*. But suppose the thing conducted in a manner different from the present: suppose Farmer GRUB to be commanded by the Government to pay, all the year round, twenty of our "*fine fellows*," living in a neighbouring barrack; and suppose their pay to be what the common foot-soldier's pay now is, one shilling and a penny a day in money, besides the lodging, fuel, candle, and clothing. Suppose them to come on some Saturday night, *about Michaelmas next*, for their week's pay, and (marching into the house) to call out, "Come, Grub, give us our pay!"

GRUB. (*Looking very sulky as he draws out his purse.*) Pay! how much is it?

SOLD. How much! You know how much it is: it is 7s. 7d. a man; and you know it; and launch it out, for we want to go to the Wellington's Head, before we go back to barracks.

GRUB. But the 7s. 7d. will buy you twice as much victuals as that sum did last year; and, therefore—

SOLD. (*Staring*) What!

GRUB. And therefore, I say, you ought to take less; and I—

SOLD. What! take less! Rob us of our pay! Cheat us of our pay!

GRUB. It is no robbery, my good men; and—

SOLD. "*Good men*," indeed! Go—d—

GRUB. *Gentlemen*, I mean. It is no robbery; for—

SOLD. Yes, but it is a robbery to want us to take less than our pay.

GRUB. Look ye, gentlemen, I wish to act justly by you: I know how much we are indebted to you for keeping out the Jacobins, and keeping down the Radicals; but, do you know that *one shilling* is now worth *two shillings* of last Michaelmas?

SOLD. No, by — Grub! That won't do, old boy; a shilling is always a shilling; and so, come, lug us out a hundred and forty of them, and the odd pennies.

GRUB. Why, you can now buy *two quartern loaves for a shilling*; and

you could buy only *one for a shilling* last year, when your pay was fixed, and my allotment made.

SOLD. Well; and what is that to you? We want *only our pay*, and our pay we will have: we want *nothing more* than our pay.

GRUB. So, then, this is pretty work. I could pay you last year with the price of *ten bushels of wheat* a-week, and I am now obliged to sell *twenty bushels* a-week to pay you with.

SOLD. We know nothing about bushels of wheat: all that we want is our pay, and our pay we will have, and it is *7s. 7d.* a-piece.

GRUB. But I have lowered the pay of *my labouring men*, in propor—

SOLD. Aye, the devil doubt you! You shall not lower *our* pay; so lug it out; or come along, neck and heels, to gaol.

ENTER MRS. GRUB.

(*Wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron.*)

MRS. GRUB. Pray, gentlemen, do not take my poor husband away. He will give you all he has got; but the corn sells so cheap, that, with my egg-money and all, he can't pay you the whole of your pay.

SOLD. Not pay! Not pay! Not pay!

MRS. GRUB. He can't pay without money, and he has sold all his corn and cattle.

SOLD. What a lie! There's a team of horses. Why does he not sell that?

GRUB. Why, gentlemen, if I sell them, my farm stands still, and then you can have nothing.

SOLD. We will have something *now*, at any rate. (*Exit, dragging him out.*)

This, my Lord Duke, would open the eyes of the farmers; but as long as the *route of the taxes* is hidden from them, they will continue to *wonder* at their ruin. They will be ruined: but, they will wonder how the ruin has come. At this time the state of things is precisely what I said it would be. I said, more than a year ago, that if the Bill went into full effect, "there must be a *general insolvency* amongst the people at large"; and this insolvency is *already come*; for while the OLD GIPSY has not at all exaggerated in describing the state of things in London, in the country things are still worse, unless the newspapers of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire, have agreed to utter nothing but lies.

But then, I shall for the thousandth time be asked, why I have so long been *urging you to enforce* this Small-note Bill; and for the thousandth time I answer, that I have never urged this, without, at the same time, urging the necessity of *reducing the taxes* in proportion to the change which the Small-note Bill must make in the value of money; and this will, at last, if the law be FULLY enforced, be in the degree of *about one-half*. Including the tax-gatherer's allowance, the taxes now amount to *sixty millions a-year*: and to collect this sum in *gold of full weight and fineness*, without actually destroying a great part of the people, is as impossible as it is to make gold out of dirt. Therefore, you must reduce the taxes; or destroy the people; or abandon this law, and give up for ever all hope of restoring a gold circulation; and yet, if you do that, you must make up your mind to a general issue, an overwhelming issue of *assignats*. This is the most desperate course of all; it would

bring the *Government to poverty at once* : it would have nothing to pay with : its money would not pass : and the soldiers, for instance, when they should be paid in assignats, would have more reason to complain than in the case of the *reduction proposed by poor Farmer Grub*. They might take the *assignats* quietly for a time ; but when a day's pay came to purchase only about a thimble-full of beer, they would *not understand* that ; no, not so well as they understood the reducing principle of *FARMER GRUB*.

If you rock yourself in the idea, that the thing will go on quietly, and without producing any great shock or calamity, you rock yourself in a very delusive dream. It cannot go on thus for any length of time. It will produce a convulsion of some sort : it must, if it be suffered to go on without a reduction of taxes, lead to, and actually produce, a state of things, the end of which no man can foresee. "*Resolution : firmness*"! A fig for your "*resolution and firmness*" : they are of no use here, without *wisdom* for a guide. You cannot silence the Debt : you cannot put down poverty : you cannot compel farmers and manufacturers and tradesmen to employ and to pay work-people : you cannot shoot distress and insolvency : in short, you have no power to prevent one of the following things from taking place.

1. Sweeping insolvency and misery, ending in a convulsion.
2. An issue of Assignats, followed by all the usual consequences attendant on a worthless Government paper-money.
3. An Equitable Adjustment, including a great reduction of the taxes, and accompanied by a Reform of the Parliament.

One of these three things *must* take place. To suffer the thing to go on without any attempt at prevention will lead to the first : the second will be produced by a Bank-restriction : but the third you may with safety resort to ; and that remedy would be effectual. There can be neither *peace* nor *sound policy* in the country, as long as the thing goes on in the present way. There can be *no war*, let the provocation be what it may ; and where is the man who is in his senses, and who believes that the *Catholic Bill* would ever have been passed, or proposed, or even *thought of*, had the *financial difficulties* not existed ? You have plainly told us, that you *feared a civil war in Ireland*. Why fear a civil war so much ; so *very much* as to give up all your principles to prevent it ? You had ample force, tenfold force, to crush any commotion. You had force enough already in Ireland ; and if you had needed twenty times as much, you would have had it by only holding up your finger to the furious Protestants of England. You had force enough to crush any rebellion, and to do it quickly too ; and it is impossible *not* to believe, that you and Peel and, indeed, the whole of you, would, under other circumstances, gladly have had a rebellion to crush, rather than abandon your principles, or, if you please, *change your opinions*, in so flagrant a manner.

But to crush the rebellion was *not all* : the rebels might have been easily laid prostrate ; but the bare march of the troops, the report of the first gun, the very proclamation against the rebels would have *blown up the paper-money system* of Ireland ; and that would have given the final stroke here. So that it was not a battle against bold and open rebels, but against the fears of the timid rich. The *No-Popery* of England would have furnished you with force in abundance against rebels ; but it could supply you with no force, with no sort of protection, against the quietly drawing of gold away from the banks in Dublin. In short, the paper-money

system must perish instantly, if an open fight were deemed at all probable. Hence, I do believe, comes the better part of the "humanity" which has been at work in the producing of this measure in favour of the Catholics. You could have crushed the Catholic Association; you could have crushed an insurrection; you could have crushed a rebellion; but you *could not*, during such crushing, have prevented the paper-system from being crushed; and on that system (you must know by this time) hangs the whole affair, Church, State, and all together. And this is the true history of this "liberal" measure. O'CONNELL'S* *Bank-note threat* would naturally lead to *inquiry*; and a very little inquiry would be necessary to convince you, that the paper-system could not stand during one week, nor even one day of civil war.

But if the paper-system overrule you thus, when and at what point is its dominion to end? It never can end, as long as the system shall exist: there can be neither *foreign war* nor *civil war* to co-exist with this system, which will go on demanding sacrifices of one sort or another, till the Government have nothing left to give. Thus has this *paper-system*, which was made for the express purpose of crushing Popery for ever, been, at last, the cause, the great, if not the sole cause, of the triumph of Popery! Very soon we may see the Government compelled, from the same motive, to yield some material point to a *foreign power*. And, in short, anything, no matter what, must, as long as this system exist, be yielded to, rather than risk a blowing-up of the system. The Bishop of Oxford and some others have said, that the Catholic cause has been *gaining ground* in the minds of the *educated* part of the people of England; and it is true, I verily believe, that the *History of the Protestant Reformation* has done a great deal in that way. I believe that it caused the greater part of the *division* which we have seen amongst the Protestants. I know that that work, and that work alone, caused one *Mayor and Corporation* to petition in favour of the Catholics. When you had proposed the measure, my work gave it numerous supporters; but never would you have proposed the measure, had it not been for the *paper-system*. You are wise, therefore, in endeavouring to get rid of the paper-system; but again I tell you, that you cannot get rid of it without general ruin, unless you adopt an *Equitable Adjustment*.

WM. COBBETT.

RURAL WAR.

(Political Register, December, 1830)

London, 2nd Dec., 1830.

THIS war continues with unabated fury. The *parsons*, during the war against the republicans of France, used to cry out incessantly for a

* O'CONNELL had threatened a run upon the banks.—ED.

VIGOROUS prosecution of the war. They have got a pretty vigorous one now! This war will be attended with one benefit, at any rate; it will open the eyes of the brave French nation with regard to *the real state of England*; it will show them what are the effects of *national debts and funding systems*. I shall begin this week in my account of, or remarks on, this war, by addressing myself to the spirited editor of *LA REVOLUTION Paris* newspaper, who has lately had his paper suspended *under a law of the tyrant, Charles X.*, which has been rigorously executed by the "*Citizen King of the best possible Republic.*" My English readers will see what *I say to the French* with regard to this war. I have often used this manner of speaking to my own countrymen; and it is a very good one, because it renders proper a *fullness of explanation*, which, though necessary, would appear impertinent, if addressed *directly* to Englishmen. In three short Letters to the editor of *LA REVOLUTION*, I have, and I hope *clearly*, explained the causes of this *RURAL WAR*; and when the reader has gone through them, I shall have to beg his attention to some remarks on the recent events of this "*vigorous war,*" as the *parsons* used to call the war that they prayed for during twenty-two years.

P.S. I will, in the course of next week, give a petition to some *peer*, with a request that he will present it to the House of Lords. This petition shall contain *my prayer for measures to be now adopted*, to prevent general anarchy and ruin. I have, many times, petitioned both Houses for the same purpose; but I will now *repeat* my prayers, that they may be fresh in people's minds. Men now begin to talk familiarly of the *very things* which I have been, for twenty years, strenuously recommending; and, happen what may, I am resolved *to be known to have been right*.

STATE OF ENGLAND A WARNING TO FRANCE.

LETTER I.

To the Editor of LA REVOLUTION, at Paris.

London, 25th Nov., 1830.

SIR,

The state of this country ought to be made known to the people of France; and the way to do this, is to give a description of it under the *name* of some person well known to the public, and who thereby makes himself *answerable* for that which he says. It is further necessary, that the description, published by you, be *also published in England*, in order to avoid the charge of *libel*, and to adhere to a maxim which all honest men observe, namely, *to say nothing behind a man's back that you dare not say to his face*. This has been the rule of my life; and this rule I will now follow, in a series of letters, which I propose to address to you, on *the state of England*; which it is of the greatest importance that the *PEOPLE* of France *clearly understand*; because it will show them how this powerful nation has been made feeble, and how this happy people has been made miserable, by the means of *TAXATION*; it will show them that this taxation has been caused by the *PUBLIC DEBT*, by a *STANDING ARMY*, and by *PENSIONS* and *SINECURES*, and it will show that these have been occasioned by laws made by *an hereditary aristocracy*, and by a *House of Commons not chosen by the people at large*, but chosen by the aristocracy and the

rich. By showing these things to the people of France, you will enable them to judge correctly with respect to what *they ought to do* with regard to these three great matters, the PUBLIC DEBT, the HEREDITARY ARISTOCRACY, and the MANNER OF CHOOSING REPRESENTATIVES.

Before I proceed to give you a description of the *present state of England*, I ought to observe to you, that *England* is, in fact, the *whole* kingdom in *point of real importance*; for that, though a considerable part of IRELAND is rich in soil, and though it contains half as many people as England, it is so stripped of its products, its people have so long been accustomed to a degraded existence, and the political factions have contrived to make the people so hostile in feeling towards the English, that that miserable country is, in a political point of view, of no weight whatever; and; as to SCOTLAND, it is worth less, and pays a less clear amount of taxes, than the *single county of York*; nay, my belief is, that, as a source of *national power*, either of the counties of Kent, Devon, Norfolk or Lincoln, is of more value than the whole of Scotland, which is, besides, a land for the breeding of Government dependents and servile tools of tyranny. What, as to the political state and weight of these two countries, do you want more than these two facts; that, while every county, town and village, *in England*, was sending addresses to the late persecuted Queen CAROLINE; while, in fact, all England expressed its resolution to defend her, and made that resolution good; not one single address, not one single demonstration of compassion, did she receive from either of those countries. And *now*, with regard to the *brave men of Paris*; while there is no county *in England* which has not produced *several subscriptions*; while even the working people of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and, indeed, of every county, while even *the villages* in the counties of Kent and of Sussex have sent their mites, not one single sous has been sent from Ireland or from Scotland. It is not that the mass of the people in those countries are not good in their nature; but they are so completely kept down by selfish faction in the one country and by greedy place-hunters in the other, that they are rendered of no avail with regard to political influence. It is, therefore, from the state of *England alone* that you have to judge, and that state I will describe to you in my next letter.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

STATE OF ENGLAND A WARNING TO FRANCE.

LETTER II.

To the Editor of LA REVOLUTION, at Paris.

PRESENT STATE OF ENGLAND.

London, 26th Nov., 1830.

SIR,

You hear of great *commotion* in England, and particularly of the *fires* which are now blazing in *twenty-six counties* out of forty that England contains. These fires consume barns and other farm-buildings, and stacks or ricks, of wheat, barley, oats, beans, peas and hay; and sometimes the value of these, in one single farm-yard, amounts to a hundred thousand

frances or more. The country *working people* are causing this destruction, which is spreading into every part of England. You will be sure that this terrible state of things has not taken place without a CAUSE; this cause I will explain to you, and in that explanation you will see the REAL STATE OF ENGLAND, all the causes of her feebleness, and of the slavery and misery of her once free and happy people.

The working people of England were, in all former times, better off, better fed, clothed, and lodged, than any other working people in the world. Their rights and their happiness seem to have been the chief object of the laws of England in all former times. During the pre-dominance of the Roman Catholic religion, the municipal laws so far interfered with the property of the Church as to make it conducive to the relief of the indigent. When that religion was put down, and the property of the Church grasped by the aristocracy, a law was passed to cause provision to be made for all indigent persons. This famous law, passed in the 43rd year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, appointed officers for each parish, to impose a tax on land and house, and thus to raise *without any limit*, whatever money might be wanted for the relief and support of persons unable to provide a sufficiency for themselves. So that there can, if this law be duly enforced, *be no person in England to suffer for want*. This law is called the POOR-LAW; and I beg you to bear in mind the description that I have given of it.

The working people, especially the country working people, lived in the happiest state that can be imagined, *until the reign of George III.* His war against our brethren in America, which *added greatly to the taxes of the nation*, made a great change for the worse; it made the people *poorer* than they had ever been before, but still they lived tolerably well; much better than the working people of any other country in Europe. It was the long and expensive war against the republic of France that brought them down to real poverty. Before the American war began, it was a *rare thing* that any one, even amongst the aged and the widows, had occasion to apply for aid from the *poor-taxes*; that war made this mark of wretchedness less rare: but *now* the rare thing is to know of a working man, single or married, who is not compelled to resort to the *poor-taxes* to keep himself from perishing with hunger. That the Debt and Government taxes have been the cause, and the sole cause, of the misery, is evident from the increase of the poor-taxes having kept an exact pace with the increase of the Debt and the Government taxes. Nothing can controvert this conclusion: the facts are undeniable and the conclusion is equally undeniable.

PERIODS.	Amount of a year's Government taxes for all England.	Amount of a year's Interest of the Debt.	Amount of a year's Poor-taxes
	£	£	£
In peace, soon after Geo. III. came to the throne	7,500,000	4,200,000	1,100,000
In peace, after the American war..	15,500,000	9,300,000	2,200,000
In peace, in 1830	60,000,000	30,500,000	7,500,000

Thus you see, Sir, how regularly the miseries of the working people have gone on increasing with the increase of the Government taxes and the increase of the Debt. The amount of the poor-taxes is the *measure* of the miseries of the people; and here you see that they are *seven times* as miserable as their grandfathers were. Taxes make the people of the nation *poor*; poverty is the parent of *crime*; and accordingly the jails are *seven times* as capacious as they were when Geo. III. mounted the throne. Let France take care, then; for, similar causes produce similar effects; and, if the funding system of France be suffered to exist for any length of time, misery will spread itself over France as it has done over England. When taxes are raised to be paid to fundholders, they create idle people; they cause a constant accumulation of the wealth of a country in few hands; they create monopolies of all sorts; they cause Jews and loan-jobbers to live in palaces; and beggar all the industrious part of the community. Taxes, however applied, have naturally this tendency; but particularly when applied to create *usurers* (now politely called "*capitalists*"), who quickly absorb the whole of the fruits of a nation's industry.

As the working people have gone on getting poorer and poorer, they have become more and more immoral; and, indeed, it has been proved by witnesses before the Committees of the House of Commons, that in innumerable instances men have committed crimes *for the purpose of getting into jail*; because the felons in the jails are *better fed and better clad than the honest working people*. As the working people have become poor, the laws relating to them have been made *more and more severe*; and the *Poor-law*, that famous law of Elizabeth, which was the greatest glory of England for ages, has by degrees been so much mutilated and nullified, that, at last, it is so far from being a protection to the working people, that it has, by its perversions, been made the means of reducing them to a state of wretchedness not to be described. The *sole* food of the greater part of them has been, for many years, *bread*, or *potatoes*, and not half enough of these. They have eaten sheep or cattle that have *died from illness*; they have eaten garbage, such as a lord or a loan-jobber would not give to his dogs; children have been seen *stealing* the food out of hog-troughs; thousands of them have died for want of food; three men were found dead last May, lying under a hedge, and, when opened by the surgeons, nothing but *sour sorrel* (*oseille sauvage*) was found in their stomachs, and this was within a few miles of a *palace*, which had cost millions of pounds sterling of the public money! The spot on which these poor creatures expired was surrounded with villas of Jews and fund-jobbers, living in luxury, and in the midst of pleasure-gardens, all the means of which living they derived from the burdens laid on the working people.

Besides sufferings from want, the working people have been made to endure insults and indignities, such as even negroes never were exposed to. They have been harnessed like horses or asses, and made to draw carts and wagons; they have been shut up in the pounds made to hold stray cattle; they have been made to work with bells round their necks, like cows put out to graze; they have been made to carry heavy stones backward and forward in fields, or on the roads; and they have, in these cases, had drivers set over them, just as if they had been galley-slaves; they have been *sold by auction* for certain times, as the negroes are sold in the West Indies; the married men have been kept separated from

their wives by force, to prevent them from breeding; and, in short, no human beings were ever before treated so unjustly, with so much insolence, and with such damnable barbarity, as the working people of England have been within the sixteen, and particularly within the last ten, years.

Such, Sir, are the fruits of *public debts* and *funds*! Without this vile system, this industrious and moral and brave nation never could have been brought into this degraded state; but as every evil, if not cured from other causes, has its cure in its own excess, so, at last, the cure will assuredly come, and it is, indeed, come, and in a manner which I shall endeavour to describe in my next Letter.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

STATE OF ENGLAND A WARNING TO FRANCE

LETTER III.

To the Editor of LA REVOLUTION, at Paris.

SIR,

London, 1st December, 1830.

The working people in almost all, if not all, of the counties of England, are, in part at least, in a state of commotion; for, since the date of my first Letter, the commotion has extended very widely. All across the south, from Kent to Cornwall, and from Sussex to Lincolnshire, the commotion extends. It began by the labourers in Kent entering the buildings of the *great farmers*, and breaking their *thrashing-machines*; for, please to observe, one effect of *heavy taxation* is to cause the invention of *machinery*. The farmer or manufacturer is so pressed for money by the Government, that he resorts to all possible means of *saving the expense of labour*; and as machines will work *cheaper than men*, the machines are preferred. As to the *good* or *evil* of machinery, speaking of it *generally*, there may be some ground for dispute; but it is very certain that it may be carried to *excess*; for, suppose that the land could be ploughed, and the corn cut and carted as well as thrashed by machinery, there would be a country *with crops*, but *without people*. There can be no doubt that our forefathers, who built the cathedrals, could have invented spinning-jennies and thrashing-machines, if their minds had been turned that way; but they knew what our modern lawgivers seem not to know; that is to say, that it is *men*, and not *machines*, that constitute a nation.

The labourers of England see, at any rate, that the *thrashing-machines* rob them of the wages that they ought to receive. They, therefore, began by demolishing these machines. This was a *crime*; the magistrates and jailers were ready with punishments; soldiers, well fed and well clothed out of the taxes, were ready to shoot or cut down the offenders. Unable to resist these united forces, the labourers resorted to the use of *fire*, secretly put to the barns and stacks of those who had the machines, or whom they deemed the cause of their poverty and misery. The mischief and the alarm that they have caused by this means are beyond all calculation. They go in bands of from 100 to 1000 men, and sum-

mon the farmers to come forth, and then they demand that they shall agree to pay them such wages as they think right; and, you will please to observe, that even the wages that they demand are not so high by one-third as their grandfathers received, taking into consideration *the taxes* that they have now to pay.

The farmers, in their defence, say, that they cannot pay the wages that are demanded, because they have so much to pay in rent, *in taxes* and *in tithes*. The labourers have, therefore, in many instances, gone to the *parsons*, and *compelled them to reduce their tithes*; and in one parish, in Sussex, they have *ordered the collector of the taxes not to take the money out of the parish, as it was, they said, wanted there!* These proceedings would have been put an end to long ago, *had it not been for the FIRES*. The military force, backed by all the great farmers, the land-owners, and especially by the *parsons* and the innumerable swarms of Jews and fund-jobbers and pensioners and State-dependants, would long ago have subdued these half-starved machine-breakers; but the FIRES! No power on earth could prevent them, if the millions of labourers were resolved to resort to them.

The farmers, therefore, seeing that there was more danger to be dreaded from the labourers than from the aristocracy, the stock-jobbers and parsons have generally made, and are making, *common cause* with the labourers; and are demanding a reduction of *rents, tithes* and *taxes*. You will please to observe, that it is *impossible* for the farmers to pay the wages which they are, everywhere, agreeing to pay; it is impossible for them to do this, and to pay the present rents, tithes and taxes; and, as they would be out of danger if the labourers were well paid, they wish to obtain a diminution of those burdens, and thus to be able to pay the labourers well. The tradesmen (*la bourgeoisie*), in the country towns, have the same interest in this matter as the farmers. They know that it is better *for them* also that the fruit of the land should be given to the labourers, who would then be their *customers*, which the aristocracy, the Jews, the stock-jobbers and the parsons, are not. In short, all the *industrious classes* have a *common interest* with the labourers; and, let the Government do what it can, the wages of labour *must be raised*; and, if they be raised, one of two things must take place; namely, *the aristocracy and the Church must lose their estates, or, the fundholders must lose their funds*.

Such, Sir, is the present state of England, and such are the causes which have produced that state. Here you see, then, how a people, inhabiting the most productive land in the world, a people to whom God has given a large portion of *all* his choicest blessings, safety from foreign foes, climate, soil, mines, woods, downs, flocks and herds, and, above all, *industry* perfectly unparalleled; a people, too, whose forefathers gave them the best laws that ever existed in the world; here you see this people, who were famed throughout the world for their willing obedience to the laws, and whose forefathers scorned the thought of maintaining even a single soldier, except in case of war; here you see this people, whose *laws* say that no man shall be taxed without his own consent; here you see this people first reduced to a state of half-starvation; next setting the laws at defiance; and then attacked by a standing army, sent against them to capture them and to put them in prison! Such, Sir, are the effects of heavy taxes, and particularly when raised for the purpose of upholding a *funding system*, which is a system of *usury* and *monopoly* added

to that of grinding taxation. *Let the people of France beware of the encroachments of this infernal system: no open despotism is half so cruel; nothing like liberty can co-exist with such a system: this system has taken away our so much boasted trial by jury in nine cases out of ten where the property and personal liberty of the common people are concerned: this system has, in fact, in many cases, made our laws to insure the independence of the Judges of no avail: this hellish system has plunged us into all our present dangers; and yet it is hugged and cherished by the Government, as was "the accursed thing" in the camp of the Israelites. Let the people of France beware of the crafty and silently-approaching curse! War! Is France afraid of war! What is war, what is pestilence, what is famine? An accursed funding system is all these in one. It is silent, fraudulent, inexorable tyranny: age, infancy, beauty, may have softened the heart of a Dey of Algiers; but never the hearts of the damnable bands that congregate at the 'Change and the Bourse.*

In the anxious hope that the brave French nation will get rid of all degrading curses, I remain, Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE HAMPSHIRE PARSONS.

1. *On the Blame ascribed to me with regard to the Disturbances.*
2. *On the Special Works at Winchester.*
3. *On the Effects of the Works at Winchester.*
4. *On the Conduct of the Bishop of Winchester.*
5. *On the Fate of the Tithes.*

NOTE BY THE EDITORS.—We are now arrived at the epoch of 1830-1, when the state of the country became, in every respect, what Mr. COBBETT had so frequently foretold. The DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S administration carried into effect the provisions of the Act for abolishing small notes (7 Geo. 4, c. 6), which took effect in 1829, and the distresses of the farmers, and, consequen'ly, of their labourers, became as great as they had been in the year 1822. Mr. COBBETT (see p. 561 of this volume), seeing that the Duke persisted in the Small-Note Act, predicted that a convulsion would be the consequence; and, accordingly, in the autumn of 1830 and the beginning of 1831, riots, intimidation, machine-breaking and the burning of farm-buildings, proceeded to such an extent in the counties of Essex, Herts, Hants, Berks, Dorset, Sussex and Kent, that a violent revolution was anticipated. In the midst of the confusion, the Parliament met, and Sir HENRY PARNELL moved "that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the various items of the Civil List, and to report thereon," which being carried against the Ministry, the DUKE'S administration went out on the next day, the 16th November, 1830.—Lords GREY, MELBOURNE, ALTHORP, JOHN RUSSELL and STANLEY, became the principal members of the new Cabinet, and one of the first of their acts was to advise the King to issue Special Commissions into the rioting counties, to try and condemn the rioters. The numbers hanged, transported, and imprisoned, were immense; but we have no means of giving precise information on this head, excepting as to the county of Hants, and, as to that county, we have subjoined a note to the following article.—The labourers had risen into this rebellion in order to make the farmers give them more wages;

and the farmers acknowledged that their wages were too low. A correspondent of Mr. COBBETT (*Political Register*, vol. 70, p. 1088) writes thus: "Andover, December 19th, 1830. I am afraid there will be dreadful work at Winchester" [alluding to the Special Commission] "and other places, among the poor deluded and ill-used labourers. Only think of the way in which they have been treated of late years! The wages, for a long time past, have been *eight shillings a week* with us. Suppose a man with a wife and six children; his parish relief has been this, to add just so much to his wages as to enable him to buy

2 gallon loaves for himself.
1 gallon loaf for his wife.
6 gallon loaves for his six children.

"Nine gallon loaves at 17d. each, the price we have lately had the bread at, would be 12s. 9d.

Deduct the man's wages 8 0

The Parish will have to pay . . . 4 9

"And that allows for each of the poor man's family (himself included) not quite so much as

3 farthings for breakfast.
1 penny for dinner, and
1 penny for supper:

2½d. for each person per day,

"without considering the cost of *clothes, shoes, or fuel*. And the greater part of the labourers are obliged, besides, to pay their own *house-rents*, say from 2l. to 6l. a year each."—This was no isolated case; in most of the counties the rate of wages and the system was the same as that detailed above; and great complaints having been made in and out of Parliament, showing the sinking condition of the labourers, but all remaining unheeded, the outbreak began, and the Duke and his Government retired. The new Ministry, however, instead of promising relief, or even inquiry, unsheathed their "sword of justice," and succeeded in reducing the unfortunate labourers to quiet and despair. Instead of inquiring into the real causes of the rioting, the Ministers and their friends and newspapers, attributed it to "incendiary" writings, and principally to those of Mr. COBBETT, he having, for many years, contended that the labouring people were oppressed by inadequate wages. He had foretold the rioting and even the burning, and had, in divers places by speeches, and constantly in his writings, exerted himself to awaken the farmers and the landlords to a sense of justice towards their working people. In a speech to the Farmers at Salisbury, in October, 1822 (see Register of the 26th of that month and year), he used these words: "Think, Gentlemen, of the occupier of a farm, compelled to pass the night with lights burning in his house; with arms ready loaded; with his friends and relations collected together, as in a garrison; with the doors barricaded; with all the avenues rendered inaccessible; with a force distributed in preparation for attack; and think of the feelings of the master of that house, while *his stacks and his out-buildings are blazing*, and he daring not to sally out to face the invaders of his own farm-yard!" A speech which he concluded by exhorting the farmers to conciliate their work-people, by giving them sufficient wages and by treating them with gentleness.

(*Political Register*, January, 1831.)

Kensington, 12th January, 1831.

PARSONS,

Hampshire Parsons! My old acquaintances, *how do you feel now?* When in March, 1817, you met at Winchester to congratulate the Prince Regent on his "*narrow escape*" in the Park, and to thank the Parliament for passing the *Power-of-Imprisonment-Bill*, I told you, in answer to

LOCKHART, that, *before ten years were at an end*, you must begin to look about you, if you *meant to keep the tithes*. I was wrong, but only in point of *time*; I was only *two years* in advance of the fact. But this, the most important of the subjects on which I am about to address you, I must reserve for the close of my letter. But, upon *the whole*, before I go any further, *how do you feel*, Parsons? And did you, when you were hunting me about, from the year 1805 to the year 1817, inclusive, *anticipate this state of things*? I often enough told you that it would come; but did you *anticipate it*? And now let me proceed in the order above laid down.

1. *On the blame imputed to me as to the cause of the popular commotions*.—It is very true, Parsons that I have, long and long ago, *fore-told* what has now happened. I have been, for about six-and-twenty years, predicting that, if such a change were not made as would better the lot of the labourers, a terrible convulsion would take place. I have always said, that Englishmen would not, like Irishmen, lie down by hundreds and die quietly from starvation. It is very true that I have, for about *ten years*, inveighed as bitterly against making Englishmen draw carts like cattle, full as bitterly as the Duke of Richmond did *last winter*, that being the very *first time* that the matter was ever even alluded to in *Parliament*, though the Parliament had plenty of proofs of the disgraceful fact given in evidence before their Committees. It is very true, that I have, for many years, been complaining that the labourers carried potatoes (accursed hog-food) to field, instead of the bread and meat and cheese that they used to carry thither; but, then, the Parliament had the same thing in evidence before their Committees so long ago as the year 1821. It is very true, that I have long been saying, that the honest working man was worse fed and worse clad than the felons in the hulks and jails; but, then, the same thing had been told the Parliamentary Committees by witnesses that they themselves had chosen. Nothing can be truer than that I have, over and over again, asserted that the labourers were put up to auction, and their labour sold for certain terms, just as is done with regard to the negroes in Jamaica; but, then, the same thing is stated in evidence taken down by the Parliamentary Committees, and *printed at the people's expense*, while I print *at my own expense*. What *blame* then attaches to me in this case? I confess, "I am free to confess," as the sensible Collective has it, that I have said that the misery was the *cause of the crime*, and that the law had no terrors, because the working-people were *better off in jail, than at their own homes*; but then Sir E. E. somebody,* Chairman of the Quarter Session of Warwickshire, and all his brother magistrates, have, in formal resolutions, *said the same thing*. Why not fly *at them*? Why not fly at the Parliament, who published all the evidence mentioned above?

Aye, but I not only related the sufferings and described the degradation of the labourers, but I foretold that they would not endure it for ever, and that *they would finally break forth and attack the rich*. It is very true, that my words might amount to this; but then EARL STANHOPE said the *same thing*, in his place in Parliament, last year, only he said it without any reserve. He said, that there was an open breach between the poor and the rich, and that they would *soon come to blows*, if some effectual

* SIR EARDLEY WILMOT.—ED.

means of prevention were not adopted! Fly at *him*, then, Parsons; deal with him first, and then come *at me*. Ah! but Earl Stanhope did not write the *History of the Protestant Reformation*! He did not tell all the nation what was the *origin*, the *intention*, and the *former application* of tithes and of Cathedral and Bishop's and College revenues! And, therefore, he may take a horse when I do not dare look over the hedge.

But, in defence of his Lordship as well as of myself, let me ask what offence there can be in *foretelling* an evil, even if it be *positive* instead of being *conditional*, which latter has always been the case with me. Suppose I see, in a field which is eaten down as bare as a board, a lot of oxen, which are shut up in it every night after they have done work; suppose I see a fine field of clover over the hedge; suppose I go to the greedy and grinding bull-frog, who is the owner of the fields and who has the oxen on hire; suppose I say to him, "Mr. GRINDUM, you'd better take the oxen out of that bare field, or cut up and carry to them some clover, or else they will be through the hedge, as sure as you are born"; suppose the poor creatures, raving with hunger, to get through the fence that night, and to eat, or trample down, his fine field of clover; and suppose him then to swear and curse and stamp like mad, and to *accuse me* of being *the cause* of the violence and mischief committed by the oxen. Suppose such a result, would you not allow that SQUIRE GRINDUM ought to have the soul beaten out of his body with a broomstick or a hedge-stake? Would you not be "free to confess," that, at the very least, he ought to have the two horns of one of the oxen in his too-well-filled paunch? And yet this is precisely the case of these rich ruffians, who have been endeavouring to fix the cause of the disturbances on me.

If to foresee and *foretel evil*, either to individuals, to bodies of persons, to rulers, to Governments, or to whole nations, be *criminal*, what will you, the *Parsons*, say to the conduct of the prophets and apostles, and even to Jesus Christ himself? If this were a crime, they were the greatest criminals that ever lived. You will hardly, or at least one would *think* so, say that EZEKIEL ought to be blamed for the scattering of the infamous Jews; that he ought to have been regarded as *the cause* of it. One would imagine that you would hardly do this; and yet he was *the cause* of that event, as much as I have been *the cause* of the FIRES of 1830 and 1831. Ah! but EZEKIEL did not write the *History of the Protestant Reformation*! And ST. JAMES now, that blunt and home-speaking apostle, was he *criminal* when he foretold thus:—"Go to, now, ye RICH MEN, weep and howl for your miseries that *shall come upon you*. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, *the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth*: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter." What! will you say that ST. JAMES ought to have been *prosecuted* for this? Will you say that he was *the cause* of the miseries of the rich and cruel ruffians that he had in his eye? Those basest of all earthly villians, "who kept back by fraud the hire of the labourers who had reaped down their fields"? Will you say that he, who urged these ruffians to do justice to their labourers,

was the cause of those miseries which arose from their not having done their labourers justice? And suppose now, that there had been, amongst those to whom St. James addressed his Epistle, some stupid, half-witted creature, who, having committed some unlawful act, had been brought forward, the halter about his neck, by the blasphemous Jews and their priests, to say, that St. James's Epistle was the cause of his committing the act, will you say that he ought to have been *believed*, and that St. James ought to have been punished? No; you will hardly say this. Why, then, am I to be called the cause of these disturbances? Ah! but St. James did not *write the History of the Reformation*. He would have done it, however, I dare say, if he had been alive at this day.

2. *On the special works at Winchester.*—It is a little too soon to give a true history of these *unaccompanied with suitable comments*. Indeed, a bare statement of the facts is hardly safe as yet. A little time for breathing is wanted. To *collect the facts* is my business, in the meanwhile. Whether the following be a fact I do not know. I take it from the *Bloody Old Times* newspaper; and you will see even that that advocate for slaughter finds it to be its interest to *soften a little*.

"*Winchester, Friday morning. (7th. Jan.)* No day has yet been fixed for the execution of the six unhappy men who were sentenced to die at the conclusion of the special commission which was recently held at this place. The information which reached you in London, that the execution was to take place this morning, is incorrect.—The scenes of distress in and about the jail are most terrible. The number of men who are to be torn from their homes and connexions is so great that there is *scarcely a hamlet in the country into which anguish and tribulation have not entered*. Wives, sisters, mothers children, beset the gates daily, and the governor of the jail informs me that the scenes he is obliged to witness at the time of locking up the prison *are truly heart-breaking*.—You will have heard before this of the petitions which have been presented to the Home Office from *Gosport, Portsmouth, Romsey, Whitchurch, and Basingstoke*, praying for an extension of mercy to all the men who now lie under sentence of death. A similar petition has been got up in this city. *It is signed by the clergy of the low church, some of the bankers and every tradesman in the town without exception*. Application was made to the *clergy of the Cathedral* for their signatures, but they *refused to give them, except conditionally*, upon reasons which I cannot comprehend. They told the petitioners, as I am informed, that they would not sign any such petition unless the *grand jury and the magistracy* of the county previously affixed their names to it. Now such an answer, as it appears to me, is an admission on their part that no mischief would ensue from not carrying into effect the dreadful sentence of the law; for I cannot conceive that if they were of opinion that mischief would ensue from it, they would sign the petition, even though it were recommended by all the talent and respectability of the Court of Quarter Sessions. I can understand the principles on which that man acts, who asserts and laments the necessity of vindicating the majesty of the law by the sacrifice of human life; but I cannot understand the reasons of those who, admitting that there is no necessity for the sword of justice to strike the offender, decline to call upon the executive government to stay its arm, and make their application for its mercy dependent on the judgment or it may be the caprice of an influential aristocracy. Surely, of all classes of society, the clergy is that which ought not to be backward in the remission of offences. They are daily preaching mercy to their flocks, and it wears but an ill grace when they are seen refusing their consent to a practical application of their own doctrines. Whatever my own opinion may be, as a faithful recorder of the opinions of those around me, I am bound to inform you, that, except among the magistracy of the county, there is a general, I had almost said an universal, opinion among all ranks of society, that no good will be effected by *sacrificing human life*. It has been remarked by almost every writer upon criminal law, that when punishments are so severe as to arm the sympathies of the public against the law, and in favour of the offender who perishes by it,

they ought not to take place; and, I repeat it, that if the propriety of these executions were to be tried by that test in this county, *they ought, on no account, to take place.*"

This last part is dictated by base love of money; for it was this very paper that called for the *Special Commissions*, and that has always called for everything *bloody*. The crew that have an interest in the monopoly, which is upheld by the present system, find that *the public* do not relish so much hanging; and, therefore, the crew soften their tone, and are becoming *humane*. I make no remark on what the crew say *about your conduct*. I leave the matter *to them* and *to you* as the fittest persons in the world to settle the matter. For my part, I have refused to put my name to *any petition* on the subject. My heart sinks within me at the thought of the sentences. I sat down to write a petition in my single name; but, upon beginning to put the words *upon paper*, my soul recoiled from the writing of those expressions which are deemed indispensable in such a case. Towards all the sufferers, not actuated by *malice*, I feel as if they were my brothers or my children. It so happens, that, of all the hundreds, I personally know but *one*, and that one is that very JESSE BURGESS, who was made use of by the sons and daughters of corruption, in Hampshire, as the means of *culminating me*, as a *cruel master*, in the year 1809. Amidst the Hampshire battalion, of which JESSE was one, I do not discover what has been his lot.* I hope he is amongst those who are to suffer the least. What I shall be able to do, I do not yet know; but anything that I can lawfully do, and that I have the ability to do, for these sufferers, or their relations, particularly their wives and children, I will do; except in cases, if such there be, where they have been actuated by *malice*, and where that malice has been made clearly to appear.

With regard to the persons constituting the *Special Commission*, with regard to the *forming of the juries*, with regard to the *charges and other acts of the Judges*, with regard to the *sentences*, with regard to the *treatment of the prisoners and their wives and children*; with regard to all these there will be a more suitable time to talk. Besides, there will *now be a man* to talk of them IN PARLIAMENT. That is the proper place for such subjects; and in that place we must, for the present, leave them to be discussed. It is not long now before the 3rd of February. The season for *rural sports* will then be over; and we shall have nothing but *sober business* to attend to. We shall have a *reform of Parliament to make*, and other very important duties to discharge. In the meanwhile, however, we ought to look a little at the state of the country.

3. *On the effects of the works at Winchester.*—*The Morning Chronicle* of to-day has the following passage:

"We regret to find that the fires of the incendiary are *blazing more fiercely than ever*, in the very districts which are the scene of the *labours* of the *Special Commission*. We refer our readers to the account of our reporter for details on the subject.—The incendiary is a far *more formidable* enemy than the *rioter*. Assemblages of riotous peasants can be easily put down; and, indeed, in all our communications with gentlemen from the country, we never heard them express any alarm on account of mobbing. A *rural police* of the owners of property can always be easily formed, and against *such a police*, rioters can make *no stand*. It is otherwise, however, with incendiaries; for, from the *exposed nature of the property*, it is almost impossible to *watch it*."

* See the account of the "*pauper's action*," vol. 3, "*SELECTIONS*," p. 265. JESSE BURGESS was acquitted in the criminal prosecution against him in 1830.—ED.

This Scotch *feelosofer* is in error here; but that is no matter. It is very true that parcels, *little bands*, of *unarmed men*, are easily beaten by *armed men*. However, this is no matter: the matter is THE FIRES and the MEAT AND BREAD, and the question is, will the fires cease until the labourers have the meat and the bread? This is the question, and the only question worth attending to, as connected with this subject. But, it is a *very important* question. It is pretty evident, that the *Special Commissions* have not done anything at all in the way of putting a stop to the fires; for, observe, it is with the *dark nights* that they always come on again. The newspapers were delighted, *a fortnight ago*, with the effect of the "*expositions of the law*," as SCOTT ELDON called it; and the Bloody Old *Times* newspaper *chuckled* that the *hangings* had produced a suitable effect. Alas! it ascribed to the HALTER that which it ought to have ascribed to the MOON! For, the moment the latter withheld *her* light, "those other wandering fires began to blaze." The Special Commissions have done this: they have taught the people, that that which they looked upon as *sturdy begging*, is felony and hanging matter; and that, to *break a machine*, which was formerly a *trespass*, is now, in these days of *negro humanity* and of "*softening the criminal code*," an offence to be *expiated on the gallows*. These "*expositions of the law*" will, therefore, make the labourers, however pinched in their bellies, take care, for the future, not to go in bands of *sturdy beggars*, and not to *break machines*; but, this is *all* that the Special Commissions will do in the way of preventing mischief. It is to extinguish the FIRES that was, and is, the great and desirable object: these it is that cause all the *real alarm*; and well they may; for, as the Scotch *feelosofer* observes, "the property is so much *exposed*, that it is next to '*impossible to watch it*'"!

Aye, to be sure it is: and *who are to be the watchmen*? Why, the *labourers to be sure*. Bon! a Frenchman would exclaim. Good! the labourers, *who are living on potatoes*, watch the *wheat-stacks* and the *ox-stalls*! O, no! they must have something better than potatoes and water while they are watching. According to the above account from the Bloody Old *Times* newspaper, there is scarcely a village, or even a hamlet, in all Hampshire, which has not had some one man or more taken away from it by these awful proceedings.* In short, there can scarcely be a *family* in the county unaffected *personally*, either by relationship or close friendship, by the fate of the sufferers. Can there be, for instance, one single soul, man, woman, boy or girl, in the parish of BULLINGTON, and in all the adjoining parishes, unaffected by the proceedings against, and by the punishment of, the two MASONS of that parish, who were a pattern of industry and moral conduct, to be held up to all the labourers of England? Is there a labouring man or woman who will not tell their

* A summary of the convictions and sentences is given in a pamphlet, published by E. Wilson, Royal Exchange, in 1831, at the close of the Special Assizes at Winchester, and (for the one County of Hants) it stands thus:

Left for Execution	6
Death recorded	95
Transported for Life	5
Transported for Seven Years	31
Imprisonment and Hard Labour	62
Fined	3

Total 202

tale to the children that are coming up? Does not their *widowed mother*, whom they so carefully maintained by their labour, now live to remind all the people round about of the loss of her dutiful and affectionate sons, and of all the circumstances attending their separation from her? And yet it is amongst people thus feeling and remembering that the *watchmen* are now to be found!

But suppose the watching to be *effectual* in the preventing of fires. This is supposing an absurdity; for to watch a large homestead twenty men are not sufficient, supposing them all to be faithful and vigilant. But suppose it to be *effectual*, who is to *pay for it*? The watchmen will *not eat potatoes and drink water*; mind that! In short, to pay for effectual watching would amount to *more than the rent of the farm*. And when is this expense to *end*? The property is *always* exposed, summer as well as winter; and the deed is so *easily* and so *safely* executed, that safety to the property must depend, as it always did depend, upon the *indisposition of the working people to destroy it*, and, but in very rare instances, on the *danger of detection* and the dread of *punishment*. For it is not in this case, as in that of murder, burglary, treason, &c. There are no traces of blood, no noise, no personal rencontre, no associates, nothing to carry away, nothing to be found on the offender. So that there is no protection for *farm-property* against fire, except in the moral feeling of those at whose mercy, whose absolute mercy it is *always* placed by necessity. The true way, and the only way, therefore, of preventing the destruction of such property, by such means, is to take away the *motive* from this the most numerous class of the people, who actually live in the midst of the property, and who are as well acquainted with every barn and every stack as they are with the different parts of their own bodies, and who have always the *power* to destroy it, if they have the *will*. A writer in the *Morning Chronicle* observes, that "every friend of humanity must regard the incendiary with *abhorrence*; that he is *more cowardly* than the *Italian assassin*, for he perpetrates his crime "in *fancied security*, and *merely to gratify a fiendlike malignity*." It is hard to discover how it can be "*more cowardly*" to set fire to a farmer's stack in the dark, than to *shoot a farmer or cotton-spinner from behind a hedge*; and I cannot see how assassinations in Italy *differ* from the like horrid acts in England. But, as to the *horrid nature* of the crime of the incendiary, if he commit the deed "*merely to gratify a fiendlike malignity*," and not to effect any *good end*, real or believed in; if from this hellish motive he do the deed, *death is his due*, notwithstanding all the prating of the "*softeners of the criminal code*." But then the *motive* may not be "*merely to gratify a fiend-like malignity*." When the Governor of Moscow set fire to and burnt down that immense city, burning sick, lame, bed-ridden, and women in child-birth, by thousands upon thousands, *his conduct was applauded to the skies by every newspaper in England*. What for? Not because he had burnt so many human beings, and reduced so many families to misery, but, because he had, by that same deed, caused the foundation of the *overthrow of Napoleon*, which was deemed by our Broad Sheet, a *good* sufficiently great to sanctify the horrible means employed to effect it. And has not this same *Morning Chronicle* told us, over and over again, that the labourers *owe the rise in their wages to the fires*? This is not justifying *arson*; it is merely *stating a fact*. And have we not here pointed out the sure means of putting an end to these disgraceful and horrible scenes? What the

sensible people of the great town of Birmingham think of this matter the following petition speaks : it speaks, too, the voice of every good and just man in the kingdom ; it reflects the highest honour on the town whence it came, and particularly on the two gentlemen whose names are attached to it.

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The humble Petition of the Council of the Birmingham Political Union.

SIR,—We, your Majesty's sincerely dutiful and loyal subjects, the Council of the Birmingham Political Union, beg leave humbly to approach your Majesty with our earnest prayers and humble representations on behalf of those unfortunate men, our fellow subjects, who have lately been convicted, under Special Commissions, of acts of incendiarism, and of riotous and illegal proceedings ; and also on behalf of those other unfortunate men who are about to take their trials for similar offences.

It is unquestionable, that those unhappy individuals have been goaded into such desperate proceedings under the excitement and phrenzy produced by a long course of unparalleled sufferings and privations, arising out of cruel and oppressive laws, some of which have been expressly intended to enhance the price of bread, and others of which have been equally calculated to beat down the price of labour.

Under the pressure of these laws, and of others equally unwise and disastrous, the unhappy subjects of your Majesty have for years scarcely been able to endure their unexampled sufferings. Great numbers of them have been tossed from difficulty to difficulty, and from a state of precarious and ill-rewarded employment to a state of utter destitution. They have struggled on for year after year under the influence of hope, constantly disappointed, and constantly diminishing, until, at last, there iterated declarations of your Majesty's late Ministers—first, that no distress existed, and then that no relief could be afforded—have positively driven them to despair.

We respectfully submit to your Majesty, that your Majesty's present Ministers have publicly acknowledged that the wrongs, difficulties, and distresses, of your Majesty's faithful and loyal people have been occasioned by the mal-administration of public affairs ; and that such distresses have tended much to produce guilt and misconduct ; and we cannot but lament, that these great truths have not been sufficiently borne in mind by your Majesty's Ministers in adopting the course which they have thought fit to pursue towards the unhappy men in question. We are of opinion that the extreme penalty of the law ought not to be inflicted upon men convicted under such circumstances. We think also, that in administering any punishment whatever, due regard should be had to the dubitable character of evidence produced by the powerful influence of large pecuniary rewards, which may tempt one man to commit perjury, and another to seduce his neighbours into crime ; for, without this precaution, it is certain that, under such circumstances, no man's life can be secure.

We, therefore, humbly hope, and most earnestly pray, that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to take these representations into your Royal consideration ; and, following the dictates of your own merciful and benevolent heart, to extend the Royal Clemency to all the unfortunate men who have been, or who may be, convicted under the aforesaid Special Commissions.

And we, as in duty bound, shall ever pray, &c. In the name, and on the behalf, of the Council of the Birmingham Political Union,

THOMAS ATTWOOD, Chairman.
CHARLES JONES, Sec. pro. temp.

Birmingham, Jan. 6th, 1831.

This is the language of the whole nation, those whom I need not describe excepted. And if the nation think thus on the subject, will the hangings and transportings *extinguish the fires*? Yet this is the thing to be desired ; and the way, the *only way*, to do it, is to take away the motive ; in other words, to make the state of the labourers *what it was in the days of their grandfathers* ; to cause them to have meat and

bread to eat, instead of the miserable potatoe, and to prevent their being ill-treated by persons having authority. In 1803, I wrote a paper to rouse the people to defend the country against Napoleon, who then was making preparations *for the invasion of England*, and who, I was then fool enough to believe, had the power to do it, I being then a suckling politician, not having been in England more than two years and a half, after an absence from it from the time that I was about sixteen years old. *The Government printed a million copies of this paper*; which it sent through the Post-office to every parish in the kingdom; and it was, besides the *distribution in the churches*, stuck on all the *church-doors*, and read from *most of the pulpits*. I was perfectly sincere in what I wrote, though very foolish; and ADDINGTON (Sidmouth) and CHARLES YORKE knew, that *I refused compensation of every sort*.* The paper had prodigious effect: the invasion did not take place; but, if it had taken place, the nation was roused even to the obscurest hamlet. There is in these fires something infinitely more terrific than in a *real invasion* on the part of the French. Now, therefore, I hereby proclaim, that in the NEXT TWO-PENNY TRASH, which will be published on *Saturday, the 29th of this month*, I will, in a paper addressed to the Ministers, show them how these fires may be EXTINGUISHED AT ONCE, and that, too, without any "*revolutionary*" measure, but, with the greatest ease, and without anything *new*. I will show them how this may be accomplished in ONE WEEK, if they will only circulate the paper in the same manner and to the same extent as my invasion-paper was circulated in 1803. In this case, however, I must be *bookseller*; because I already publish the TRASH monthly, price 2*d.* If any one buy 300, or more, I sell them at 1*l.* the hundred; and I would sell a very large lot at 10*s.*, though I do think that I should then lose by the transaction.

Come now, parsons, *Hampshire parsons*; do read one more of my papers from your pulpits! At any rate, *I will publish the paper*: if the Ministers reject my advice, they must: I shall have done *my duty*, and shall view the consequences with less concern. I will recommend to them nothing that may not be *done at once*; done, too, without an invasion of the property of *anybody*; done with the greatest ease, and, to say all in one word, done without affording *even you* ground for grumbling. This, mind, Parsons, is a most important matter: nothing is effected *until the fires be put out*: while they go on, there is nothing else to be thought of: if they go on, at their present rate, much longer, they must lead to a state of anarchy; and I have to beseech the Ministers to reflect betimes on *what would NOW be the result of ten days of anarchy in England!*

4. ON THE CONDUCT OF THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.—I have, at last, found a Bishop of the *Law-Church* to *praise*. The facts are these; the Bishop, in coming from Winchester to his palace at *Farnham*, was met, about a mile before he got to the latter place, by a band of sturdy beggars, whom some call robbers. They stopped his carriage, and asked for some money, which he gave them. But he did not *prosecute* them; he had not a man of them called to account for his conduct; but, the next day, set *twenty-four labourers to constant work*; opened his castle to the distressed of all ages, and supplied all with food and other necessaries who

* See this paper, "SELECTIONS," vol. 1. p. 302.

stood in need of them. This was becoming a Christian teacher. This is rather different from *selling small beer out of that same palace*; as is, in the History of the Protestant Reformation, truly recorded of BISHOP NORTH, which anecdote has made the monks and friars laugh all over Christendom. But besides this really Bishop-like conduct at Farnham, the Bishop has done another act, even more laudable than his charitable deeds at Farnham. It has been stated, in all the London newspapers, that he has ordered *pieces of land*, in WALTHAM CHASE, to be allotted to the labouring people round about. The case is this: this Chase, or Forest, lies partly in the parish and manor of Bishop's Waltham and partly in the parish and manor of Droxford, both in Hampshire. The Bishop is the lord of the two manors, as he is of thirty or forty more, I believe. But he is only lord of the *soil*; the *herbage* belonging to the copyhold tenants, of whom there are many in each of these manors. So that he cannot make the grants of his own accord *without the consent of all the tenants*, which, however, they will, seeing his example, and considering how full their barns are and how big their ricks, hardly refuse, *just at this time*.

But, Parsons, what will the Bloody Old Times, who *praises* the Bishop for his benevolence in this instance; what will this base and bloody old sheet say, when it is informed that I AM THE REAL AUTHOR OF THIS BENEVOLENT INTENTION! In 1816, I think it was, when the labouring people of our neighbourhood were suffering very much from want of employment, I proposed to the parish of Bishop's Waltham, that we should petition the Bishop, who was lord of the manor, to grant an acre of waste land to any married labourer who would enclose and cultivate and live on it. I called a vestry of the parish, and to the farmers and land-owners made this proposition. We put the matter to the vote, and every man voted against me, with the single exception of Mr. JENNINGS, the schoolmaster! The three orators against me were, BUDD, of Stakes; CHIDDLE, then with three farms in his hands; and STEEL, of Ashton. Budd said, that to give the labourers a bit of land would make them "*sacy*"; Chiddle said, that it would only make them "*breed more children*"; and STEEL said, that it would make them demand "*higher wages*." What is the present state of Budd I do not know; Chiddle has *now not so much land*, I hear, as one of the labourers would have had; and, as to Steel, he, who used so to swagger, has since *blown his brains out with a pistol*! When I heard of the awful end of this man, and of the great change in the affairs of Chiddle, I could not help calling to mind their conduct on the above occasion, and to call to mind also the denunciations of God against the oppressors of the poor: "*Hear this*," said I, when I heard of the death of STEEL. "*Hear this*, O ye that "*swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail! I will "turn your feasting into mourning, saith the Lord God, and your songs "into lamentations.*"

The vestry-book of the parish of Bishop's Waltham contains a record of this my earnest endeavour to protect and cherish the labourers. This has, indeed, been upwardest in my mind all my life long, or at least ever since I was able duly to estimate their toils and their hardships; and if I had had *power*, instead of being *persecuted*, England would never have beheld the scenes which now disgrace her. But, besides the efforts of mine in 1816, the Bishop owes to me, in part, that he *has this Chase*; for it is very likely, that if it had not been for me it would have been *enclosed* by

Act of Parliament, in 1827, in the time of PRETTYMAN, who had given his consent; and the Bill had even passed the House of Commons, in spite of the laudable and able endeavours of Mr. RICHARD HINXMAN and Mr. OVERINGTON; but it was flung out by the Committee of the Lords, and, I believe, in consequence of a memorial written by me, handed to Mr. HOLMES, and given by him to Lord SHAFTESBURY. I describe this beautiful Chase, with its scores of cottages, and its cows and pigs, in my WOODLANDS, an extract of which I sent to Lord Shaftesbury, along with my memorial. If that enclosure had taken place, not only would the present Bishop have had no Chase to give to the labourers, but a thousand of these (children and all together) would have been deprived of all the outlet which now enables them to live so much better than they otherwise would. So that, Parsons, while we do justice to the Bishop, let a little be done to me. The Bishop goes the right way to work to put out the fires: his is a more effectual way than that adopted by the Ministers. He will, however, find some pretty hard flints in the copyhold tenants. The way to soften them is to have their names printed in a hand-bill, with the word dissent or assent against each. Only just print these, and let them see them, and their hearts will soften.

And now, Parsons, let me ask you this question: Whether these acts of the Bishop be not a great good? And then this question: Whether they would have taken place if it had not been for the fires? I have no desire to detract, in the smallest degree, from the Bishop's merit; his conduct proves him to be a truly benevolent man; but, as these acts did not take place before the fires, I must presume, that, while he as well as most of us, must have condemned those acts in themselves, they roused his attention to the cause of acts so outrageous, so alarming, and so new to the country; and that, thus roused, he was stimulated to those really good works. It is this unavoidable conclusion that makes men look at those acts with less horror than they have been accustomed to look at acts of arson; and, while a wise government would not fail to see this, it would hasten to take away the possibility of good being ascribed to deeds which, in themselves, are so decidedly wicked; and if the Government follow the advice I shall tender to them in the next Number of the Two-Penny Trash, they will take away this possibility, and will leave the incendiary to suffer under the execration, instead of the deep compassion, of the just part of the nation.

5. ON THE FATE OF THE TITHES.—Parsons, for many years you have accused me of disaffection, disloyalty, infidelity, and all sorts of crimes, for no other cause than that I proposed to take away the tithes from the clergy. Look, now, at another part of this Register, under the head of TITHES; and you will find, that, from PENZANCE to Dover, from Pevensy Level to the Tweed, from the west of Wales to the east of Norfolk, the same sentiment prevails. "A strong feeling," says the *Palmouth Packet*, "of resistance to the tithe-system has displayed itself in the western part of this county. Some days ago, a solicitor of St. Ives was so roughly treated by the people of Mousehole, from whom he was collecting the tithes for fish, that he was glad to escape without loss of life or limb. Both at Newlyn and Mousehole, boards are fixed against the corners of the streets, with 'No Tithes paid here,' painted on them; and the St. Justmen, it is said, have offered to march in a formidable body to their aid, if necessary."—Now, these men are not rabble; these men are nor Jacobins; these are people of property and of

weight in the community. They do not, I dare say, read my writings. Yet, they are all of a mind. They all seem to think that tithes *ought not to be*. Why *blame me*, then? I have only gone a little before other people.

It is very strange, but it is true, that you are beaten without an attempt to defend yourselves. You seem *sulky*. But that will avail you nothing. You might ask, why tithes, which have existed a thousand years, should be found so oppressive *now*, for the *first time*? You have plenty of arguments; but they are all answered in a moment, and in this one remark; that the Church Property is *public property*, and that is *wanted to be applied to the diminution of the taxes*. This is the *answer to every-thing* that you can say. As long as the taxes were bearable, your affair was left unmeddled with; but, as I have said for years, *something must give way at last*; and the nation, with voice unanimous, have pitched upon the Church as the JONAH. Your shipmates, the fundholders, the pensioners, the patentees, the dead-weight, and the staff, all agree that *you are wanted the least*. The fundholders are your most formidable foes; but they are sure to stand *longer* than you. Sir JAMES GRAHAM, the present First Lord of the Admiralty, wrote a pamphlet, three years ago, proposing to take 30 per cent from the fundholders; and saying not a word about taking any-thing from you! I let loose upon him instantly, and was joined by the whole country. O, no! pay the debt honestly; pay it in full tale; pay it in gold; let the gold be of full weight and fineness. But this cannot be done and *you keep the tithes at the same time*, and the labourers get paid sufficient wages to keep them quiet. And here, here is the *true and only source of all the difficulties of the Government, and of all the dangers that menace the country*; and, be you well assured, that *you, or the fundholders, must give way*. You might have so managed the matter as to make the fundholders the JONAH; but you have not, and must, without a most wonderful miracle, be the Jonah yourselves.

One PRETTYMAN, in preaching before the judges at Winchester, ascribed the acts of violence to the *cheap pamphlets*! A fellow of the name of FERRER, the other day, at Cambridge, ascribed them to the *lectures*, when the very greatest fire of all was close by Cambridge, where *he would not let me lecture*! But all this is really brutal nonsense. Just as if I could persuade men to feel what they do not feel! Just as if it required *inflammatory pamphlets and speeches* to convince them, that they, who create all the food fit for man, ought not to live on food fit only for *poor hogs*! Just as if it required anything but their own hearts to tell them, that, when they fall into poverty, they ought not to be made to draw carts like beasts of burden! And, if I had the *power*, why should I have the *will*, to cause society to be dislocated, and all property to be *cast up to the winds*? In the insolence of your hearts, you and the like of you, represent me as one who has *nothing at stake*, who can *lose nothing by a scramble*. Who has *more* at stake than I have? He who has *more* than four sons, men of talent and learning and of sobriety and industry never surpassed: he who has *more* than three sensible and virtuous daughters: he who has *more* than nearly a score of copy-rights of books of his own writing, the income from *each of which surpasses your allowance to a curate*, and the value of which to me depends on *law* as much as does the value of any man's estate to him. You, you talk about *stake and property*! what are the bits of *public property*, held by you at last for *your lives*, and liable every hour to be legally taken from you; what are these,

compared with the fruits of my talents and industry? The subjoined is a *roll of my farms and orchards and gardens*. Look at it; see it the work of the *over-hours of eleven years*; muster up an account of the labours, *any fifty of you*, in the same space of time; and then, if you have any sense of shame left, blush for your abuse of me. In my strenuous and incessant efforts to defend and aid the labouring people, what motive but a good one could I have had, or can I have? They have no means of *rewarding me*, even with the intimation of their gratitude. They cannot know me personally, nor I them. But, besides my natural disposition, that Book, which I have, I believe, read with more profit than you have, told me, when a boy, that "blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive: and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."

And now, Hampshire parsons, leaving you to ask yourselves whether you have acted with these promises in your minds, I close my letter with once more bidding you look at the documents, which you will find under the head of TITHES.

WM. COBBETT.

A LETTER

FROM THE LABOURERS OF THE TEN LITTLE HARD PARISHES*
TO ALEXANDER BARING, THE LOANMONGER.

(*Political Register, September, 1831.*)

Hard Parishes, 1st September, 1831.

LOANMONGER,

We have read in the newspapers what is called a speech in the House of Commons, and this speech which is printed in the following words, the newspaper-mongers say was made by you.

"The constitution of England had a King, Lords, and Commons—although an hon. and learned Gentleman had told his constituents that half the Commons was nominated by the people and half by the aristocracy. He (Mr. Baring), for one, was not inclined at once to make this sweeping change, however he might be disposed to make some alterations. True it was that the Commons had not, at present, unlimited power. It might be compared to a man with one hand tied behind him; the people required that the other hand should be released, and the rational answer was, 'No: he is a violent dangerous fellow, and is not to be trusted with the use of both his hands.' If the other hand were released, it would be employed in the destruction of the people who demanded that it should be set at liberty. (Cheers.) The people ought only to have that degree of power which was consistent with their own interests; and it was at least perilous to destroy

* *Hard parishes* is the name by which Mr. COBBETT used to distinguish several parishes lying together near Whitchurch in Hampshire.—ED.

the fabric which had *fostered their industry, and protected their liberties*. The people were no more to be trusted with power than children with edge-tools. (Hear, hear.) He would ask this simple question—Whether the influence of the people had been so reduced, in the House of Commons, as to render it necessary to re-organize the Constitution? (Cries of ‘Question.’) Taking it for granted that half the House was nominated by the aristocracy, he contended that this state of things was *advantageous, inasmuch as it mitigated democratic power*. (Hear, hear.)”

This is the speech that the news-people tell us you made. Now, then, suppose that when we go to work for you, or for any of the farmers or parsons, we were to go with *one hand tied behind us*: what would be said to us? We should be ordered to let loose the other hand, and to go to work directly with both hands: and if we refused to do this, we, if single men, should be told to starve; and if married men, should be sent to old Becket’s* jail, or to the treadmill, for not working with *both hands* to support our wives and families without parish relief. If called out to *serve in the militia*, we must come with both hands. If we were to come with one hand tied behind us, we should receive the word of command to let it loose instantly; if we refused, it would be let loose for us; and if we refused to use *both hands* in handling the arms, we should be *tied up and flogged*.

This speech is said to have been made by you in a debate upon the REFORM BILL, which, when it becomes a law, will make the members of the House of Commons more the representatives of the people than they have hitherto been for a great many years. To this (according to the above speech) you object, because it would let loose both our hands; and because the common people are like “*a violent and dangerous fellow who is not to be trusted with the use of both his hands*.” In another part of the speech it is said, that the people are “no more to be trusted with power than children with edge-tools.” These are very insolent words, Mr. Loanmonger. Whether they were uttered by you or not, we cannot say; but they have been published all over the kingdom under your name, and we have seen no publication in which you disown them.

Let us talk with you coolly a little about this matter. When it is a question about the enjoyment of rights and liberties, we are violent and dangerous people, and are not to be trusted with the use of both our hands; we are to be considered as children, as senseless children, or as madmen who require constant restraint. But when we are called upon to labour for the rich, or to take up arms to defend their persons and their property, which it is our duty to do if we ourselves be well and fairly treated: we by no means deny this, because if the property of the rich were not protected by the working millions, it could not be protected at all, and then there could be no such thing as property; and then any little things that we ourselves might acquire by our industry, care, and frugality, would be taken from us by the idle and the dissolute. But when we are called upon to labour for the rich, or to fight for them, then we are, during the time that we so labour and so fight, not to be deemed unworthy of being trusted with the use of both our hands; then, we are not, during that time, to be looked upon as dangerous fellows and as children. Bayonets, swords, and lances, are edge-tools, and pretty sharp edge-tools too; yet we are to be trusted with them, so much like children as we are, as long as we use them for the purposes of the rich and the powerful. Ah! BARING, you may think that we are brutally ignorant; you may think that we understand nothing but the mere labours of the field: we

* The name of the keeper of Winchester jail.—ED.

understand well what our rights are, and of this we shall convince you before we have concluded this letter.

We observe, and have long observed, that the working-people of England are, now-a-days, by those who affect to be their superiors, and the greater part of whom live upon the fruit of their labour, NOT CALLED THE PEOPLE; not called the COMMONS OF ENGLAND, as they used to be called; but are called the *peasantry*, the *population*, the *lower orders*; and that these degrading names are given to everybody that does not, in some way or other, live in idleness upon the fruit of the people's labour. The swarms of half-pay officers, of clerks under the Government, of tax-gatherers, and of parsons, are all called *squires* or *reverend gentlemen*. The jailers are called *governors*, and the turnkeys are called *deputy-governors*. So that while those who raise all the food, and make all the houses and all the clothing, are treated as if they were something a great deal lower than the stock upon a farm, all who live upon the fruit of their labour are considered as the only persons in the kingdom having any right to be treated with attention and kindness, or even with civility.

Nay, we cannot refrain from observing how suddenly even we ourselves become objects to be caressed, when by chance we *get a red coat* upon our backs. To-day, JACK CHOPSTICK is one of the *lower orders*, one of the *population*, one of the *peasantry*; but to-morrow, though one of the laziest fellows in the village, and one of the most dissolute, by merely taking a sum of money from the fruit of our labour, and putting a red coat upon his back, he becomes all at once a "*fine fellow*," a "*hero*," and he receives as much every week for subsistence, over and above lodging, clothing, fire, and candle; over and above these, the very lowest of the "*fine fellows*" receives as much in a week as the magistrates allow for the maintenance of a man, his wife, and two children, without any allowance for lodging, clothing, firing, or candle. This does not escape our observation, BARING. We do not grudge the soldier that which he gets. We, for our parts, cannot see why England should not now exist without a standing army in time of peace, as well as it did formerly for more than a thousand years. But if there must be soldiers, they ought not to starve any more than other men. They have not *too much*. But if seven shillings and sevenpence a week, with clothing, lodging, fire and candle into the bargain, be not too much for the single lowest soldier, is not a gallon loaf and sixpence a week too little for the hard-working married man, who is allowed neither of the other things which the soldier has? We are told that there is many a weaver who works sixteen hours every day of his life at labour as hard as hedging and ditching, and who has not to maintain himself and his family anything like so much as that which is given to the lowest soldier whose pay partly comes out of the fruit of that poor weaver's earnings.* If these be falsehoods, BARING, proclaim them to be falsehoods; if they be truths, then say again, if you like, that we are dangerous fellows, and ought to have one hand still tied behind us: then say, if you like, that it is not *high time that a change should take place*, and that another sort of men ought not to be chosen to make the laws and impose the taxes.

* See Report of a Committee on Hand-loom Weavers' petitions, 1835, page 5, where it is shown that the Weavers' wages amount, for food and clothing, to about 2*d.* per head per day!—Ed.

Another curious thing we have observed, and that is, that all those who live upon the labour of the people are provided for, in case of their ceasing to receive pay for *services* real or pretended; we observe that, in these cases, they are provided for by *pensions* or *allowances* for the whole of the rest of their lives, though they do nothing for the public, and pretend to do nothing for the public. If a man have served in the army or in the navy; if he have been a clerk under the Government; if he have been a tax-gatherer of any description; if he have been in Government employ of any sort, he has *pay for the rest of his life in one shape or another*, and our earnings are taken from us in order to provide the means of that pay. Now, BARING, do loan-mongers, do bankers, do merchants, do traders of any description, when they discharge their clerks, give them pay to the end of their lives for doing nothing? You will say NO, to be sure. When you want a clerk no longer, or when he has become incapable of his business, you cease to pay him; and why are not we to cease to pay taxes for the paying of officers and clerks who have been in the service of the Government? Even common soldiers, and in the prime of life too, have pensions granted them for life. Have these men any more right to this maintenance than any ploughman or weaver has? They tell us, that they have been "*serving their king and country*," and have they not been *well paid for it all the while*? And if they, even when old and worn-out, have been serving their king and country, have not the weaver, the artizan, and the ploughman, who have been working harder and living harder all the while; have not they also been *serving their king and country*; and have they *pensions given them*, when they are worn-out? They have STURGES BOURNE'S Bills, *select vestries* and *hired overseers* to appeal to for the means of their miserable existence, after they have left the narrow of their bones in the fields or in the loom-shed. There are two cases, indeed, in which it would be just to give pensions to soldiers or sailors. First, in the case of *wounds*, for men are not likely to receive wounds in civil life; and next, in the case of men *impressed* or forced to become soldiers or sailors: but if a man enter the service of his own free-will; if it be his choice to lead the life of soldier or sailor, rather than continue at useful labour, what right has that man, even in his old age and worn-out state, to anything *more* than relief from the parish, in the usual way and in the usual degree?

But, our complaint on this score does not stop here. This speech says that we are to be restrained, we are to have one hand tied behind us for our own "*interest*"; and it says that it is "*perilous to destroy the fabric which has fostered our industry, and protected our liberties*." We do not understand what you mean by "*fabric*"; but, we understand that you mean, that the present mode of ruling us has fostered our industry. To *foster* means to *suckle*, to *feed*, to *cherish*. Now, BARING, has our industry been fostered by the magistrates' order, signed by your brother THOMAS and seven others, allowing the labouring man a gallon loaf and fourpence a week to live upon? Has our industry been suckled by allowing less than that for a mother and children to live upon? But, that we may not be accused of misrepresentation, we will here copy the order and regulation to which we allude. Read it, BARING; read it, all England; and then let the reader of it say, if he can, that our industry has been *fostered*; that it has been fed and cherished. Look, BARING, at the *fifth resolution* in particular. See the man, his wife and one child, doomed to remain upon the same spot, and compelled to live upon four shillings

and sixpence a week the whole year round, or sentenced to starvation as a punishment. Of these eight fosterers of our industry ; these eight cherishers of us and our wives ; these eight sucklers of our children, five were *ministers of Christ* ; each, we believe, with more than one living, if not with more than two ; and one of the other three magistrates is your own brother, who is so zealous in circulating amongst us that BIBLE which tells us that even "the ox is not to be muzzled as he treadeth out the corn." We beg you to read this magisterial order with attention, and to remember that it was most rigorously acted on until *last year*.

"HAMPSHIRE JUSTICE.

"NEW REGULATION OF ALLOWANCE TO THE POOR.

"At a meeting of the magistrates acting in and for the division of Fawley, in the county of Southampton, at their petty sessions, held at the Grand Jury Chamber, Winchester, the 31st day of August, 1822 ;

"Present—the Rev. *Edmund Poulter* (chairman), the Hon. and Rev. *Augustus George Legge*, Sir *Thomas Baring*, Bart., the Rev. *Wm. Hill Newbolt*, D.D., *W. Nevill* and *George Lovell*, Esqrs., the Rev. *F. W. Swanton*, and the Rev. *Robert Wright*, eight of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace, and a large and *respectable number of the yeomanry* residing within the division, who were requested by the magistrates to attend on the occasion.

"The magistrates, having taken into their consideration the allowances usually made by this bench to paupers applying for relief, and the diminished price of every article of life,

"1. Resolved unanimously,—That in future the magistrates acting at this bench, in making their orders, either collectively or individually, for the maintenance and relief of such paupers, will not exceed the following allowances :

"2. When the family shall consist of a man and his wife, with one or two children, or a man with two or three children, or a woman with two or three children, to each of them the price of a gallon loaf, of the best wheaten bread, and 4d. each over per week.

"3. When the family shall consist of a man and his wife, with three or four children, or a man with four or five children, or a woman with four or five children, to each of them the price of a gallon loaf, of the best wheaten bread, and 3d. each per week over.

"4. When the family shall consist of a man and his wife with five or more children, or a man with six or more children, or a woman with six or more children, to each of them the price of a gallon loaf, of the best wheaten bread, and 2d. each over per week.

"5. And whereas a practice has been prevalent among the labouring classes to absent themselves during a part of the year when their services are most required, and to return after the harvest and become a burden to their respective parishes, the justices recommend to the officers of every parish, when the family shall consist of a man and his wife, or a man with one child, to offer to each such man 4s. per week, from Michaelmas to Lady-day, and 5s. per week from Lady-day to Michaelmas, so that he might be engaged to serve the whole year ; and any man refusing that offer shall not be entitled to any relief. If no such offer be made, or no sufficient employment can be found whereby any such man can maintain himself and his wife or child, the allowance is to be 3s. 6d. per week and no more.

"6. To every unmarried man the justices recommend the officers of every parish to offer 3s. per week from Michaelmas-day to Lady-day, and 4s. per week from Lady-day to Michaelmas-day, so that he may be engaged to serve the whole year ; and any unmarried man refusing that offer shall not be entitled to any relief. If no such offer be made, or no sufficient employment can be found whereby any such unmarried man can maintain himself, he shall be paid 2s. 6d. per week, and no more.

"7. To a woman with one child 3s. 6d. per week, and no more.

"8. To every single woman, 2s. 6d. per week and no more.

"9. And the justices do declare, that all paupers maintained and relieved by their parishes, and able to work, shall, for the allowances so to be made to them, be compelled to perform such proper work as the parish officers shall direct or

require of them. And it is earnestly recommended to the parish officers to provide, as far as possible, employment for all such paupers, and if they neglect or refuse to perform the work found for them, they will be punished as the law directs.

“T WOODHAM,

“Clerk to the Magistrates.

“Ordered that the foregoing resolutions be inserted in the Hampshire county newspaper.”

This was not tying up one hand, BARING; it is sewing up the mouth; and yet, when we stepped forward to demand better treatment than this, the bloody *Times* newspaper of London, which is the property of two women, one called ANNA BRODIE, and the other FANNY WRAIGHT, called aloud for SPECIAL COMMISSIONS, and for the putting of *some of us to death*, at least! Of the proceedings of that Special Commission, of COOPER, of COOKE, of the two MASONs who were taken from their widowed mother, of JOSEPH CARTER who was taken from his wife and eight children; of many, many others, we may speak to you hereafter; but here, BARING, is the way in which our industry has been cherished, in which our hard toil has been requited, in a country made fruitful by our hands; by our *two hands*, and by every joint and nerve in our bodies; while swarm upon swarm of idlers have been, and still are, rioting in luxury on the taxes raised upon us. You are afraid, it seems, that some degree of power should be put into our hands; you are afraid that our industry should cease to be fostered if the Reform Bill be adopted, and if people even in the middle rank of life have the choosing of members. Such fostering as we have above described will, in all human probability, cease to exist; but, so far from that being an evil, we shall deem it a great good; and, be you assured, that the very reasons which make you object to the Reform Bill make us most anxious to see it pass.

Not only are we compelled to pay taxes on our malt, hops, beer (for we pay a tax on it still), tea, soap, candles, sugar, tobacco, and on every thing that we swallow, or that we wear; not only are we compelled to pay taxes to provide pensions for life for all men that have ever been in public employ, but we are compelled to pay taxes also to *the widows of such men for their lives*, and to *their children also, until they be grown up*. While we are ground down to the earth, we are compelled to pay taxes to breed up swarms of gentlemen and ladies who are to breed more in their turn, to be kept out of the fruit of the sweat of our children. There is no provision for *our widows*; *no pensions for them*, or for *our children*; they are left to STURGES BOURNE's Bills, select vestries, and hired overseers. But, relating to these pensions for widows and children, there is something curious, which we cannot help noticing. The widows of *officers* in the army are pensioned, and also their children; but there are *no pensions for the widows and children of the common soldiers*! The common soldiers come from the peasantry, the population, the lower orders, and, therefore, there are no pensions for their widows and children; and thus it is, BARING, that our industry has been cherished by this “FABRIC” which you are so much afraid of seeing destroyed!

In short, BARING, we have, at last, *got behind the curtain*; we understand clearly how it is, that, amidst all the abundance produced by our labour, we are reduced to a state of beggary; we see clearly how it is, that, in the *land of roast beef*, our best living has been that of potatoes, which our forefathers would have despised, even as fattening for a hog.

We know that the TITHES were established for the *use of the poor*; we know that, for *nine hundred years*, England knew nothing of *church-rates or poor-rates*, and that the churches were maintained and the poor relieved *out of the tithes*; we know that agreeably to the law as it now stands, all the tithes, all the estates of the bishops and deans and chapters; all the estates of the colleges, belong to the public and to the poor, and can be rightfully disposed of in any manner that the representatives of the people shall please; and as we firmly believe that the REFORM BILL will give the people wise and just representatives, we look to that with great hope and satisfaction, as something which will let loose the hand which you seem to think so necessary to be tied behind us. For the present, BARING, we bid you farewell, requesting you to be contented with what you have got; and we assure you, that when we get plenty of bread, bacon, and beer, and good clothing and good lodging and good fuel, in exchange for our hard labour, we shall not grudge you that which you possess; but that, until we get them, no content will exist amongst

THE LABOURERS

OF THE LITTLE HARD PARISHES.

TO MR. O'CONNELL,

ON HIS SPEECH AGAINST THE PROPOSITION FOR ESTABLISHING
POOR-LAWS IN IRELAND.

(*Political Register*, January, 1832.)

At Mr. Johnson's, Lime Place, Manchester, 14th January, 1832.

SIR,

With very great surprise (to give the mildest term to my feeling on the occasion) I have read, in the MORNING CHRONICLE of the 7th instant, a publication purporting to be the report of a *speech* made by you at a meeting of the NATIONAL POLITICAL UNION, held in Dublin on the 4th of this same month. The speech is stated to have been made in consequence of a motion by Mr. JOHN REYNOLDS, for the appointment of a committee to deliberate on the subject of POOR-LAWS FOR IRELAND. Having long been convinced that the withholding from Ireland of these laws, at the time when they were given to England, was the *original sin* in the misrule of Ireland, and that it has been the greatest of all the causes of the immeasurable distance between the manners, the habits, and the condition, of the working classes of the two countries; having seen that that *Catholic Emancipation*, which was, according to your expectations, so frequently, so eloquently, and so confidently expressed, to restore harmony and happiness to Ireland, has been far indeed from producing any such effects; being more fully than ever convinced that there never can be peace in Ireland, and that there never can be any security, or chance of security, against those periodical returns of starvation in Ireland,

the bare thought of which ought to make an English, and more especially an *Irish* legislator ashamed to show his face amongst mortals of common humanity; remembering that Mr. GRATTAN, that Dr. DOYLE, and that YOU YOURSELF, have been the advocates of this remedy, for the sufferings of your unhappy country, you, I am sure, will not wonder that, in reading the report of the speech to which I have alluded, my feeling was such as to be very inadequately described by the word *surprise*; but you would wonder, I trust, and I am sure that my readers would wonder, if I were not to give an *answer to that speech*. This I shall now do with all that respect towards you which is due to you on account of your laudable and able exertions during the two last sessions of Parliament; and, in order that the public may have the arguments and facts of both sides of the question fairly before them, I will first insert the above-mentioned report of your speech:

MR. O'CONNELL rose amid loud cheers. I rise, he said, to second the motion for a Committee. With many of the principles laid down by Mr. Reynolds, I entirely concur. I believe he has exaggerated the wealth of the Established Church—but then it is enormously great, and almost defies exaggeration. The claim which the poor have upon that wealth is obvious. One-third of it originally belonged to the poor, and they have been *stealing* from the poor by having kept from them that one-third. (*Hear.*) I concur also with Mr. Reynolds in what he has said of the generosity of the English people. (*Hear.*) Their generosity towards this country in money gifts has been most laudable, and I only wish that they had equally distinguished themselves for their *political charity*. (*Hear.*) We have got from *them* three or four hundred thousand pounds for our beggars, and they have been three or four centuries *making beggars of us*. Jack-the-Giant-Killer was distinguished for making giants first and then slaying them; it is thus the English have acted towards the Irish—they have made beggars of them first, and then relieved them. (*Hear, hear, hear.*) Though I concur in the expression of my gratitude to those who have subscribed to the relief of the Irish poor, so must I also give expression to my abhorrence of those who have *made a rich country poor*, and have *placed a starving population in the midst of abundance*. (*Hear, and cheers.*) Though I am most ready to second the motion for a Committee upon this subject, I cannot but *start back with horror* at the proposal of *Poor-laws being introduced into Ireland*. I know that a great case is made for them in the misery of the people, and I *was myself* even ready to plunge into the Curtian *gulf*, where eventually we might be swallowed up, in the hope that we could for the time be able to relieve the distresses of the poor. I have thought upon this subject *by day*—I have *mused upon it by night*—it has been the *last thought that visited my pillow* before I closed my eyes to sleep—and it has been the *benefit of my morning meditations*; and the result to which I have come is this, that it would be *impossible* to introduce the Poor-laws here without *enslaving and degrading the poor*. The poor themselves, I think, would suffer most from a poor law. When people talk of an amelioration of the English system, I ask of them to point it out, for I never yet met a man who was able to discover it. (*Hear, hear, and cheers.*) I abhor any *interference with the rate of wages*, especially in an agricultural country, and this is one of those things which frighten me about the introduction of the Poor-laws here. What kind of poor-law is it that is wanting? If it be one for the support of *the sick and the maimed*, I go to the full extent with those who support such a poor-law. I say that the State is bound to make provision for those who are afflicted with *sickness or disease*; but there it is our duty to *stop*. There is no danger of encouraging sickness to enable a man to get into an infirmary, nor will any man break his leg in order that he may have a claim upon the charity of his neighbour. Let me be understood—all claims arising from *disease, sickness, or casualty*, should be provided for by *the State*, and to that extent I go with those who are advocates for Poor-laws. One third of that which is now in the hands of the clergy, being given to its legal destination, would be fully sufficient to defray all such demands upon charity. (*Hear.*) Even at present there is *scarcely a village in Ireland* that has not a *dispensary*, nor any county town without its *hospital*, and if these be not sufficient, the *Legislature is bound* to make provision for them. (*Hear.*) Go beyond

that, and what do you do? Are you to take care of the aged? Do you not, by doing so, remove from the individual the necessity of providing for old age—do you not encourage him to go to the dram-shop, and lay out his sixpence upon his animal gratification, rather than of hoarding for the day of want? Do you not take from industry its incentive, and from providence its best guard? (Hear.) If I were, as my enemies represent me to be, one who was looking solely to popularity, and not to serve my country, what more fitting theme could I select than that of the Poor-laws? What more popular topic could I possibly adopt? (Hear.) I feel, however, that it is the duty of a humane and a conscientious man to express candidly his opinion upon a topic so deeply interesting and important to his fellow-countrymen. (Hear.) I say, that if you make a provision for old age, you take away the great stimulant to industry and economy in youth. You do another thing—what is to become of the aged father and mother—they lose the solace and the affectionate care of the son, and the tender attentions of the daughter, the moment you say to them that a legal provision for their support is procured. You turn the father and the mother out to the parish, or you thrust them into the solitary, the cold, and the wretched poor-house—there, in the naked cell, sufficient to chill the human breast, you leave the expiring victims of your mistaken humanity. (Hear, hear.) But think not that you have a compulsory provision for the aged alone: if you go thus far, you are bound also to provide for the hardy workman, who cannot procure labour, and who must not be left to starve. The man with a good appetite and willing hands, but who has no work, you must include him also. It was not at first intended, I believe, to include this class amongst those to be provided for by the Poor-laws; but it was found that they could not be excluded, and the moment that principle is adopted, the rich parish would be obliged to provide for all the poor who might claim relief from it, and in a short time that parish would be swamped with the number of claimants upon it. You cannot say to the city of Dublin that it should have a Mendicity one-fourth the size of the metropolis—that every man who sought relief there should obtain it, and the citizens be obliged to pay the expense of supporting them. And yet, how are you to discriminate, unless you make a law of settlement, one great instrument of oppression against the English poor. One of the means of settlement in England is by birth; there is none less likely to be subject to imposition, and yet none is made a greater instrument of oppression. The moment that it appears a poor woman is in a state of pregnancy, she is immediately made an object for persecution, and a notice to quit is served by the landlord on the wretched hovel that the prolific mother inhabits. The landlord, in fact, is compelled by the vestry to be guilty of this persecution. Another means of settlement in a parish is by living there for one year; and the consequence is, that engagements are made with labourers for only eleven months, and they are obliged to be one month idle before they can expect a renewal of work in the same parish. Another bad consequence of that law is, that it prevents the circulation of free labour, and obliges every man to stick to his parish. The Poor-laws, too, take from a man a direct interest in being industrious. The motives to labour are present subsistence and future support. Take these two away, and you deprive a man of two great stimulants to labour. (Hear.) Besides, the Poor-laws compel those dependent upon them for support to work—but in what manner? The labourers are let out by the parish at half wages, and then these half-workmen come in competition with the regular labourers. The farmer will tell the regular labourer, who demands three shillings a day, that he will give him but two shillings; for if he does not choose to take that, he will get those who he is ready to admit are inferior workmen for one shilling, and thus the good labourer is necessarily made poor. (Hear, hear.) Have I not seen, in Shrewsbury, for instance, placards on which were inscribed, “Vagrants and Irish labourers whipped out of the town?” Mr. Sturges Bourne made an improvement in the law in this respect, for he provided that after the Irish labourer was whipped, he should be sent home. (Hear.) These laws are necessarily called cruel laws, for they make charity itself the subject of taxation. They create in a man’s mind something of the sensation that is felt upon paying the wide-street or grand jury cess. (Laughter.) They make, too, one man abundantly charitable, by putting his hand into the pockets of another—and to do what? to keep the poor at the lowest rate of maintenance. It is well known that in many parishes in England the poor are farmed out to be provided for at the lowest possible expense. The man who takes the care of them under-feeds them, in order that he may make a profit on them. Not only is the pro-

viding of food for them hired out, but apothecaries to supply them with medicines are hired also—*men whose interest it is that the sick poor should die as soon as possible*, in order that they may be at the less expense for medicines for them. (*Hear.*) For an obvious reason I do not enter into the horrors of this *demoralizing system respecting females*; it is sufficient for me to say, that the *more vicious a female is, the more objects has she to make her selection from*, either to pay *forty pounds*, or to marry her. (*Hear, hear.*) It is sufficient to say of the system, that clergymen of the Established Church of England *have sworn*, that, amongst the poorer classes, out of every twenty women they married, *nineteen were in a state of pregnancy.* (*Hear, hear.*) What do we see as the *consequence of the Poor-laws in England?* The country is *in a blaze from north to south*; the agricultural labourers there are destroying the property of their employers. (*Hear.*) I have now sat in three Parliaments, and I have heard in each of these, members state that these laws created a great deal of misery and distress. But then it may be said that these laws can be ameliorated. How will you ameliorate them? What part of the English poor-laws will you shut out? How will Mr. Reynolds improve these laws? All the *ingenuity of Committee after Committee* that has sat respecting these laws has been exercised in vain, and has been unable to discover any *effective amelioration.* (*Hear, hear.*) One feature of the Poor-laws is, that it *makes slaves of the poorer classes*; it makes them the slaves of the overseers, and destroys completely their character for *independence.* I prefer the *wild merriment of the Irishman* to the *half-sulky, half-miserable tones of the English slave* to Poor-laws. The Irishman certainly has his *distresses*, but then he has his *hopes*; he endures much misery; but then he *entertains expectations of redress.* (*Hear, hear, and cheers.*) Let the question of Poor-laws stand over, till we see if justice will be done to us by *England*, upon the *question of reform.* I have often said, that if a *just reform bill* were given to Ireland, I would *try the experiment with it*; but if they do not give a *just reform bill*, then I shall want to introduce a poor-law for Ireland by *repealing the Union.* (*Hear, and loud cheers.*) Mr. O'Connell concluded by requesting that their *exertions* should not be *interfered with by the poor-law question*, in looking for a substantial *plan of reform*, and if that were refused, in seeking for a resource and a *remedy for a bad reform bill.* (The hon. Gentleman sat down amid loud cheers.)

Sir, I do not overlook the great *cheering* which this speech appears to have called forth from your Dublin audience; but when I recollect the still more noisy cheering drawn forth in another place by the Dawsons and others, when they so unjustly, and in a manner so senseless, assailed you, I am by no means disheartened by this vast quantity of cheering; which I am disposed to ascribe, not to any folly, and still less to any perverseness, but rather to that "*wild merriment,*" which, towards the close of your speech, you are pleased to describe as characteristic of your countrymen, and on which you appear to set so high a value.

Upon a careful perusal of this speech, I have no hesitation in saying, that the far greater part of your *facts*, as they stand here, are founded in error; and that the whole of your arguments are fallacious; and these assertions I think myself bound to prove; not by any general statement or reasoning; but, in the first place, point by point, as your facts and arguments lie before me. I might, if I chose to pursue that course, insist, that with regard to *your opinions*, they ought to be viewed in conjunction with, and estimated according to, the tried value of many of your former opinions. I might, if I chose that course, meet the imposing assurance, that you "*have thought of this subject by day, have mused upon it by night, and have given it the benefit of your morning meditations*"; I might, if I chose, and with perfect fairness, meet this formidable preamble by asking you, whether you had not thought by day, mused by night, and meditated in the morning, on the *measure for disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders*, before you became the very first man to *suggest* that measure to two Houses of Parliament, as being a measure

necessary to the *fair representation of Ireland*; and whether, in less than twenty-four months from the date of the suggestion, you did not, before the face of these forty-shilling freeholders, *beg their pardon, and the pardon of Almighty God*, for having entertained a thought of their disfranchisement? Passing over the "*golden chain*," by which you proposed to *bind* the Catholic priests to the Protestant Government and *hierarchy*; passing over this and many other such errors, and confining myself within the forty-shilling freeholder error, might I not, if I chose, express a confident hope; nay, presume and almost conclude, that you are not less in error now, when you so boldly call ENGLISHMEN, in direct terms, and, by inference, the AMERICANS, the *slaves of the Poor-laws*?

I might, with perfect fairness, do this, and perhaps to the entire satisfaction of the greater part of my readers; but I will evade nothing; will consider nothing coming from you as unworthy of serious notice; and will, therefore, agreeably to my promise, answer your speech point by point.

Deferring, till by-and-by, my notice of your charge against the Protestant hierarchy, of having "*filched*" from the poor of Ireland the amount of their third of the tithes, I begin with your charge against the "*English people*" of having "*made the Irish people poor*." We will cast aside your "*gratitude*" towards the former, as a fit companion for the *mutual good-will* between the two countries, which this charge of yours is so manifestly intended to inspire and keep alive; we will cast these aside; but, since you so positively assert that we, the many-headed Jack-the-Giant-Killer, have made your countrymen *poor*, we may surely be allowed the liberty to ask you to name the *time* when they *were rich*. When A is accused of having stolen the property of B, it is incumbent on B to prove that he *ever had* the property. Yours being, as to this matter, bare allegation without proof of previous possession, we need not remind you, how you, being in such a case counsel for the accused, would scoff the accuser out of court. We will not scoff you out of court; we will give you further time for "*thought, musing, and meditation*"; and will even aid these cool and candid operations of your mind by suggestions of our own. You say that the "*English people*" have been *three or four centuries* engaged in the work of making the Irish people beggars. You doubtless use the words *English people* instead of *English Government*, not only from a love of *justice*, but from an amiable desire to promote the good-will and harmony between the English and the Irish. But, granted that it is the *English people*, what have they *done* to make the Irish people *poor*? *Three or four centuries*! "*An inch is a trifle in a man's nose*"; and with you orators *a century*, more or less, is not worth stopping about; it is a mere splitting of straws. These "*centuries*" could, however, hardly have fairly begun above *thirty-two years ago*; for then you had a "*domestic Legislature*," and a right good one it was without doubt, for you *want it back again*! What, however, even going back to the conquest, have the *English people done* to make the Irish *poor*? *Conquered the country*, and parcelled out its lands amongst Englishmen. There! *Take it in its fullest extent*: and what have they *done* to the Irish, to a tenth part of the amount of *what the Normans did to them*? Yet they have survived it; they have overcome conquest by their industry and love of country: they soon made the conquerors proud to be considered part of themselves; and they never sat brooding in sloth and filth over the fabulous dignities and splendour and possessions

of their forefathers. It is, therefore, not perverseness, but sheer nonsense, to talk of wrongs which the Irish experienced from *that* cause. The English imposed the *Protestant hierarchy* upon the Irish. Very unjust, but having no tendency to make them *poor*, any more than the same imposition upon themselves; and it has been *heavier* upon themselves; for they have always had to yield *greater* tithes than the Irish. They *forbade the open profession of their religion*, on pain of exclusion from civil and political power. Unjust as well as foolish; but the same is done to the Quakers everywhere; and that does not make them *poor and ragged*; and now, when the Irish have civil and political power, they are *poorer than ever!* Have the English people *ever taxed* the Irish? We will see about that by-and-by, when we come to talk of the *reform* that *you are seeking*. How then have the "*English people*" made the Irish people *poor*? They have, indeed, *suffered* them to be *made poor*, by *not compelling the owners of the land in Ireland to pay poor-rates*. This is their great sin towards the Irish people; and now, when they seem resolved to do right in this respect, and to make reparation for the wrong, as far as they can, you step in with erroneous facts and fallacious arguments to induce the Irish to believe that that long-withheld good is *an evil!* The fact is, however, that the *English people* have never had any hand in causing the wrongs and misery endured by the Irish people. The wrongs and this misery, as far as they have been caused by misrule, have been inflicted by that "*band of oligarchs*," to whom you have so often, so recently, and so justly ascribed them, and amongst whom your *native oligarchs* have been the very, very worst. The *English people* have always commiserated the sufferings of the Irish; and this feeling has always been most conspicuous, too, amongst the *Church-of-England people*. The people of England have been wronged by the injustice of the oligarchs as much as, or more than, the Irish have; for they have had to *pay* for keeping the Irish people in submission to those who refused to give them Poor-laws, and who thereby reduced them to starvation. If this be *not* the true state of the matter, you have the means of proving the contrary; and if this be the true state of the matter, let the reader characterize *your charge against the English people of having made the Irish people poor*.

From this general charge against the people of England, which it was necessary to place in its true light, I come to your several charges against "*English poor-laws*," which might, perhaps, have experienced from you some little mitigation of censure, if you had, by any accident, happened to know that they were, too, *American* poor-laws, as you will (to your indignant surprise, I dare say) learn more circumstantially by-and-by. The first thing that you urge against our Poor-laws is, that they "*interfere with wages*," and that this is one of the things that "*frightens*" you. As an Irish lawyer, you might be excused for ignorance of these laws, but not for a *misrepresentation of them*: and here we have a mere *fact* to deal with, and have the written proof at hand. To the original Poor-law of the 43rd of Elizabeth, many acts have been added, relating to the relief and management of the poor; and, in no one of these acts, is there any authority given to anybody to *interfere with the wages* of labour, nor is there in any of them, nor in the original law itself, any countenance given to any such interference. So that, it appears that you have been frightened by the workings of your own imagination. That, in many cases, the magistrates in settling the amount of relief, have taken the amount of *the wages of the party into view*; and that they have, in most

cases, made the relief too small in proportion to the wages; and that, in many cases, the employers of farm-labourers have, in order to ease themselves at the expense of gentlemen and tradespeople, given the labourers *less in wages and more in poor-rates*; all this is true enough, and it certainly involves a mis-application of the powers of the Poor-laws; but what charge does this imply *against the Poor-laws themselves*? And, after all, what is this evil? what does this crooking-working of self-interest amount to, compared with the frightful evil of leaving thousands to perish with hunger and cold for want of legal and sure relief?

For "*sick and maimed*," however, *you* would, it seems, have relief provided by "*the State*." It is impossible to know what you mean by *the State*; but, at any rate, you would have *them* provided for by a compulsory assessment of some sort; but not *the aged*, nor *the hale*, though these latter be without work, and without the means of obtaining food or raiment; and, you add, that *you* "*believe*" that "*it was not, at first, intended by the poor-laws to provide for the wants of this class*." When a *lawyer* is speaking of an *Act of Parliament*, and especially when its tendency is the subject-matter of his discourse, he should not "*believe*" anything about its provisions; and, before you pronounced so decided a condemnation of this, the greatest of all our Acts of Parliament, which, in fact, furnishes a great part of the machinery for carrying on all our internal affairs, and which raises and disposes of more than seven millions of pounds sterling in a year in England and Wales; before you so boldly condemned this great Act, your mind ought to have had left in it not the smallest ground for *belief* respecting the provisions. This *belief* is, however, erroneous; for the Act *does* provide, and it clearly *intends* to provide, for this class of persons; and, if it had not provided for them, it would have been nugatory at the time; and if they were not provided for now, an army of five hundred thousand men would not uphold the Government of England for a month! I thank God, that it does provide for their wants; I thank God, that it gives them a *right* to relief, and that they *know* and *feel* it. It is the bond of peace; it is the cement of English society; and accursed be all those who would enfeeble it!

But, "*the sick and maimed*," you would have *the State* provide for these; *but not for the aged*; and if there be, in "*almost every village of Ireland, a dispensary, and in every county town an hospital*," there is provision already made for the "*sick and maimed*"; so that the Irish poor have all that you want them to have! Glad to know it! It certainly is *news* to me. I wish it may be *true*! Yet there must want a "*dispensary*" of *food and clothing*, or else we have been told *most monstrous lies* about the people eating stinking shell-fish, sea-weed, and nettles, and about whole parishes receiving the *extreme unction* preparatory to death from starvation, and about whole families of females being in a state of *complete nakedness*; and our own eyes must deceive us, and mine, especially, must deceive me, when I think I see, every month of my life, hundreds of squalid creatures tramping into London, by my door, without shoes, stockings, or shirts, with nothing on the head worthy of the name of hat, and with rags hardly sufficient to hide the nakedness of their bodies! However, for *the aged* you will have *no provision*. And *why*? What is your *reason* for this? For, upon the face of the proposition, it does seem to be dictated by anything but *that tenderness* which you are constantly expressing towards the Irish people. Your reasons are these: 1. That, by *making provision* for the destitute in old age, you take

away the great inducement to industry and frugality in the days of youth ; and, 2. That you deprive the aged parents of the aid of their children, who, seeing a provision for them in the poor-house, will leave them to go to perish in its "naked cells." As to the first of these reasons, it would be equally good against a provision for the "sick and maimed," if they happened to be old. But are all the labouring people able, in youth, to lay by something for old age ? It is the decree of God that the human race shall be sustained by labour ; nine-tenths of labour is painful in some degree ; very few of the human race will encounter pain, but from necessity ; and none will, therefore, seldom encounter more of this pain than is demanded by their present wants. To call upon men who are engaged in pursuits not bodily painful, to lay by, in their youth, for the days of old age, is reasonable and just ; but to call upon the hard-working man to do this is neither. If he do it (and, in England, he, to a great extent, does it, in five cases out of six, after all) ; if he do it, where is the tongue or pen to speak the praise that is his due ! But if he have not, from whatever cause, been able to do it, or have not done it, he has a clear right to a provision in old age : he has spent his life and worn out his strength in the service of the community ; and that reluctance which every man naturally feels to ask another for something, is a sufficient security against his being lazy and prodigal in his youth, upon a cool calculation of the benefit of parochial provision in his old age. With regard to your second objection ; namely, that by making a provision for old age, you deprive the indigent parents of the aid of their children, who, seeing the "naked cell" provided for them, will let them go to it ; with regard to this matter, you appear to regard the Irish people as being capable of setting at defiance, and as likely to set at defiance, not only the laws of nature, but also the express and a hundred-times-repeated laws of God. No very high compliment to your countrymen ! No very strong proof of the sincerity of your belief in that "generosity," that "active and practical compassion for the poor," and that "deep sense of religion" which we shall presently see you ascribing to them ! But you, as a lawyer, might have told them one thing, and since you did not do it, I will ; and that is, that if neither the laws of nature nor those of God could induce them so far to honour their father and their mother as to keep them from the poor-house, the Poor-laws would compel them to do it, they having the ability ; and if they have not the ability, how can Poor-laws deprive the parents of their aid ? As a lawyer, you ought to have known that those Poor-laws which you so vehemently decry, compel all persons, being able to do it, to maintain their indigent fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, children, and grand-children. This is what you ought to have told your Dublin audience, though it might have cost you the loss of some of those valuable cheers, which you obtained by this suppression of the truth, and by supplying its place with the "naked cell," existing nowhere but in your imagination. Either you did not know the law as to this matter, or you did know it. If the former, you ought to have known it before you made this speech ; and if the latter, I decline to characterize your conduct.

But, Sir, in your anxious haste to narrow the effect of Poor-laws, you forgot that, besides the sick, the maimed, and the aged, there were some other parties who are, however, by no means overlooked in that HOLY WRIT, for not believing in which we shall presently find you condemning the "infidel" to be dealt with in a way "to supersede all legal punish-

ment"; namely, the *widow*, the *orphan*, and the *stranger*. In your comprehensive scheme of "active and practical compassion for the poor," you will make *no provision for these!* The English poor-laws, which do not cry, "Lord! Lord!" but which *do his will*, make provision for them all; and well, indeed, is it that they do, or thousands upon thousands of *Irishmen* would, at this very moment, be dying and lying dead from starvation; and that, too, if your doctrine be sound, without having the smallest ground for accusing the English of injustice or cruelty.

The *law of settlement* you represent as an *instrument of oppression*. Your story about yearly servants being obliged to be *one month* out of employ, in order to prevent them from gaining a settlement, is mere romance, the thing being *impossible*; because the whole of the business in all the farm-houses in the country must, in that case, be suspended for *a month*; and, to believe that this can take place, you must know about English farming as little as, for your sake, I hope you know about our Poor-laws. In some cases, for the reason here assigned, the master will hire the servant for some days less than a year; but it much oftener happens that this sort of bargain is from the wish of the servant, who does not, in general, wish to "*lose his parish*"; and, at this moment, I have a country-boy living with me, whose mother would not consent to his coming unless the bargain was such as not to cause him "*to lose his parish*." This, at once, shows the light in which the *working people* view the Poor-laws. Instead of deeming them a bond of "*slavery*," as you choose to represent them, they deem them the *title of their right* to their patrimony. And with regard to the compelling of married people to *stick to their parishes*, it is a great good, instead of being an evil; it being evident that people in that state of life will be, in all respects, more careful of their characters, and will be more likely to be of better behaviour, if resident amongst those who know them, than if wandering about from place to place. If they quit their parishes, and become chargeable to another, or manifestly likely to be so, the Poor-laws expose them not to oppression, but consider them in the light of "*the stranger*," relieve them if necessary, and take them home to their parish. Well would it have been, Sir, for the thousands of poor *forty-shilling freeholders of Ireland*, whom the "*LIBERATOR*" saw driven off the estates, as the price of that "*Emancipation*" which gave him a seat in Parliament; well would it have been for these poor sacrificed creatures, if there had been an English law of *settlement* to compel the savage landlords to keep them; and in that case, indeed, they would never have been driven off the estates, and, finally, as they were, exposed to all the horrors of famine and pestilence.

We now come to two assertions, which, from their character, and from one and the same term being applicable to both, ought not, for a moment, to be separated; namely, 1. That, in the town of SHREWSBURY, you saw placards, on which were inscribed the words, "*VAGRANTS and Irish LABOURERS whipped out of the town*"; and, 2. That "*Mr. STURGES BOURNE made an improvement in the law; for he provided that, after the IRISH LABOURER was whipped, he should be sent home.*" As you *positively assert* that you saw these placards at SHREWSBURY, I must suppose that SHREWSBURY is in Ireland; for I am sure you never saw such a placard in *England*. This town is certainly in Tipperary or Connaught, or something: at any rate, I assert that you never saw it in an *English town*. As to the second of this couple of assertions; *FIRST*, in

no bill ever brought in by STURGES BOURNE is there one single word about "*Irish labourers*," and in no law that is now in existence, or that ever was in existence, is there any provision for, or one word about, the *whipping of Irish labourers*. Therefore, had you not said that the matter of this speech was the fruit of your "daily thoughts, nightly musings, and morning meditations," I should have concluded that it was the subject of a *dream*, or an effusion, emanating from an exhilarating draught at Bellamy's.

But suppose we were to disregard the sufferings of the Irish *here*; were to let them die in the streets, instead of *sending them home*, we should only be acting upon *your own principle*; for you propose to leave *the stranger*, even in his own country, without any relief at all. But how can you, Sir, reconcile with your profession of a desire to see the two countries cordially united; how can you reconcile with this profession this assertion, that there is a law, in England, authorising the *whipping of Irish labourers before they be sent home*? I hope that some one has told you the story, and that want of time prevented you from looking after *this law*. The falsehood being so entire; it not having a shadow of truth to give it countenance, I cannot help hoping that this is the case. I see, in the course of the year, many hundreds of them going off to Bristol in very commodious caravans, drawn by good horses, smoking their pipes, and full of your admired "*wild merriment*." Never are they whipped, and there is no law for whipping them, in any case, in which an Englishman would not be whipped.

Equally *destitute of truth* is the assertion, that "Clergymen of the Church of England have sworn, that, out of every *twenty* women of "the poorer classes, that were married by them, *nineteen were pregnant*." No Clergyman in England ever *swore* this, and no one ever said it. The tale is a gross misrepresentation of evidence given before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1828, when the overseer of PELHAM, in HERTFORDSHIRE, told the Committee, that nearly the whole of the young women were pregnant before they were married; because, being *too poor to pay the expenses of the wedding*, they generally put it off, *till the parish was glad to pay for it*. But was this the fault of the Poor-laws? No; but, as was shown by the same evidence, the *fault of the taxes*, which made the farmers unable to pay the labourers a sufficiency of wages, and that this latter made the labourers so poor, that they were unable to get married before the pregnancy became obvious to the parish-officers. Thus the Poor-laws, instead of being the *cause of this shame* to the young people, actually came in and prevented the children from being born out of wedlock.

The same may be said of your statements relative to the letting out of the English labourers to hire to the highest bidder, and of all the other degrading measures adopted by overseers. They are *abuses* of the Poor-laws, and not evils *created* by the Poor-laws: they have arisen out of *recent alterations* in those laws, and not out of those laws themselves, as is clear from the fact, that those laws existed for about two hundred years before any of these evils and oppressions were ever heard of.

As to the *farming of the poor*, supposing it to be done upon just principles, what is it more than *putting children to be boarded by the year*? If care be taken that the contractor do what he ought to do, there is nothing either unjust or degrading in this; and if he do not do his duty, and the poor people complain, the payers of the rates have no

interest, and can have no inclination to uphold him in his wrong doing. So that this is a perfectly futile objection to Poor-laws, of which, however, this species of contract forms no essential part.

Your next statement is, that "*in consequence of the Poor-laws, the FIRES are now blazing in England, from north to south.*" The cause of these fires is well known; it is openly avowed, it is specific; and it is, that the farmers *do not give the labourers so much wages as they say they ought to have.* This is notoriously the cause. In many cases the *fires* have stopped when the wages have been *raised*; and have begun again when the wages have been *lowered*. This has, indeed, been the case all over the country: and, in the face of these well-known facts, considering also that the Poor-laws have existed two hundred and about forty years, and never produced such effects before, it required, certainly, nothing short of a *Dublin audience* to embolden you to describe the *FIRES* as "*a consequence of the Poor-laws*"; after which, who need to wonder if you were to ascribe the national debt and the cholera morbus to the Poor-laws?

You have known "committee after committee set in vain, to discover some way of making an *effective amelioration* in the Poor-laws." Have you, indeed! and so have I too. But that may be an argument *in favour* of the Poor-laws. LORD COKE said, that "*MAGNA CHARTA* was too *strong a fellow* to be overcome by puny Acts of Parliament": and the same may be said of Old Betsy's poor-law. But, do you know what they mean by "*amelioration*"? I will tell you: *taking away the relief.* This is what they have been trying at for about twenty years. But they find the law "*too strong a fellow*" for them. It is the *Magna Charta* of the working people; it is written in their hearts; the writing descends from the heart of the father to that of the son; and, God forbid that it should ever be effaced; for, if ever that day come, English society and English manners and English happiness will all be effaced along with it, and the world will lose the example of a working-people, such as it never had in any other country upon earth.

Now, Sir, before I come to your general and sweeping denunciations against the English poor-laws, let me, in finishing these particular assertions and arguments, just put under your eyes one remaining assertion; it is this: "Apothecaries to supply the poor with medicines are *hired*, "*whose interest it is, that the sick poor should die as soon as possible, in order that they may be at the less expense for medicines.*" This, too, was the result of your "*thoughts by day, your musings by night, and your morning meditations,*" was it? If you, Sir, can now again see this your insinuation upon paper, and not change colour, anything addressed to you, though by a pen a million times as eloquent as mine, must be wholly thrown away.

Leaving you to consider of, to think, muse, and meditate on, the figure you make before Englishmen, with this insinuation on your lips, I now come to your sweeping assertions relative to the effects of the Poor-laws, and to the picture which you give us of the people of the two countries so much in favour of the Irish. You told your cheering audience, that the Poor-laws made *slaves* of the English working people; that it completely *destroyed their character for independence*; that you preferred the *wild merriment* of the Irishman to the *half-sulky, half-miserable tones* of the English *slave* to the Poor-laws; that the Irishman certainly had his *distresses* [indeed!], but then he had his *hopes* [of what?]; he endured

much misery, but then he *entertained expectation of redress!* Here, it seems, there was "*great cheering*"; and well there might, if the matter conveyed *surprise as agreeable* to your audience as it does to me. Well, then, here you wipe away the heavy charge of our poor "half-sulky, half-miserable," slaves having made the Irish *poor!* And if this really be the state of the Irish people (and who can doubt it since *you say it is*); if they have those cheering hopes and flowery expectations; if they save in youth wherewithal to support them in age; if they have dispensaries in all the villages, and hospitals in all the county towns; and if they be (as under such happy circumstances they naturally must be) *wild in merriment*; this being (as we now *know it is*) their state, then, upon my word, if they still come here to mock with their mirth our poor, "half-sulky" souls, I shall be for giving their hides a little firking, *à la Shrewsbury*; for "United Kingdom" here, or "United Kingdom" there, they are not to come here with their "wild merriment," and taunt us with our "half-miserable" tones! However, when I get upon the same floor with you, we will soon make an equitable adjustment as to *this* matter, at any rate. You shall move and I will second a bill, which, when it become a law, shall be called the ACT OF RECIPROCITY, giving you power to whip all the "half-miserable" English slaves that go to Ireland, and me power to whip all the youths of "wild merriment" that come to England. This would set all to rights in a trice: you would preserve your "*green island*" from the contagion of the *sulks*; and if I did not clear ours of the "wild merriment," there should be neither whalebone nor whipcord left in England.

But now let us (and soberly, if it be possible) take a more minute look at these general assertions made by you. They, taken fairly and without exaggeration, amount to this: that the English poor-laws *degrade* a people, destroy all *independence of spirit*, and, in fact, *make them slaves*. Before I come to ask you how these assertions are sustained by the comparative condition and character and manners of the English and the Irish, you will perhaps permit me to ask you how MOSES came to make such ample provision for the indigent poor; how THE APOSTLES came to do the same, and to establish the order of DEACONS for the express purpose of superintending the tables at which the poor were relieved; how the CATHOLIC CHURCH came to receive all lands and other real property, as well as gifts in money, *in the name of the poor*, and in no other name; how THAT CHURCH came to allot one-third part of the tithes to the poor, which in Ireland, you say, the Protestant parsons "*filched*" from them: you will, perhaps, permit me to ask you how all this came to be, if *Poor-laws*; that is to say, *regular relief to the indigent*, have a natural tendency to *degrade*, break down the spirit, and enslave men; for, mind, the Act of Old Betsy only came to supply the place of the *certain and regular parochial relief*, before secured to the people by the *statute* as well as the *common* and the *canon law*. You will, I dare say, answer, by saying, that if Moses, the Apostles, St. Austin, Pope Gregory, and the makers of Magna Charta, had been aware of the manifold blessings o' stinking shell-fish, sea-weed, nettles, and *agitation*, they would have made an exception as to the "*green island*." Well, but the mere *colour* cannot signify much in such a case; and then let me ask you, whether you deem the people of the *United States of America* to be *degraded*, destitute of *independent spirit*, and *slaves*?

Now, Sir, to be serious for a little; though a *lawyer*, it was no duty

incumbent on you to know the laws of the *United States of America*; but, as a *gentleman* and *man of learning*, it might be expected of you that you understood something of the laws of a country of so much importance; and, as a *legislator* of this kingdom, so very extensively, in various ways, connected with that republic, give me leave to think that it was *your duty* to know something of the principal laws in force in a country, the freedom and prosperity of which, have become subjects of so much admiration throughout the civilized world. Yet, that you know nothing of those laws, more than you do of the laws of the Cherokee nation of savages, is certain; otherwise it is impossible that you could have put forth, even in Dublin, this sweeping reprobation of the English poor-laws; seeing that the famous Act of the 43rd year of ELIZABETH is in full force in every State of that republic, and that it is acted upon in the most kind and attentive manner. I cannot speak positively, but I think, that we could not pay less than *fifty thousand dollars a year*, in poor-rates, in the City of Philadelphia, thirty-two years ago. I dare say, that the poor-rates of the City of New York now amount to more than a *hundred thousand dollars a year*. Both cities have *poor-houses* of prodigious dimensions; and, which will, doubtless, fill you with indignation, the youths of "*wild-merriment*" are the most numerous and most permanent inmates of the "*naked cells*" of those poor-houses! Many a score dollars have I myself paid for the relief of the *merry* lads and lasses, in both those humane cities, and never grudged so to do; and many a pound have I paid for the relief of similar *merry* persons at KENSINGTON; but *not without grudging*, knowing well, that what I pay, in this way, is, in reality, given to the crafty and hard-hearted landlords of Ireland. I never lived in any place in America, without paying poor-rate. And it even happened, when I lived in Long Island, the *overseer* of our township (North HEMPSTEAD) came and took a servant-girl away to her township (FLUSHING), she being in a state which the delicacy demanded by Irish ears forbids me to name. We being greatly in want of the services of the girl, I begged hard for a respite for a few days; but the ex-officio guardian of the morals and the money of the township, was inexorable: "Mr. Cawbut comes from old England; Mr. Cawbut must *know the law*, and Mr. Cawbut must know that the law *must be obeyed*;" and, with that, he put her into his cart, and away he took her and married her, I hope, to a very good husband. So, you see, Sir, that you have, in this memorable piece of intense eloquence, wasted a great deal of very fine indignation upon a very common-place subject.

However, to give you something beyond these assertions of mine, let me first inform you, that, some years ago, several parishes, in the east of Sussex, sent out, at their expense, to *New York*, divers families, who, from their numerosness, were greatly burdensome to those parishes; and, some years before that, some farmers went out, from the same neighbourhood, also to *New York*. They sent home letters to their relations, giving an account of the country, and of their situation, and, generally, beseeching their fathers and mothers and brethren and friends to follow them. I, hearing of this, and wishing to dissuade *English people* from going, if they did go abroad, from going to any other country but the United States, went down into Sussex, saw the parties who had received the letters, got them from them (I have them now), and published them in my little work, called "*The EMIGRANT'S GUIDE*," which every member of both Houses of Parliament, and especially my Lord

GREY, ought to read, and particularly the letters of these excellent people, *the labourers of Sussex*. If I had never cared about English labourers before, these letters would have rivetted them to my heart. Affectionate parents, dutiful children, lovers of their country: there are *all* the virtues here! And these are the people whom the garret-lodged prigs of the London newspapers call "*ignorant peasantry*," and Mr. Sheil called "*Kentish boors*"! But, the interesting thing at present, is, what did *these people* say about *Poor-laws in America*?

Now, Sir, do, pray, look at the *little book*. If I were at home, I would send you a copy. Look, first, in page 92, at a letter from Farmer BENJAMIN FOWLE, addressed to his cousin, DANIEL FOWLE, of SMARDEN, in Kent, and dated from UTICA, in the State of New York. He is describing to his cousin the happy state of the country; and he thus speaks of the Poor-laws: "I have been *poor-master* of this town for many years, and I find it a *rare* thing for a *resident* to become an *annual town-charge*." But, *strangers* and *temporary poor*, he had frequently. Then he adds, that he knows of no one *who takes the trouble to lock his doors by night*. So, you see, honesty and virtue *can* co-exist with old Betty's law, which, you say, *degrades* people and destroys their character and makes them slaves! But what the *labourers* say on the subject, in their letters, is still more interesting, and more to the point. Look at pages 55 and 58. The writer is STEPHEN WATSON, jun., of SEDDLESCOMB, near Battle, in Sussex; and I got the letter from his father, who now lives at Seddlescomb, and whose name is also STEPHEN WATSON. In his letter, dated at ALBANY, 5th Oct., 1823, he tells his father this: "Do not make your-
selves *uneasy* about us; for if we cannot get a *living here*, here is a
" POOR HOUSE, JUST THE SAME AS IN ENGLAND." O! "the *slave* of the
Poor-laws!" Then, on the 29th of March, he, beginning his letter with
"Honoured father and mother," writes thus: "The *laws* of this country
" are as good as in England: the poor are well taken care of: there is
" a large house in this place for the accommodation of the old and in-
" firm that are not able to work." The *hale* wanted none, for the work
was always plenty.

How different, Sir, the American patriots and legislators are from you! You will, by no means, have a provision for the *aged*, lest it should cause laziness and improvidence in youth, and lest it should deprive parents of the aid and the affectionate attachment of their children! How wide the difference between the American and the Irish philosophy! STEPHEN WATSON, who calls his father and mother "*honoured*," and who, I'll be bound for him, never said "*your hanner*" to any man in all his life, does not, you see, seem to think that Poor-laws make "*slaves*." He says, "the *laws* of this country are as good as in England." And why? Because the *poor* are well taken care of, and because there is a *poor-house*.

Now, Sir, will you acknowledge that you have done wrong to English poor-laws and English labourers? You will not? Very well, then, I will proceed, and go right forward into your comparative estimate of the *character* and *condition* of the English and the Irish working people. And, in the way of preface, let us have *your own description* of Ireland, and of its people, as published in your address to the Irish nation, dated at Dublin, on the 6th of this month.

I begin with calling your attention to these *truths*:—

FIRST, That there is not on the face of the globe a more *fertile country* than

ours, nor any one that produces, for its extent, such a *superabundance of all the prime necessities for the food, clothing, and comfort of its inhabitants.*

SECONDLY, That no country is so well circumstanced for general commerce as ours; we are at the western extreme of Europe with a direct navigation to every maritime state in Europe, whilst our connexion with Asia and Africa is by open ocean space; and with the free American republics our intercourse may be the most direct, rapid, and unconfined.

THIRDLY, Our *green island* is indented by spacious roadsteads, magnificent bays and estuaries, and capacious harbours—harbours *open at every hour of every tide, and sheltered from every wind, and secure from every tempest.*

FOURTHLY, Our *fertile island*, too, is extensively intersected by navigable rivers; and the hard and durable materials of which our roads are, or may be formed, would easily afford the means of ready communication and speedy intercourse with every part of our productive soil.

FIFTHLY, The streams that rush from our *majestic mountains*, or sweep with abundant and rapid course through our *green and glorious valleys*, give a superabundant multitude of *mill sites*, and afford the cheapest and most *healthful power for the working of manufactories* in the known world.

SIXTHLY, Our climate is genial and conducive to *long life and manly vigour.* No parching suns scorch our plains into aridity, or our people into decrepitude. No chilling frosts destroy the power of vegetation, or thin our population by the pinching blight of excessive cold.

SEVENTHLY, This *lovely land* is inhabited by a people *brave* as they are *patient, generous* as they are *hardy, good-humoured* as they are *laborious, intelligent*, numerous almost beyond the number of the oppressions they are made to endure. Suffering woes themselves, they are full of active and *practical compassion for the poor* and the needy; and, above all, they are a people deeply impressed with all the sincerity of religious belief, and with the incalculable value of religious practices. Differing as many of them do with each other upon *various points of faith*, they one and all scorn and *detest* infidelity; and the infidel or the atheist, if he were to rear his *detested head* amongst us, would find that speedy punishment from universal opinion which would render the inflictions of law needless, and would anticipate and *supersede all legal punishment.*

My countrymen, these *truths are undeniable.* Such is a faint sketch of Ireland and her population. Why are the blessings of God perverted? How are the generous and noble impulses of man blighted! Why is Ireland in a state of *decrepitude and decay*? Why are her towns in general *dwindling into villages*? Why are her *villages so frequently disappearing*? Why are her farmers emigrating, or sinking into labourers? Why are her labourers almost unemployed, or *wholly starving*?

Well, then, as far as the seven heads of description go, here is a *heaven upon earth*; and these are all "*truths undeniable.*" So that, if we do not find the Irish labourers *better* in character and condition than the English, we shall *here* find no argument against the Poor-laws. But before I enter on the comparison, I feel my attention forcibly arrested by a *sentiment* in the 7th paragraph, and by an *assertion* in the last of all; and on these I must remark before I go an inch further. In the 7th paragraph, you, in the excess of your religious zeal, condemn the "*infidel*" to a popular punishment, *superseding the operations of the law* (that is to say, to *knocking on the head*), if he dare to raise that "*detested head*" in the "*green island*"; and yet, only about two years ago, *you were perfectly clamorous* for putting the *worst* of all *infidels*, the Jews, upon *the bench* and in *the King's Council*; infidels who not only raise their "*detested head,*" but who raise their horrible voices also, to declare JESUS CHRIST to have been "*an impostor,*" and who, amongst the blasphemous rites of their synagogues, are said to *crucify him in effigy* twice in the year! In short, two years ago, you were for *knocking the infidel on the head*, without judge or jury! Now, could this subject have had your

“daily thoughts, nightly musings, and morning meditations,” in *both cases*?

The *assertion* to which I have alluded, and which is in the last paragraph, is this: “that the *towns* of Ireland are dwindling into *villages*, and that its villages are *frequently disappearing*.” Compare this assertion with the *oath* that you made before the Committees of the House of Lords in 1825; namely, that the population of Ireland had been, and still was, *prodigiously increasing*, and that a *surplus population* was *one of the causes of the misery of the people*! That was your oath, or words, I pledge myself, *fully to that effect*. Which statement are we, then, to believe? Will you say that this dismal decay of towns and villages has taken place *since 1825*? Hardly; for, then, we shall ask you what are become of your splendid promises of *prosperity to Ireland* which *Emancipation* was to give? And (more serious still!) where are those “*nine millions*,” and that “*growing importance*,” which you put forward as the ground of Ireland’s claim to an *equality* with England?

And now, Sir, let your Dublin audience remain to clap hands and huzza, while you and I enter on that comparison (which you have provoked) of the relative *character* and *condition* and *manners* of the Irish lads of “wild merriment,” and the “English sulky *slaves* of the Poor-laws.”

First of all, it is of importance to observe that, as to the means which are the *gift of God*, the Irish have, from your own account, greatly the advantage over the English. For, while you assert that there is not on the *face of the globe*, a country *more fertile* than Ireland, it is well known that there are many more fertile than England; for, though, by incessantly scratching and tumbling it about, we do make it produce a good deal; still, when you come to your “majestic mountains,” pouring down streams into “glorious valleys,” there to set endless “mills and manufactories” into motion, and that, too, in promoting of “health” at the same time; when you come to these, you make us feel our inferiority; and, above all, on the score of *greenness*, in which respect you appear to surpass us beyond all comparison. There are, indeed, persons not so devotedly and exclusively attached to this particular *colour*; and, for instance, I have no objection, nay, I like, to see a part and a great part of a country *brown*; and, at one time of the year, *white*. You, however, deem *greenness* the mark of perfection; and you *have it*: the “English people” have not robbed the Irish of *that*, at any rate. Again, we have indeed, “*harbours*” too; but not, like you, harbours “open at every hour of every tide, and sheltered from every wind, and secure from every *tempest*.” We are obliged to wait for the tides, whether coming in or going out; and, with all our moorings and double moorings, our ships are frequently driven on the beach, or out to sea. These toils and dangers are, it seems, unknown to Ireland, to the people of which “lovely land” the proverb of “time and tide waiting for no man,” must be wholly without a meaning.

But, Sir, now comes your great difficulty; for, if these, which you have given us here, be “*truly undeniable*”; if such be the natural resources and advantages of Ireland; if no spot of the globe exceed her in fertility; if she be favoured in the manner that you describe; and yet, if, as you say is the case, “the blessings of God are there so perverted, that she is “in a state of *decrepitude and decay*, her towns *dwindling into villages*, “her *villages disappearing*, and her labourers almost unemployed, or

"*wholly starving*"; and if, as we know to be the case, her people are seen wandering over this *our* country (not so blessed by God) in search of food, and in a state nearly approaching to that of actual nakedness; and if, as you insist, Poor-laws, to secure them food and clothing at home *would not better their lot*: if all this be so; or rather, if all this *were* so, we should, like the English Grenadier of the Guards, when he landed in Virginia, be tempted to exclaim, "The ADAM and EVE of this people surely came out of Newgaie."

It will not do for you in this case to say that the "blessings of God have been perverted" by the English, until, at least, you have replied to my answer to your charge against us, on that score; and besides, the public have not already forgotten that you represented that "*emancipation*," which you obtained even beyond the extent of your petitions, as all that Ireland wanted to make her contented and happy and everlastingly grateful to England: and that you pledged yourself that the adoption of that measure would enable the Government to draw additional millions of revenue from Ireland. We have not so soon forgotten those your a-thousand-times-repeated declarations; and, therefore, we deny you the right to *impute to us* this "perversion of the blessings of God."

You must, then, impute it to yourselves; or you must confess that your country calls for that very INSTITUTION; that great *English institution*, which we are now about to tender you, and which you are endeavouring to prepare your miserable countrymen to reject as a *scourge*. Look at the difference in the working people of the two countries. You have, if you *do* speak the truth, the advantage over us in climate and soil; and you have, you say, a people "*brave, patient, generous, hardy, good-humoured, laborious, and intelligent*." Yet, look at the difference in the people, and particularly the *working people*, of the two countries! Look at it: consider it well: here, indeed, is matter for an *Irish legislator* to think, muse, and meditate upon. When did you, or anybody else, ever see or hear of *Englishmen* prowling about, in bands of half-naked beggars, in any country upon earth: when did you ever hear of the necessity of taking *them* up by force, and carrying them like malefactors and tossing them back upon their native shores: when did you ever hear of *them* being an incumbrance to any people amongst whom they went: when, since you talk of their *hovels*, did you see or hear of English labourers being in hovels, in company with the pig, the flesh of which they were destined never to taste, both feeding on the same root, at the same board, warmed by the same chimneyless fire, and both blackened by the same smoke: when, since you talk of the "*naked cells*" of the poor-house, did you ever hear of thousands of *them* living on stinking shell-fish, sea-weed, and nettles, and of thousands at a time receiving the last offices of religion as preparatory to death from starvation: when, since you call them *slaves*, did you ever see or hear of one of *them* applying the cringing and fawning appellation of "*your hanner*" to any human being, much less to any thing, though groom or footman, from whom they expected to coax a farthing or a mouthful of bread: when did you ever hear of *English* labourers who needed, or who would *contentedly suffer*, an employer to stand over them at their work: when did you ever hear of *their* dwellings being destitute of every mark of cleanliness and of decent reserve, having about them no traces of human existence within, except the feculent heap at the door, which nature herself would call upon them to hide: when did you ever see or ever hear talk of one of *their*

rural habitations, not having about it (unless rendered impossible by local circumstances) gooseberry and currant-bushes, beds of parsley and other herbs, plants of wall-flower and biennial stock, clumps of polyanthus, daisies, and bulbs, and other flowers, and, where possible, plants of roses and honey-suckles, trained round their windows, or over their doors, with the greatest care and the greatest taste, of all which, together with apple-trees grafted by their own hands, and together also with *stalls of bees*, the result of their own care; there are more in a circuit, embracing ten rural parishes of England, than there are to be found in possession of all the millions of labourers that inhabit the "lovely land": when, lastly (not to suffer the provocation to urge me further), did you ever see or hear of an "*English slave*" *disowning the country of his birth*, and wherever found, and under whatever circumstances, not forward to proclaim himself an *Englishman*, and to boast of the honour of the name?

Now, Sir, avoiding, as something too painful to encounter, a detailed exhibition of the other side, do I ascribe the *difference to the nature* of the Irish people, to any *inherent vice* in them? By no means. I ascribe it to the difference in the *treatment* received by the two people from their rulers. Not to anything *done* by England to Ireland; but to the former not having *compelled* the domestic rulers of the latter to treat the Irish working people as the English working people have been treated, during the last two centuries and a half; and particularly to its not having compelled the owners of the land in Ireland to leave enough of its produce in the several parishes, to provide for the wants of the destitute; as is effectually done in England and America by those famous Poor-laws, which BLACKSTONE truly says, are "*founded in the very principles of civil society*"; but the unspeakable benefit of which you are now labouring, though, I trust, in vain, to prevent your ill-treated, unhappy, and ever-troubled country from receiving. I allow, that, as to this matter, your efforts have received but too much countenance from those of persons in this country, who have long and particularly since the publication of the book of the foolish and unfeeling MALTHUS, been endeavouring to chip away the meaning, intention, and effect of the Poor-laws. STURGES BOURNE'S BILLS were a bold stroke; but, the inventors, when they look at the *awful consequences*, will find little reason to congratulate themselves on their success. Those bills have already cost them ten thousand times more than the bills would have saved them in a hundred years. In 1819, the present Lord Chancellor said, that he was "prepared to defend, to their utmost extent, the *principles of Malthus*." He has *pledged himself* to bring in a poor-law bill *this session*, to supplant, I suppose, the bill of Lord TRYNHAM, which would in effect have repealed the hated bills of STURGES BOURNE, and have restored peace to the villages and hamlets. If the Lord Chancellor's Bill do not lessen the *extent of the claim* on the poor-rates, it will be a tacit giving up of MALTHUS; and, if it do, a bill to alter the succession to the crown would not be more *wild*! Oh, no! This law is immortal; it has lived under all changes of dynasty, and changes of forms of government, in England and in America; it is written in the hearts of the people, it is "*founded in the first principles of civil society*"; it makes, if duly administered, even the poorest man feel that he has an interest in all the property around him; it is the ground, the good ground, the sold ground, but the *sole* ground, upon which the poor man is called upon to take up arms in defence of the rich; it is, as I said before, the bond of peace, and the cement of society; woe be unto

those who shall attempt to destroy or enfeeble it in England, and the just reproach of mankind will, in the end, be the inevitable lot of all who shall attempt to prevent its adoption in Ireland.

It was my intention to make some remarks on that part of your speech, where you speak of the *sort of reform* which you demand for Ireland, and where you clearly enough hint at the attempts which you shall make to cause a *separation*, if the intended reform be not such *as you shall deem "just"*; but, not having time to do justice to this subject now, and extremely anxious to act justly towards you, I must defer it till next week; and, in the meanwhile, offering you, if you deem it worth your while to use them for the purpose, the columns of my *Register* as a vehicle for *any reply* that you may choose to give to this letter, I remain, Sir,

Your most humble and

Most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

MR. HUME.

PROFLIGACY WHOLLY UNPARALLELED.

(*Political Register*, July, 1832.)

Chichester, 24th of July, 1832.

ON the 16th instant there was a debate in the House of Commons, about a sum of money which the Ministers wish to pay to the Emperor of Russia, and which he has no more right to than Lady JULIANA HOBHOUSE had to her pension. The fact is this; a sum of English money was to be given to RUSSIA, in order for her so to act as to cause the territory of BELGIUM to continue to belong to the King of Holland. When, therefore, separation between the two countries took place, all obligation of us to pay RUSSIA this money ceased of course. Yet the Whigs, afraid to offend RUSSIA, for fear of war and loss of place, proposed to make us pay the money, notwithstanding all the bloody deeds of RUSSIA in POLAND. It was necessary that an Act should be passed, in order to authorise this payment; and the OUTS opposed this Act. HUME joined in the opposition, and the Ministers carried the question by a very small majority. Some say the sum is *five millions*; the Ministers say it is only *two millions*. Perhaps it would be safe to take it at about four millions. On the 16th instant the debate was renewed, and then HUME, who had voted against the Ministers before, *voted for them*, after the most profligate speech that ever fell from the lips of mortal man. I do not say that he uttered it; but I find it in print in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 17th instant; as a publication, I take it; and I again say, that it is the most profligate production that ever came from lips or pen. I beg my readers to attend to every word of it. It makes good all my conjectures about the views of this man. He is, at this moment, at work as a *Parliament packer*; and his reward is to be, I verily believe, the *Chancellor-*

ship of the Exchequer : he is dazzled with the prospect ; the lights dance before him : he prodigiously over-calculates his influence with the public. However, let us have his monstrous speech before we proceed further.

“ Mr. HUME was anxious to state why he had voted against the present Ministers on this subject in January, why he had voted for them on Thursday, and why he opposed the motion of the hon. Member for Thetford now. He had formerly objected to the payment as a tribute to Russia, because it was attempted to be justified on the ground of supposed liberality, and because the treaty of 1831 had not then been produced. At the hands of this country Russia deserved nothing on the score of liberality, even supposing we were in a condition to display it ; and the late Ministers of the Crown had not made any attempt to gain from Russia that justice for Poland to which she was entitled, and which might have been procured. With regard to the terms of the amendment, if it were carried, and if, in consequence, the present Ministers retired from office, those who brought forward and advocated the amendment were not themselves prepared to assert that they would have refused the money to Russia ; and the nature of the counter-proposition of the hon. Member for Thetford did not show, that if the Tories obtained power they would not pay it. They still cunningly left a loop-hole, out of which they might escape. (Cheers.) The object of the proceeding of Thursday night was *avowedly only to turn out the Whigs, that the Tories might get in*. He (Mr. Hume) had come down with a determination to vote against Ministers, until he found out the game that was playing. He soon saw how he was surrounded, and would not become a party to the scheme. (Cheers.) He had, therefore, *not changed his opinion*, but his action. He had supported the Whigs, even though *he thought them wrong* (cheers and laughter) ; because he did not wish to *lose their services in the great cause of reform*. (Cheers.) The real question was, not as to the justice of the claims under the Russian-Dutch loan, but as to the comparative merits of Whigs and Tories ; and he, for one, could not entertain a moment's doubt about it. If once the Tories obtained office, they would soon find the *means of defeating reform*, even although the Bill had been passed ; and he thought, therefore, that in this case he was warranted in voting, *even against his judgment*. (Cheers.) If the Tories again came into office, he did not see much chance of saving the public money ; and to keep them out, which was a great good, he consented to a minor evil. It was idle to call the present amendment anything but a repetition of the motion of the former night. The hon. Member for Thetford had this night said, that, even if defeated, there was no chance that the present Cabinet would retire. He (Mr. Hume) had thought so once, but he did not think so now. He began to have his fears upon the point, and he would not willingly have them realised. Reform was not yet complete, and it would not be considered complete until *after the elections*. (Hear.) He put it to the hon. Member for Thetford, whether he would, upon his honour, say, if the amendment were carried, that he, for one, would oppose the payment of any further sums to Russia ? It was his intention, therefore, to support his Majesty's Ministers, *right or wrong*. (Much cheering and laughter.) Aye, *right or wrong* ; for he was convinced that he should best serve the general interests of the country if he kept them in office, and did not risk the consequence of a change. (Cheers.)”

Let us strip this of its nonsense, and then see what it amounts to. Here is a sum of our money to be taken out of our pockets and given to the amiable desolator of Poland. The treaty does not bind us to give him a farthing, and so says HUME himself. Upon a former occasion he voted against the Ministers, who are for giving the money ; because he was convinced that the money ought not to be given. But he now votes for the Ministers, though “ *he has not changed his opinion*,” and though “ *he still thinks them wrong*.” And, why does he do this ? because he wants the present Ministers to remain in power, and because he is convinced that they will not remain in power if they be not permitted to give away this sum of our money. Therefore, “ *right or wrong*,” he will vote for the giving of this money !

This is a pretty sort of Parliament-man maker ! This is a proper person from whose hands for the Metropolitan boroughs to receive their members ! This is a proper gentleman to be chairman-general at the meetings of electors ! We need not, for our present purpose, enter into the question of the *justice of thus disposing of our money*. We need not do this *at present*. There will be time enough, hereafter, *to call these Ministers to account in due form*, for procuring a law to be passed thus to dispose of our money. There will be time enough to examine Master DENMAN and HUME with regard to their interpretations of the treaty. Plenty of time for us to hear over again the pretty twattle of Mr. CAMPBELL about VATTEL'S doctrine as applied to the case. Plenty of time for all this. At present, we need not meddle with the matter, Mr. HUME having declared that the money *ought not to be payed*, he having voted once against the paying of it ; he now confessing that he votes against his judgment ; he now avowing, that he votes for the paying away of this money *unjustly*, because he fears that the Ministers will quit their places, *if they be not permitted to do this act of injustice to the nation* ; and because he wants them to retain their places ! As I said before, I do not impute the words to him : I take it as a publication made under his name ; but, I repeat, that they are the most profligate words that ever came out of the lips of the most profligate of mankind. What ! Here are a set of Ministers, who, according to his own declaration, and his own vote, are so wicked and so perverse, as to fling away millions of the public money, or resolved to quit their places if they be not permitted to do it ; and he, "*right or wrong*," will vote for the purpose of keeping such men in power !

But his reason for this is quite as profligate as the act itself. He will do it, he will vote "*right or wrong*" to keep them in power, lest, by their going out of power, reform should be defeated. Mark the insincerity of this ! When he voted against the giving of this money before, *even the English Reform Bills had not been passed*. The Boundaries Bill, without which the other bill was nothing, had not then left the House of Commons ; so that there might be some danger of defeating reform then by turning out the Ministers. They must, indeed, have been a most perverse and wicked crew, to have abandoned the reform, rather than *not do this act of injustice to the nation*, as he thought it and still calls it ; but, at any rate, they might have abandoned reform *then* ; and he might have voted for them, and supported them in this act of injustice, in order to prevent a greater evil ; but, now, when the Reform Bills are passed, what excuse has he for this act of unheard-of profligacy ! Ah, Mr. HUME ! if you really did, which I hope you did not, utter these profligate words, so full of insult to this burdened nation ; if you did utter these words, verily you are the most deceived of all mankind. You think, "that the reform will not be complete until after the elections" ; that is to say, until you have *packed a Parliament*. O ! short-lived hope ! Do you recollect, that *I told your fortune* somewhere, I think it was in the latter part of 1829, or the beginning of 1830. Situated as I am at present, I cannot refer to the *Register* in which your fortune was told. You can refer to it, I dare say. Do so ; read the passage with attention ; think well of it ; for there your fortune is as truly told, as the Duke of WELLINGTON'S was in the passage which I have so often quoted. You have, I perceive, a particular desire to keep up the old cheating humbug of *Whig and Tory*, in which you will fail to a certainty : there will be

Whig and Tory and People; and the latter will sweep away the two former, as the whirlwind sweeps the dust from the road. The Reform Bill was not thought of when I told your fortune: read it, I pray you, and write it down upon your heart; for there your doom is written as truly as the prophet foretold the destruction of the Temple of JERUSALEM. It is a strange thing, that none of you seem to perceive, that there can be no resurrection of the nation, without a total change of this "vile body."

You hug yourself in the thought that you shall have a *majority* in the first reformed Parliament, and that you shall make a beautiful display of your talent of *deducting by thimblefuls* from the stream of public expenditure, and that you shall triumph over your opponents, who will be for no deduction at all. You forget that there will come, *and must come*, a body of men to *cut off the head of the stream*, to take it at its sources, and divert it, as nature and as justice demand, to fructify the land, to be the reward of ingenuity, industry, and virtue, and not to go rolling along until it produce at last a feculent mass, which now spreads misery and feebleness over that country which was formerly the happiest and the greatest in the world.

Yes, you think to amuse us with the prattle about *Whig and Tory*, when we shall be crying aloud, "*repeal the malt and the hop-tax*," caring not a straw what nick-name is given to those who oppose it, or those who are for taking it off. We shall call upon BURDETT, of course, not to prattle to us about *Whig and Tory*, but to "*tear the leaves out of the accursed Red Book*"; yes, we shall call upon this representative of cabbage-stalks and rotten-turnips of Covent-garden-market, to assist in doing some one of the thousand things that he has proposed and promised to do. O! COBBETT'S *Register*, thou terror of evil-doers, thou reward of those who do well, *thou hast it all written down*, and what thou hast omitted is in the head of thy maker. Poor BURDETT, the old *Chronicle* tells us, "*will be re-elected for WESTMINSTER without opposition*": very likely, and, in all probability, under a second salute of cabbage-stumps and turnip-tops. But what will he do in the House? I was going the other day, through EGHAM, and I saw, before I came up to them, a great crowd of idle fellows assembled round a cart loaded with earth or dung, I forget which, and apparently in great embarrassment on account of the unwillingness of the old, tall, bare-ribbed, and broken-down chaise-horse, which they had got in the shafts; in great embarrassment on account of his unwillingness to go on. Coming up to them I stopped, and joined the spectators, who were numerous enough to have carried away the contents of the cart, each taking a gallon in his hand. The old fellow jostled about, shook his harness, turned his head from side to side, as if looking for the means of escape, and when bidden to *go on*, tossed up his head, clung his ears down into his poll, and patted about with his feet as if dancing a hornpipe; anything but apply his shoulders to the tugs. "There," said I to my companion, "there is BURDETT in a reformed Parliament!" After sitting some time and viewing the scene, I said to the anxious multitude, "Put the cart in motion, *yourselves*; push it up against him, and let him find it coming." They followed my advice. Some got to the wheels, others shoved behind, and as soon as the old boy found that it was coming, off he set, prancing and tearing just as he used to do in the rattle-trap post-chaise, and the fellows took good care not to let him stop until they had got the load safe

into the meadow. If they had stopped only for one minute, and he had felt that the thing was not coming, he would have pitched up again, and danced another hornpipe. So that I very well know the way to get BURDETT into a gallop, and to keep him there. Some of the rest of us must sustain the *dead pull*, during which he will be afflicted with the "gout," "or he detained in the country by a heavy fall of snow"; but when we get the thing *a-going*, in he will come, and prance away, threatening to tear the harness all to pieces. However, jostle, knit down his ears, dance hornpipes, or do what he will, *Whig* and *Tory* will be swept out of fashion, and the source of the corruption will be cut off, and never again will a man dare to utter profligate words resembling those upon which I have been commenting.

TO PEEL'S-BILL PEEL.

ON HIS SPEECH OF THE 27TH OF JULY, 1832, ON THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:

1. *On the Effects of Taxes on the People.*
2. *On the Reduction of Taxation.*
3. *On the Currency.*
4. *On the Time for the calling of the New Parliament.*
5. *On National Faith.*
6. *On the Colonies.*
7. *On Foreign Affairs.*

(*Political Register*, August, 1832.)

Firle, near Lewes, Sussex, 30th July, 1832.

PEEL'S-BILL PEEL,

On Sunday, the 22nd instant, I went to church at HAVANT, the last town in HAMPSHIRE coming towards the east; and, to a congregation very numerous, and consisting of persons of general good sense, I heard a heap of as blundering stuff as one would wish to hear, doled out under the name of a sermon by a man, who, I am told, was an officer in the army during the late war. His name is MOUNTAIN, and he has a brother a parson at HEMEL-HEMPSTEAD, or in the neighbourhood, in HERTFORDSHIRE, and who has recently figured in that neighbourhood as a justice of the peace. At HAVANT I gave them a sermon of my sort, on Monday, the 23rd. I did the like at Chichester on the 24th and 25th; and at Brighton on the 26th, 27th, and 28th. "Six days shalt thou work" and on the seventh thou shalt go to church, which, in order to avoid the sight of fine dresses and the like, I did yesterday at this village, which is as beautiful a one as any in all ENGLAND; and, which is a matter of more importance than the beauty of the country and the fineness of the crops and the herds of fine DEVONSHIRE and HEREFORDSHIRE oxen in the meadows, and the flocks of beautiful South-down sheep on the hills and in

the fields, the congregation, consisting of almost the whole of the persons in the parish, exhibited no marks of that haggard poverty, that miserable degradation, which I beheld at MICHELDEVER, and which I have never beheld anywhere else in the same extreme degree, except in the fine, rich, and beautiful valleys of WILTSHIRE, which, to the disgrace of the last-mentioned county, I shall never omit to mention, unless I shall live to see the working people there treated better. At this church at FIRLE, which is in itself and its surrounding trees a most beautiful thing, there were two old men who walked with crutches, and who were not so well dressed as they ought to have been, and whom the farmers of FIRLE would not suffer to be so badly dressed as they were if they were to read in the Bible the terrible denunciations against those who neglect the poor and needy; and who, while they are establishing schools and distributing Bibles about, were to read the EPISTLE of ST. JAMES, which LUTHER called an "Epistle of Straw"; but which they would find to contain most awful denunciations against them if they withheld from the poor their due share of the fruits of the earth. With the exception of these two old men, there was not a shabbily-dressed person: the young men were nicely and decently dressed; the young girls were finely dressed, as they ought to be. The more aged were dressed according to their age; the parson, in a very plain discourse on the subject of baptism, confirmation, and the Lord's Supper, gave us some very wholesome instruction, and in a very unaffected manner; and, what I have not seen since my return from AMERICA in 1800, the *psalm-singing* was in the old fashion, by a group of chopsticks assembled in a gallery. This is apparently a trifling affair; but it has been an affair of great importance to the established church; and very well worthy the attention of even a *statesman*. "Why then," some one will say, "do you address it to a fellow like PEEL'S-BILL PEEL?" Why, I do not address it to him. I am about to write to him on other matters, of which, indeed, he understands no more than he does of this; but I have the pen in my hand: it will amuse my readers to know how I came to the village of FIRLE; and I may as well put down here, as anywhere else, what I have to say about this *psalm-singing*, by their conduct relative to which the parsons have driven innumerable flocks from the church to the meeting-house.

Fifty years ago it was the universal practice in all the villages and in all the country towns, for psalms to be sung *by singers*, consisting of persons belonging to the parish, who sang while the rest of the congregation sat silent. When PITT and his villanous paper-money had introduced a mass of luxuries theretofore unknown in England, boarding-schools sprang up among the other toad-stools of the system. *Music* became part of education, and the farmhouses, out of which the men and boys had been driven to make way for the music-master and the piano, became scenes of refinement in which the nose was turned up at the homely singing of the church. Organs were introduced; the general singing of the congregation, in imitation of the tabernacles of LONDON, crept about from church to church; *hymns* took the place of the psalms, but all this did not nearly equal what was going on in the meeting-houses.

In hundreds and in thousands of instances the church congregation has been absolutely broken up by the musical ears of the parson's wife and daughters being too delicate to endure the choristers of the gallery. At BOTLEY, where I myself lived, there had always been a set of singers in the parish, priding themselves on their powers in that way. BAKER,

the parson, came out of **SUFFOLK** to take possession of his living about a year before I went to live in the village. He and his wife were both "musical"; their ears were shocked at the parish singing; they wanted to have an organ, which the parish would not consent to. The parson then *exerted his authority*, and forbade the singing which had been going on for two centuries; and *he and his wife* actually used to exhibit as singers before the congregation, just like a couple of player-folks singing a duet on the stage! But mark the consequence; the singers left the church; the congregation followed them; a crowded Methodist meeting-house began instantly to hold the people; and I have been at the church many times when there has been nobody but myself and one or two others of my own family, together with the parson and the clerk and the parson's wife. So that, as far as religion is concerned, the tithes at Botley, at any rate, are of no use whatsoever, though the rector be resident; and this arising, in the first instance at least, from his stupid interference in the taste of his parishioners.

This, or something very nearly resembling it, has been the case in thousands of parishes, and it is one of the things which have actually laid the foundation for that series of proceedings which must end in taking revenge upon this Establishment. The people venerate things long established. Of all the people in the world none dislike innovation so much as the country people in England. Improvement, when it is real, and even manifest, finds great difficulty in making its way amongst them, because it necessarily implies change. What an insolent fool must a parson have been then to want to do away with a practice so long established, and at the same time so great a favourite with the people. About twenty years ago there was the common psalm-singing at **MICHELDEVER**; and I remember that my second son, who was there a little while at school with the parson of the parish, used to describe to me with great delight, the singing at **MICHELDEVER**, of which we had none at **BOTLEY**. Old **FRANCIS BARING** had too much sense to suffer this order of things to be disturbed; and the parish used, as far as I can judge, to be a very happy one; but **TOM BARING** having succeeded, with his great stock of piety and with his curate (for he himself is the rector) of, apparently the new caste, the psalm-singers are banished, and the hymn-book is introduced; the parson stands up in his pulpit as head-singer; and there is a bawling and squalling that admits not of adequate description. To be a singer in a parish used to be a little feather in a chopstick's cap; even that is now too great an honour for him: he is to be nothing but a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. I was, therefore, having long been disgusted with the innovations introduced in this respect by the insolent parsons and their more insolent wives, not less pleased than surprised, at hearing the psalms sung by a set of singers with smock-frocks on their backs, just as I used to hear them when I was a boy. And very sure I am, that if the church revenues were taken away from those who now unjustly devour them, and a clergy established upon just and equitable terms, all the ancient manners, all the ancient virtues, and all the ancient absence of crime, would again return; while the tasteful parsons and their tasteful wives might become player-folks if they would, or follow some other calling, in which, at any rate, they would not be mischievous to the country.

Returning to **LEWES** last night, which place I have made my headquarters for the present, and finding there the *Morning Chronicle* of the

28th, containing the report of your speech of the 27th, I resolved to come to this village to-day, and here to write a commentary on the said speech; embracing, as it does, something more or less on each of the seven topics stated at the head of this letter. Nobody in the House answered you, and nobody dared; for the other faction have the same interest that you have: to have exposed you would have been to expose themselves. Your speech is, in fact, a speech for them as well as for yourself. You want no reduction of expenditure; God knows they want none; but my views are not the same as theirs nor as yours. I can expose you, not only from taste, but from a sense of duty; and I shall now take your speech and insert the *whole* of it, topic by topic, and comment thereon as I proceed.

1. On the Effect of Taxes on the People.

“ Sir ROBERT PEEL thought the Noble Lord had acted perfectly fair in laying before the House, as far as he was able, an estimate of the exact state of our financial prospects; and though these, certainly, were not very prosperous, yet he did not think the deficiency was such as to give any serious cause for alarm. (Hear, hear.) He agreed with the right hon. Baronet, that there was an elasticity in the resources of the country, more than adequate to the demands upon it. He did not, however, think it politic to have a deficiency, for the Government might be driven, either to incur fresh debt,—and when he spoke of incurring *fresh debt*, he included the issuing of Exchequer Bills, and all those expedients which were resorted to for the purpose of turning off a temporary inconvenience (hear, hear); or, the only other course would be, the imposition of fresh taxes. Now he thought it much better to keep those taxes which are already laid, than to repeal them, and then be driven to impose others in their stead. In the present state of public feeling, however, he must say that he did not think it possible to keep up a great surplus revenue. (Hear, hear.) And when he recommended Ministers to keep up an excess of revenue over expenditure, he did not contemplate such a surplus as might be appropriated to the purpose of paying off any part of the debt, but sufficient to provide against contingencies or unexpected emergencies. It was much better to maintain a tax to which the people were habituated, than run the risk of being compelled to impose a new one. When a new tax was laid, many ways were found of evading it: but when it had existed for five or six years, the excise and revenue officers discovered and prosecuted impostors. Capital, also, became used to its operation. (Hear.) He spoke of the generality of taxes, and without reference to the extreme case of a tax which might have become particularly odious. He could not, however, concur in the gloomy view which some persons took of the state of our finances; persons who even ventured to doubt our ability to maintain the public faith; he had no such opinion. (Cheers.) Nor could he agree with those who contended that the state of the revenue indicated any increase of privation among the labouring classes. There was a set of men who had just started up, and who had discovered that the currency was not sufficiently extensive to meet the necessities of the labouring man; and that whereas the Bank issued 17,000,000*l.* per quarter, they ought to issue 25,000,000*l.*, which they, in their wisdom, had laid down to be the precise amount requisite for the circulation; on the contrary, they found such an increase of consumption in many of those articles which tend much to the comfort of the labouring classes, as to afford matter of congratulation, and give rise to a well-founded belief that their distresses had been diminished, and their privations mitigated. The increase in some articles of the revenue might be explained by the effect of the previous alterations in the duties; thus the amount of revenue derived from the duties on bricks had increased, whilst that derived from the duties on tiles had decreased. That was to be accounted for by the remission of the duties as stated. The revenue from glass had decreased, but that arose from the practice of making glass thinner, and consequently a less quantity would cover a larger surface. But let them look to the consumption of malt: there had been an increase in the consumption of that one article of 7,600,000 bushels on the average consumption of the last three years; that was a test of the increasing comforts and prosperity of the labouring classes;

for he considered that malt liquor was to them not a luxury *but a necessary*; and when there had been so many objections raised to the operation of the Beer Bill, he referred to that one fact *to prove its great advantages*. This increase of consumable articles was a great proof of the increasing comforts of the lower orders. The right hon. Baronet then adduced the increased consumption of various other articles in support of this position."

The SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHT, whether it arose from the native muddyness of their heads; or from their carrying on their works by owl-light and candle-light; or from the circumstance of a guttling and guzzling shop being over their heads, and their visiting it so frequently during their deliberations on matters affecting our property, our liberties, our lives: whatever it may arise from, there always appears to be a confusion of ideas in everything which one hears in this assembly of six hundred and fifty-eight. Thus you could not offer your opinion upon the nature and effects of taxation generally, without introducing and mixing up and jumbling together along with it something about *public faith* and about the *operation of the currency*; two subjects quite distinct, having nothing to do with the other subject; and yet all are, as it were, tossed into a mess and mixed up like the different ingredients of a half-stinking French ragout. So that to the trouble of commenting upon nonsense, I have the trouble of first separating and analysing the nonsense itself. Here, then, I shall reserve, till I come to those topics, what is here said about *currency* and *national faith*; and confine myself at present to what is here said about the effect which taxes have upon the people.

You are pleased that there appears to have been an increase in the consumption of articles which tend much *to the comfort of the labouring classes*. Now, before I go further, let me ask you, whether you supposed that the labouring classes are not affected by any taxes except those which are imposed on articles which they consume. This is the general notion among the six hundred and fifty-eight. Their notion is, that if all the taxes were paid directly by the rich, the poor would not feel the effect of them. Why, if all the fifty-four millions of taxes were laid upon the land, the labouring man would bear as great a portion of them as he does at this hour. Let it be Property-tax; let it be Income-tax; let it be what it may, it will go on shifting itself from the shoulders of those above to the shoulders of those beneath; and will always fall *with the greatest degree of weight on the lowest*. This, which must be manifest to every man who possesses the powers of reflection, who is not stupid to the degree that the jester CANNING was stupid, who said that, to lay out money on palaces was peculiarly proper in times of general distress, because *it furnished employment* to many whom distress threw out of work, not having brains to perceive that taxes must be raised to get the money to lay out upon the palaces, and that the taking away of the taxes would diminish the means of the tax-payers to give employment. To every man not stupid to this frightful degree it must be evident, that taxes, lay them where and how you will, must finally fall in their heaviest degree upon those who have but just enough to live without any taxes at all. What, then, are we to think of those men who propose to *relieve the nation* by taking off Excise duties and laying on taxes on property? There is one thing, indeed, which is to be attended to here as an exception; and that is, *when you lay on a tax upon a tax; when you lay on a tax upon those who receive the taxes*; such as a tax upon pensions and sinecures, or on the funds; and this is, in reality, not a tax; *but it is so much deducted from what the nation has to pay*.

But, I am now to speak of what you say about the *increased consumption of malt*, which you look upon, as a mark of the increased comfort and prosperity of the working people; and, you are perfectly right here: it is a proof of their increased comfort and prosperity. I am afraid that the poor toiling creatures at the furnaces, at the anvils, and at the looms, have experienced none of this increased prosperity; but that the labourers in agriculture have, I know very well; I know it with inexpressible satisfaction; and my satisfaction is the greater because I know that it has arisen from their *own resolution not to be starved*. When the men of EAST KENT, unfurled their banner, with the words, "WE WILL NOT LIVE UPON POTATOES," they pronounced the doom of this taxing system. Into KENT, and on the very spot too, where this banner was hoisted, Christianity first came into England; and that event, great as it was, was attended with consequences scarcely more important than those that will attend the unfurling of that banner. St. AUSTIN brought to our country deliverance from the darkness of heathenism: that banner will bring to it deliverance from IRISH starvation; and it will finally bring deliverance to the unhappy and ill-treated IRISH, too. The country labourers, including the smiths and wheelwrights and collar-makers and all the village shoemakers, tailors, and the like, are much better off than they were two years ago. In the north of HAMPSHIRE, in WILTSHIRE, perhaps in some other parts of the country, the cruel monsters have endeavoured to get them back to the bag of cold potatoes at plough; but they have not succeeded; and, in proportion to their success is the sum of their well-grounded apprehensions. Even at MICHELDREVE the working people are better off than they were before the men of KENT hoisted their banner. Many means are used to prevent *the positive rise of wages*; but there are various ways in which more food and drink find their way to the mouths, and in which more clothing finds its way to the backs of the working-people. I have heard of a parish in HAMPSHIRE, in which upwards of nine pounds a week were paid for WATCHING, during twenty weeks, beginning with the 1st of November last! Here are a *hundred and eighty pounds sterling*; and these are divided amongst the labourers of the parish. The hard-hearted fools could not find in their hearts to give the hundred and eighty pounds in additional wages, which would have rendered all watching wholly unnecessary. But, no matter; the labourers get it somehow or another: they are getting it, generally speaking, all over the country; and, here, PREELY, here is the true cause of the additional consumption of malt; here is also the cause of honest Lord ALTHORP's straitened means; here is the true cause of the falling-off of his taxes; for, though the additional millions, received by the labourers, are in part laid out in beer, they are, in much greater part, in ten thousand times greater proportion, laid out in bread and meat and shoes and smock-frocks and hats, and other necessary things upon which my Lord ALTHORP has not so direct a lien. This is the true cause of the falling-off of the taxes. The labourers have taken from the big farmers, the parsons, and the landlords, a part of that which they had to spend in taxable commodities. The Government is compelled to pinch as much as it can. Its squanderings are rather restricted compared to what they were, and hence the "*dulness*" at the watering-places; hence the *empty theatres* everywhere; hence the ruin of thousands of tradesmen in the WEN; and, cry as much as they will about it, the "*vast improvements*" of REGENT-STREET, "PALL-MALL East," and "WEST STRAND," are des-

tinged to see the grass grow before them! It is useless to sigh and cry. The fall must come. It is either that or cold potatoes in the labourers' luncheon-bags; though Judge VAUGHAN thought that the potatoes in the bag was a matter of no sort of importance. Along with the prosperity of the agricultural labourer, will come the prosperity of the labourer at the anvil and the loom. It may be called "*cruel*" to look with a dry eye at the prospect of seeing PALL-MALL East broken up; but it requires a bolder heart to view with a dry eye millions of labourers with cold potatoes in their luncheon-bags. For forty-two years the hellish PITT system has been going on *creating idlers*, and robbing the industrious for their support: palaces, and whole streets of palaces, have been rising up out of the robbery. Put a stop to the robbery, and these will come tumbling down. The labourers go slowly on in the recovery of their rights: they are sure to recover them in the end; and PALL-MALL East and the PILE AT PIMLICO will, in their altered appearance, proclaim the change to the world.

You, PEEL, say very truly that malt is a *necessary* to the working people. It is so; it is one of the great things: the infernal tax upon it, and the more infernal tax upon the hops, have driven the beer-barrel out of the labouring man's house; have driven him to carry a bottle of water to the field when he is MOWING, work which strains every nerve, from the top of the toe to the crown of the head, while the sun is darting his rays down upon the labourer's back: and, PEEL, if there has been such an increase in the consumption of malt, without the tax being taken off or diminished, *what would the increase be if the tax were abolished!* We shall then have *your support*, to be sure, in taking off these infernal taxes upon the malt and the hops! Agreeing with you here, as far as you go, and glad that you have made the admission, I defer further discussion on this subject until the hives of the north shall send me to meet you on the same floor: and thus I dismiss this first part of your speech.

2. On the Reduction of Taxation.

"Another ground of congratulation was the diminution of the public expenditure. The noble Lord had certainly effected a considerable reduction in this head. But before he could congratulate himself that the whole of that reduction would be permanent, it would be necessary to consider what were the articles on which the reduction had taken place. The principal articles were the *extraordinaries* of the army and navy. If in the latter, for instance, it arose from not purchasing stores, it was clear that such a reduction, though perhaps a very proper one for the current year, could not be calculated on as permanent; for the time was arrived when new ships and new stores would be required. In the army there was no reduction of force which would make a permanent saving. The saving was, therefore, in the militia and in the *extraordinaries*. The saving in the militia arose from its not having been called out during the last year, which saving, therefore, was not permanent; but in the *extraordinaries* there was a permanent reduction of perhaps 200,000*l.* per annum. The House would observe, that it was very important in all those instances, to inquire whether the reduction was casual or permanent. He did *not agree* with the right hon. Bart. who had spoken last, that a material diminution of expenditure was to be anticipated from a reformed Parliament. *Why was such reduction to be expected in a reformed Parliament more than in the present?* Did the right hon. Bart. think that the noble Lord opposite would have experienced any *difficulty in carrying any measure of reduction through the present Parliament?*

"Sir H. PARNELL—I think not.

"Sir. R. PEEL—The right hon. Gentleman admitted that he thought not. He could not, therefore, rely much on the next Parliament for reduction. He did not

believe that any measures of reduction which the noble Lord could propose in the next Parliament would meet with opposition through the selfish feelings of any member—certainly not of a majority. (Hear.) Under no fresh constitution of Parliament could the Government anticipate a greater reduction than their own sense of duty would lead them to propose, and the good feeling of such a House of Commons as the present would lead them to sanction."

Sir HENRY PARNELL had said that, if his noble Friend should be, as he hoped he would, continued in his present office, "he ought to remember, *that under the new Parliament he would be the only Finance Minister who ever had it in his power to reduce the expenditure*; other Finance Ministers might have been as willing as his noble Friend, but in the *former state of the representation they had not the power*. He looked forward to the reformed Parliament, in the expectation that it *would effect a material reduction in the expenditure*." The part of your speech which I have last quoted is an answer to this. You do not agree with PARNELL in supposing that a reformed Parliament would be any more disposed to reduce taxes than the present Parliament is. You ask PARNELL whether he thinks the noble Lord would have experienced any difficulty in carrying any measure of reduction in the present Parliament; and, strange to say, PARNELL is represented as acknowledging that he would not have experienced any difficulty in carrying any such measure of reduction through the present Parliament! Well, then, this reformed Parliament is to be a sad moonshine affair after all; we shall get nothing by it but merely schedules A and B and the division of the counties; and so MACAULAY has told the people at LEXDS, and so the WHIGS are preaching up everywhere. You do not care much about my being hanged I dare say, but if a reformed Parliament do not reduce taxes before it has sitted a year; and that, too, to a very great amount, if nobody else will take the trouble to hang me, I will hang myself, if I belong to that Parliament. In your character, PEELY, there are many traits, some of which delight one person and some another, my favourite is your *amiable simplicity*, which, conspicuous at all times, was never I think so conspicuous as in the question which you here put; namely, "WHY is such a reduction to be expected in a reformed Parliament *more than in the present Parliament*?" Aye, *why* indeed! *why* are we to expect that a reformed Parliament will not continue to vote *two thousand five hundred pounds a year pension to BURKE thirty-three years after the man has been dead*? *Why* are we to expect that a reformed Parliament will not continue to vote *six hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year to a hundred and thirteen of the aristocracy*, a sum greater than that of the Poor-rates in the first five ENGLISH counties in the alphabetical list; and a sum more than twice as great as the amount of all the Poor-rates in the twelve counties in WALES? *Why* are we to expect that the representatives of a people, a great number of the working part of whom still live upon potatoes, will not vote away annually a parcel of our money actually to be sent abroad to be given to foreigners under the names of half-pay and pensions and allowances? *Why*, indeed, are we to expect that a reformed Parliament will not continue to support out of the taxes squeezed from the labouring man, whole tribes of families written down upon the Pension-list? *Why* are we to expect that a reformed Parliament will not be willing to tax the people to keep up military and naval academies, where the offspring of the aristocracy and the parsons and their dependants are actually nursed up from their babyhood, and edu-

cated at the expense of the working people? It were unreasonable, indeed, to expect that a reformed Parliament would object to this! And *why* should a reformed Parliament not approve of having three hundred and two barracks, and three generals to every regiment of horse and foot, and two admirals to every ship of the line! WHY, indeed, as you say with so much and such amiable *naïveté*, which however was not sufficient to induce you to ask why a reformed Parliament should not be driven out with hedge-stakes and flint stones, and why the boroughmonger Parliament should not be called back to supply their place. Ah! PEEL, it is an *opinion* which we express here: it is your fear which we discover: just like the girl when she expressed her confidence that her lover would not leave her; the expression arising solely from her too confident and too correct expectation of the evil that was about to befall her. You will see taxes reduced, PEEL; and, remember, that I tell you that you will do well to join in the work; for that if you do not, you will become a very contemptible person, in spite of your millions of money.

3. On the Currency.

4. On the Time for the calling of the new Parliament.

"The noble Lord had attributed the diminution of the revenue to three causes. To the cholera, political excitement, and the state of the currency. With reference to the first cause, he believed that the apprehension of foreign powers had produced a sensible effect upon our trade. With respect to political excitement, the noble Lord thought that it was about to be at an end, and that consequently there would be an increase of the revenue. He hoped that it might be so, but there appeared to be no great diminution of it in Ireland. (Hear.)

"Lord ALTHORP was understood to say, that the revenue in Ireland had increased last year, notwithstanding the excitement.

"Sir R. PEEL said, the noble Lord knew best on that point, but he thought the fears entertained in Ireland for the security of property would do more to diminish the revenue than the excitement of political warfare. The noble Lord had also adverted to the currency as one of the causes of the deficiency in the revenue, and he had observed, that the changes which had taken place, as well as the uncertainty which prevailed with respect to ultimate proceedings, and the effect produced by the fluctuation in the exchanges, had doubtless contributed much to that state of things in which they at present found themselves. Now in his (Sir R. Peel's) opinion, the noble Lord had diminished the consequences of the cholera, and he had much over-rated the effects of the changes in the currency. Undoubtedly, however, the Bank had contracted its issues, and, as a consequence, the proceedings of the country banks must have been limited, and the capital required for the operations of commerce decreased. Now if this were so, how necessary did it become, on the part of the noble Lord and his colleagues, to seize the earliest possible opportunity to place the foundation of all the currency on some sure and satisfactory basis. (Hear, hear.) Parliament should not be allowed to separate without some expression on the part of the noble Lord as to the course which the Government intended to pursue with respect to the question now under agitation. (Hear, hear.) He (Sir R. Peel) remembered well the Bullion Committee, and the difference of opinions which prevailed; but although the members were bound to secrecy, the noble Lord, as a Minister of the Crown, had his own views on the subject, and he was bound, for the sake of the country, to make them public at the present crisis. It was possible, perhaps certain, that the Committee would make no report during the present session; and unless Parliament assembled for a short sitting in October or November, which he supposed was rather improbable, six months must elapse before the country could receive information on that most interesting subject. (Hear, hear.) He repeated, full six months; for the elections could not, under any circumstances, take place much before December, and as there were snows and storms in the north at that season, which must be taken into account, it was not at all improbable that the elections might not take place during the present year. With

six months of recess, then, before them, he put it to the noble Lord whether it would not be politic to put an end to that state of uncertainty which the noble Lord admitted to have so strong an effect on the issues and the exchanges, by at once stating what were the views of the Government on the question. (Hear, hear.) No one expected the noble Lord to go into details which were to form the subject of deliberation hereafter; but the noble Lord and the Government must have already made up their minds on the great leading points of the course they intended to pursue; and if the noble Lord described correctly the prejudicial effects of the existing state of uncertainty, he recommended him to put a termination to it by avowing at once the opinion of the Government. (Hear, hear.)"

You have twisted these two topics together in such a way that I must take them under one head; and I will take the last topic first. "*A short sitting in October and November*"! Ah! sayest thou so? and honest Lord ALTHORP; that sincere WHIG; THE HONEST, *par excellence*! he says nothing! You send out a *feeler* for another session of this Parliament; you send out that feeler, and the honest Lord remains mum! and then "six months *must* elapse"! Why *must*? All this looks very ugly; and then come the "snows and storms in the north"! I hope they will not be as heavy as BURDETT'S "fall of snow"! What! is the reform of Parliament to depend upon the weather, after all? I have long suspected that this Parliament would *meet again*; and now I suspect it more strongly than ever; nay, I should not be at all surprised if the reformed Parliament never met! We are not to be deceived, mind; our eyes are all open; and so, as to that matter, you may set your heart at rest. I know, that, whether the reform Parliament meet or not, *things will be reformed*; and perhaps the sooner for acting upon the feeler which is here put forth, and which feeler I am quite prepared for seeing turned into a reality. I expect all sorts of means to be tried to keep this present Parliament in existence; it clings to life with more anxiety than sinner ever did; it is manifestly afraid to move, as the soul is afraid to quit its tenement of clay. Like dying men of a certain description, it looks backward first, and then it looks forward with dread. If there be a short sitting such as you talk of, another year's taxes will again be voted away. When that is done no other Parliament will be needed for the purpose of taxing and voting money; and I should not at all wonder to hear it announced by degrees that the present Parliament was to sit out its seven years. You uttered these words, and on these words *the Ministers made no remark*. It was a matter of vast importance, and yet they said not a word.

Now, as to the affair of the currency; the remark in the early part of your speech, on the sect *which had just started up*, and had discovered that the currency *was not sufficiently extensive* to meet the necessities of the labouring man. The sect has not just started up: it has been pretty busily on foot for fifteen years, and its doctrines are truly ridiculous, besides being mischievous. The sum and substance of its doctrines is this, *that money ought to be increased in quantity as saleable commodities increase in quantity*. This is the sum and substance of the doctrine of this sect. Now, this year there are corn of all sorts, apples, pears, potatoes, all sorts of produce, in quantity full two-fifths greater than in any year since the year 1818. According to this doctrine, then, there ought to be two millions of money made to put into circulation in addition to every three millions that are now in circulation! Did such an idea ever before find its way into human head! But, how are we to transfer this

property from hand to hand *without more money than we have now!* How are we to transfer it without more money! Why by selling for three shillings the same quantity of wheat that we before sold for five shillings: by having things at low price instead of things at high price. That is the way we are to transfer it from hand to hand, to be sure. Things must be dear or cheap in proportion to their quantity compared with the quantity of money in the country. In a just and well-regulated state of things, the quantity of money in a country will always remain nearly about the same; and the price of commodities will rise and fall in proportion as the quantity of them is scanty or abundant. But, these little-shilling philosophers have got it, somehow or other, crammed into their heads, that money ought to increase with the increase in the quantity of commodities; and, according to their notion, the produce of the land ought to be as dear after the next harvest as it was before. Anything so stupid, and so openly at defiance with experience, and with nature itself, never could have found its way into the human mind, unless that mind had first been bewildered and perverted, by the paper-money tricks, and by the false prosperity arising from those tricks, of which PITT was the beginner more from his shallowness and presumption than from his knavery.

This, PEARLY, is what you would have said upon this subject, if you had known how; but this; the folly of this sect, by no means is to serve as a cover for your own folly. What do you mean by calling upon the noble Lord and his colleagues, "to seize the earliest possible opportunity to place the foundation of all the currency on SOME sure and satisfactory basis"? And, PEARLY, I have heard a man call you "*the John Kemble of the House of Commons.*" I much question whether that player man would have talked of placing a *foundation* on a *basis*. I have always thought that a foundation was a basis. You are a pretty fellow to be a "*leader*" of the House of Commons! However, if verbosity were the worst of it, one might overlook that. You mean that the Ministers ought to place the currency on *some* sure and satisfactory basis; and the word *some*, it is, that will certainly drive me mad, unless you explain yourself pretty quickly. What, after having set the question at rest for ever by your famous bill, which will hang about you like the body of that death described by St. PAUL, until it drag you down and sink you for ever; after setting the question at rest for ever, amidst the huzzas of the six hundred and fifty-eight, so long as thirteen years ago; after disturbing it from its rest by an Act of Parliament in 1822; after bringing us to within forty-eight hours of barter in 1825; after setting the question at rest again for ever in 1826 and again in 1829, you are now recommending to the Ministers to seek "*some satisfactory basis*" for the currency!

You, the great doctor on the subject, are calling upon the Ministers to tell us *what course they mean to pursue* with regard to this matter which you tell us is now in agitation! It is not of your ignorance, here, that I must complain: it is of your *impudence*. One wonders how a man who has done so much mischief connected with this subject, can dare to open his lips upon it, unless for the purpose of tendering, to the utmost of his power, atonement and compensation to his injured country. PEARL, let me be plain with you, and tell you that the records of Parliament and of the courts of law, speak of things of far less magnitude than the bringing in and procuring to be passed your Bill; but they never spoke of anything which was one ten-thousandth part so injurious to the country. *The*

Parliament sanctioned your Bill, did it? So it did the foundation of the proceedings of the SOUTH-SEA BUBBLERS; but, in that sanction the bubbleers found no security. At any rate it becomes you to be modest in speaking upon matters relating to the currency. You were duly warned of the mischief you were about to do to your country. Ignorance is no plea for a man who voluntarily steps into the receipt of a high salary under the king; but, you have not ignorance to plead; because you were fully forewarned of the mischief you were about to do; and if no other man have a right to be your accuser, he who gave you the warning has that right, *and I am that man!*

5. On National Faith.

"It was a matter of regret that the revenue during the last two years had suffered so much diminution; but he felt convinced that the *great sources of national prosperity were unaffected*. (Hear, hear.) Of this too he was sure, that no proposition to get rid of their difficulties inconsistent with the preservation of *the national faith* would be tolerated, even for an instant, and that *no man of honour, in any Parliament, would attempt to propose it*. (Cheers.) He was confident, too, while the sources of prosperity were unimpaired, that if any occasion arose which required a national sacrifice, that the people of England would not be found wanting for the effort. (Hear, hear.)"

PRELY, do you remember old GEORGE THE THIRD? If you do, you will know that year after year, while the nation was contracting its enormous debt; and that his son GEORGE THE FOURTH, while he was contracting debt, too, and while the nation was crying out distress from every quarter; that these kings regularly twice a year expressed their conviction, "that the *great sources of national prosperity were unaffected*," and they, too, always concluded with the strongest exhortations to uphold national faith. You, however, have *something new here*. They were not so fortunate as to live to see the Parliament reformed; and, therefore, however well inclined, they could not express their opinion, that "no proposition contrary to national faith would be tolerated, *even for an instant*, and that *no man of honour in any Parliament, would attempt to propose it*." They, unhappy monarchs, had not the good luck to live in our reforming times; and the last was peculiarly unfortunate in not living long enough to have Lord GREY for his Minister. They, therefore, could not share in those *cheers* with which you were honoured by the House of all Houses upon this memorable occasion. But, now, PRELY, with regard to the fact. I see no necessity for any man to propose a getting rid of the Debt. I see no reason why it ever should become a question with any man who wishes to relieve the nation of its burdens. The first duty of a representative of the people, is to watch over the safety of them and of their personal liberties. His next duty is to take care that not one farthing of money be taken from them by compulsion more than it is just and necessary for them to pay. His chief business then will be to take off those taxes which cause them to live in misery and to degrade them. It will then be for the partisans of taxation to show that the taxes are just and necessary; and, when it comes to the question of paying interest on the debt, you, the "JOHN KEMBLE of the House," will, I dare say, find it extremely easy to convince the weavers and spinners of MANCHESTER, and the toiling smiths of WARWICKSHIRE and STAFFORDSHIRE, that it is quite proper, quite *just*, that they should toil like slaves all their days to pay the interest of debts contracted by schedules A and B in the days of their fathers; nothing can be easier than for the "JOHN KEMBLE of the

House" to satisfy the people of the 'justice of this; to satisfy them that the bones and flesh and blood of their children who are now in their cradles, are the property of those of whom money was borrowed by schedules A and B. You will only have to tell them, in the language of the impudent ALEXANDER BARING, that the fundholders have a MORTGAGE on all the property of the country; and, they will see, at once, that those who borrowed the money, were the *owners* of the whole country, and could have *sold* it if they liked; because, if they could not sell they could not mortgage. The fundholders having their security on the consolidated fund, you, "John Kemble of the House" as you are, would be able to show the poor labourers and chopsticks in an instant, that, to petition for the taking off of a tax is to petition for a breach of national faith; because taking off a tax diminishes the security of the fundholder. And that, thus, to do anything, no matter what, to endeavour to lighten their burdens, is what "*no man of honour*, in any Parliament, will ever attempt to propose."

PEELY, are you really fool enough to imagine, that your putting out this censure beforehand upon any one who shall propose to deduct from the interest of the Debt; are you fool enough to believe, that this will have any effect upon the minds of those who shall be chosen to sit in a reformed Parliament? If you do believe this, you are a foolisher man than ever appeared upon the stage of this world, having the reputation of being in his senses. In short, you know that the proposition will be made, and you, like most other silly men in similar circumstances, are entertaining a hope that you shall be able to defeat it by this sort of forestalling. Cannot you let the reform Parliament alone. Why, let it be *elected*, at any rate, before you begin to read lectures to it. The most impatient of parsons stop till the congregation is assembled before they begin to preach to it. Let us alone, PEEL: say your prayers, if you like, about us; but, at any rate, do not preach to us before we be chosen.

6. On the Colonies.

"The noble Lord had adverted to the state of the colonies. He (Sir R. Peel) approached that part of the subject with pain, for he believed no Parliament had ever separated before, leaving *the colonies in a state so little satisfactory* to the mother country. All they knew with respect to the colonies was, that the Government did not intend to exact the obedience of the islands possessing separate legislatures to those orders in council which had been the object of so much contention. He wished, however, to know, whether the Government persisted in their intention to force the obedience of the Crown colonies. Every one knew that the orders, although nominally enforced in the Crown colonies, were universally disobeyed; and he put it to the noble Lord whether, under such circumstances, it would not be more consistent with the honour and dignity of the Crown, to withdraw them altogether. (Hear, hear.) While he was on this subject, he wished also to ask what reward the Government intended to bestow on the colonies that accepted the orders. The fiscal regulations had been abandoned—the discriminating duties were not to be collected; but, if he understood the noble Lord right, the mother country was to pay a portion of the civil list of the obedient colonies. Now, he put it to the noble Lord, whether, after all they had heard of the necessity of compelling the colonies to bear the expense of their own government, this was not an act of retrograding—(hear, hear)—and a departure from the avowed determination of those who were placed over that department."

"*Very little satisfactory*," indeed. The whole of the colonies of every description, as now managed, are a burden to the country. Every nation

in the world has coffee, sugar, tea, and spices at about one-half the price that we have them in ENGLAND. The colonies are merely a channel through which to convey English, Scotch, and Irish taxes into the pockets of the aristocracy and their dependants. The colonies are all filled with their relations and their creatures. The money raised upon us, and which there would be no pretence for giving them here, is given them in the colonies. In CANADA millions have been squandered away. It is pretended that the colonies are so many outlets for English manufactured goods. I do not believe that all our colonies put together take as much of our goods as the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. The goods sent from ENGLAND to CANADA do not amount to so much in the year as the money that is sent thither, and which is first taken from us in taxes; so that we raise taxes to send to CANADA to give to the people there to buy goods with; and that we call trade and commerce! On a limited scale, and when necessary to national defence, colonies may sometimes be useful; but stretched about over the world as ours are, they are the cause of feebleness and not of strength; they are the cause of poverty and not of wealth. Managed as our colonies are, they are mere channels, just like the army, the barracks, the academies, and almost every thing else; mere pretences to suck up our earnings, and to give them to the aristocracy and their dependants. This evil is to be put an end to like all the others, by refusing to give the money to uphold it; it is one great mass of monstrous abuses; and it must and will be put an end to. The mere name of *possessing territory* is not worth a straw; if the possession be not conducive to the wealth or strength of the nation, it is worth nothing; but, as in our case, it may be greatly mischievous; and the sooner a mischief is put an end to the better.

7. On Foreign Affairs.

"He could not sit down without adding a few words on the subject of our foreign policy. There were, at this moment, rumours of armaments for the coast of Portugal, and rumours of armaments for the Scheldt; God knew with what truth, or for what purpose. Of course it was intended that the expense of these armaments should be paid out of the naval estimates, because no Government could venture to expend a large sum on an armament without coming down to Parliament and demanding a vote for that purpose. He objected, however, under any circumstances, to the course which was pursued on the strength of documents, which could only tend to mislead the judgment with respect to the question at issue. At all events, he hoped the noble Lord was prepared to say whether there was the least probability that the treaty would be ratified, or that Holland would consent to accept the terms proposed to her. He hoped, indeed, that it might prove so, and *they would be able to avert the dreadful alternative of the horrors of war.* They had to lament at that moment the existence of war in another country, Portugal. He was convinced that the civil war which raged in that country, never would have commenced but for the encouragement given to it by the Government; and this much he might add, that the endangering the peace and prosperity of Portugal by a prolonged civil war, never could prove conducive to the honour and interests of England. With respect to Holland, he could only say, that if the King refused to ratify the treaty, then the armaments which must follow, would disturb the calculations of the noble Lord, and the surplus he had calculated on would not be realised. Whether, however, the noble Lord's calculations were or were not realised, whatever was done by this country, whatever money was expended to force Holland to sign the twenty-four articles, would be expended in a manner contrary to the true interests of England—against the independent rights of the smaller powers of Europe—and, if incurred in conjunction with France directed against Holland, would be inconsistent with that course of feeling which the wisest of British statesmen had always pursued, and which might be pregnant with consequences to the peace of the world that no man could foresee. (Cheers)."

O! you could not *sit down* without saying a few words about our foreign policy; and what you said was, to be sure, well worth standing up for. Neither top nor tail can any human being make of it, only that the Ministers will have some difficulty in "being able to avert the dreadful alternative of the *horrors of war*." Indeed, why then I can give you comfort on this score; for I give you my most positive assurance that they have simply this choice; either to remain at peace, or to *blow up the funding-system*. What I said ten years ago to the Men of KENT, I now repeat to you; to wit, "That the figure of eight and eight naughts "at the right-hand of it say to the King of ENGLAND, You shall never "go to war again while we are in existence." Since that time we have protested against the FRENCH entering SPAIN; they entered it, and our Minister in each House of Parliament put up *prayers* that they might not succeed; they did succeed; they rubbed out the SPANISH bonds, and we took it as quietly as so many lambs. Since that time, we have seen RUSSIA overrun TURKEY, open the channel of CONSTANTINOPLE, send a fleet into the MEDITERRANEAN, make us come and assist her in her enterprise, and laugh at us when we began to be alarmed. Since that time, we have seen the AMERICANS fairly oust us from the Gulf of MEXICO, and forbid us to interfere in the affairs of SOUTH AMERICA, threatening us with the power of RUSSIA if we did. We have just seen the Ministers resolve to pay millions of our money to RUSSIA, and resolve to quit their places if they were not permitted to do it. All the world sees that it is unjust to pay it; it is given, too, at a time when RUSSIA is doing the most hateful acts ever done by any power on earth. But they must pay the money, or a war with RUSSIA. If war with RUSSIA, war with the UNITED STATES of AMERICA, or they carry on the commerce of the world, while our ships are liable to be seized. Thus we submit to everything; because, with this debt, we cannot go to war. To go to war, implies an issue of assignats; that implies a real destruction of the Debt; that implies a state of embarrassment to the aristocracy and to the whole of the State, such as our rulers dare not look in the face. This is the true secret of the payment of the money to RUSSIA. We bought a parcel of victories: we have not paid for them; and other nations will take them back again. Why it signifies nothing to talk of this matter: the words "*foreign policy*" are in our case nonsense. The question is, and it is the only question: Shall we continue to sink till we be the lowest nation in the world: or shall we shake off the millstone of debt, falsely called national?

Thus, PEEL'S-BILL PEEL, have I taken the pains to comment on your speech; not out of any respect to you; not anything other than contempt that I have for your talents and your knowledge; but because the stuff you put forth on the 27th July furnished an opportunity of conveying useful knowledge to my readers; and now, with that contempt with which a man like me ought to look upon a man like you, I commit these observations to my readers, being their faithful friend,

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF RADNOR.

ON THE RESISTANCE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA TO
THE CUSTOM-HOUSE LAWS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES.

(*Political Register*, January, 1833.)

Bolt-court, Fleet-street, January 11, 1833.

MY LORD,

I have this moment read the proclamation of the President of the United States, relative to the affair stated at the head of this letter, which is an affair of the greatest importance to the United States themselves, and of not much less importance to our own country. I happen to have been placed in circumstances which have given me a greater portion of knowledge with regard to the causes of the resistance of the Carolinians, and that have also enabled me more accurately to foresee and to estimate the consequences thereof, than it has fallen to the lot of the greater part of Englishmen, to have been able to acquire, and to be able to do. I, therefore, think it my duty to publish my opinions with regard to this great matter; in the doing of which I have taken the liberty to address myself to you by name, first, because it will necessarily cause that which I write to be read with more attention and more respect; and next, because, having constantly in my mind the recollection of whom I am addressing myself to, I shall be more scrupulous with regard to my statements, and more careful with regard to my language.

This affair will be eagerly laid hold of by the enemies of Parliamentary reform; that is to say, the enemies of *cheap government*, as an argument against the reform which has taken place; against the extension of *suffrage*; against the *Ballot*; against short Parliaments; and against, in short, everything savouring of liberty enjoyed by the great mass of the people. I, therefore, make use of the *True Sun* evening newspaper, in order that no time may be lost in anticipating, as far as I am able, this argument, which I shall prove, not only to be worth not a straw; but, I shall also prove, and that too, I trust, as clearly as daylight, that this event in the United States, furnishes the strongest possible argument in favour of a thorough reform of Parliament, and in favour of that *cheap and just* government which is, I trust, to be the fruit of our reform.

To do this in a manner in which it ought to be done, I must first of all enter, pretty much at length, into a history of the causes of the Carolinian resistance, some of which are of distant dates. I must begin, in order to give your Lordship a full view of the matter, with a statement of a statistical nature. There are now twenty-eight *States*, including three, which are as yet called *territories*, not yet having population sufficient to send members to the *Congress*, agreeably to the Constitution of the United States. Each *State* has its own separate government. At the head of

which is a governor, who has his secretaries, law-officers, &c., just as the PRESIDENT has; each State has two houses of assembly; each passes its own laws, and carries on its own affairs; and the expense of the government of each state is, on an average, less than the amount of the county-rates in any one of the greater *counties* of England. But the Government of the United States, or general government, can alone make war, make peace, make treaties, or do any other thing relating to commerce, or other relationships with foreign nations, in which respect the CONGRESS is endued with all the powers of the English Government, consisting of King, Lords, and Commons; and the Congress consists of the President, a Senate, and a House of Representatives. The Congress can impose taxes of all sorts on the people of the whole country; and though it has no *municipal* jurisdiction, except over a space ten miles square in the place of its sessions (which is at present in Maryland), it has a jurisdiction extending over the whole country with regard to all matters relating to the taxes imposed by it; relating to all matters on the high seas; relating to all matters connected with commerce, with war, and with everything arising out of treaties. It has its judges, who go the circuits regularly all over the country; it has its law-officers; and its courts take cognizance of the violation of any law of the United States; and, in matters of common law, its courts take cognizance of all offences against the United States, just as our gentlemen of the long-robe do; and, though *ex-officio* informations are not in use, the attorney-generals make out bills of indictment in most abusive and thundering style, always concluding (not being able to put in the word "*King*") with "to the evil example of all others in like case offending, and against the peace of the said United States, their *sovereignty* and *dignity*." I used to tell them that their abuse was not half so sonorous and sublime as that of my native country; and that they ought to get a king again as soon as they could, were it only to give a harmonious rounding to the conclusion of their bills of indictment. I remember seeing a man in *jail* in the little State of NEW JERSEY (and he lay in that jail a good while) for his hostility to the *peace*, *sovereignty*, and *dignity* of the State of *New Jersey*, which hostility he had exercised in preaching an *Unitarian sermon*; such sermon being a breach of the common law, and also of the statutes of *William the Third*, "sometime King of the said State."

Not to wander further, such is the division of the *governing powers* of that great country: and now as to the division of its *territory*, its *resources*, and its *interests*. I observed before, that there were eight-and-twenty *States*, including *territories*. Ten of these *States* lie between 39 and 45 degrees of north latitude; with some little exception, the rest between 39 and 29 degrees of north latitude. The former I will call the *northern States*, and the latter the *southern States*, though some parts of them are more northern than 40 degrees; but then they have the same interest with the southern States, having no *maritime outlet*, except the MISSISSIPPI and MISSOURI, down their several branches, and out of the mouths of the monstrous MISSISSIPPI, which empty themselves into the Gulf of MEXICO. The following is a list of the States, taking them in their order from *north* to *south*:

NORTHERN STATES	Maine.
	New Hampshire.
	Vermont.
	Massachusetts.
	Rhode Island.
	Connecticut.
	New York.
	New Jersey.
	Pennsylvania.
	Delaware.
SOUTHERN ATLANTIC STATES...	Maryland.
	Virginia.
	North Carolina.
	South Carolina.
	Georgia.
NORTH-WESTERN STATES.....	Florida.
	Michigan territory.
	Missouri.
	Columbia territory, in part.
	Ohio, in part.
SOUTH-WESTERN STATES	Indiana, in part.
	Illinois, in part.
	Kentucky.
	Tennessee.
	Alabama.
	Mississippi.
	Louisiana.
	Arkansas territory.

Now, if your Lordship will please to look at the map, which you will find at the head of my *Year's Residence in America*, which (as Lord MOUNTNORRIS used to tell his friends in his anonymous pamphlets), is the best thing you ever read in your life; and "if you have not got it, I advise you to get it directly," which you can do at the price of only five shillings; if your Lordship will be pleased to look at that map, you will perceive in the first place, that the northern States are a mere little patch, compared with the whole of the territory of the United States; and then, you will be pleased to bear in mind, which will be more fully hereafter explained, that the TARIFF-LAWS, which have stirred up the present resistance, are advantageous to those northern States only; and that the burden which they impose falls principally upon the rest of the Union.

Such is the division of the mere *territory*; but your Lordship will now please to observe, that the *products of the northern States* amount to a mere nothing compared with those of the *southern and western States*. If you look into Mr. MELISH's description of the United States, which is a very useful book, you will find a vast deal of useful information, which that indefatigable Scotchman collected together, by actually going himself over the whole country. I forget how many thousand and thousands of miles, he told me that he travelled in order to get his information. He got a great deal, at any rate, and if your Lordship will look at page 447 of his book, you will find, that this SOUTH CAROLINA, which is now in a state of rebellion, and, which contained, when Mr. MELISH wrote his book, a very little more than half, a million of people, exported to Britain (for a Scotchman very properly never says *England*) in the year 1821, domestic produce to the amount of 6,868,000 dollars; while the great state of PENNSYLVANIA, which is larger than six of the other northern States out of the ten, exported of domestic produce, to the same Britain,

to the amount of only 2,832,000 dollars. Cotton, one of the great products of the southern States, has increased most enormously in its exports to this kingdom; and your Lordship is aware, I suppose, that of the total exports of the United States, of domestic produce, about *three-fourths* come to this same "*Breetan*," and her West India colonies. All the cotton comes, at any rate. So that the products of the Atlantic southern States, cotton, tobacco, rice, almost all come hither; for, in the other countries of Europe, they grow tobacco themselves. Now, then, if you would please to look at the map again, you will see, that MARYLAND, VIRGINIA, NORTH and SOUTH CAROLINA, GEORGIA, and the FLORIDAS, are all to the south of the line above-mentioned, and all lie upon the Atlantic. While the *north-western* and *south-western* States, have the great rivers for their outlet into the Atlantic.

Next, we are to consider the *interests* of the States; and your Lordship will soon find how the *tariff-laws* operate in favour of the *northern* group, while they are prodigiously injurious to all the rest. The *Southern-Atlantic* States have all their fine ports and harbours; and the sea always open to convey away their produce. With regard to the *north-western* and *south-western* States and territories, their outlet is the mouths of the MISSISSIPPI; and your Lordship will perceive that they have no other outlet. You will perceive that the OHIO, the ILLINOIS, the MISSOURI, the ARKANSAS, the WHITE, the RED, and all the other innumerable rivers that run through these western States and territories, all fall into the Mississippi; and that every ounce of produce raised in these States must come out of the mouths of the MISSISSIPPI, if intended for exportation, and that every article of clothing, every lock and key, every knife and fork; and, in short, every necessary of life, except eatables and drinkables, must go in at the mouths of that river; and your Lordship will, therefore, see, that all these *southern* and *western* States, are, commercially speaking, closely connected with BIRMINGHAM, SHEFFIELD, MANCHESTER, and LEEDS; that they have no such connection with the northern States; and that there is no tie whatsoever to bind them together, except that which is of a mere *political nature*. For, that as to *defence*, in case of war, the *western* States can receive no aid whatsoever from the *northern* States; they must rely entirely upon their own arms; and we remember, very well, that it was the militia of TENNESSEE, and, under the command of this very President, too, who defeated our army at NEW ORLEANS, and drove them back into the sea. The predominant interests of these States, therefore, is wholly different from that of the *northern* States.

These latter have a much greater population in proportion to their extent; their soil, generally speaking, is beyond, all measure, inferior to that of the other States; their climate more variable and less certain as to the crops. In the five New England States, New York, Vermont, and even New Jersey, the summers are sometimes too cold for the thorough ripening of Indian corn; whereas, in the southern and south-western States there is no such disadvantage; the cultivation is carried on at a great deal less expense of labour, and the products are beyond all measure finer, even of the same sorts of grain. But the great difference in the interests of the two sets of States arises from these circumstances; that the northern States are already sufficiently peopled; that the good land is everywhere settled and cultivated; that they are cultivated almost entirely by white people, and without slavery; that the capital of rich men is employed in ship-building, navigation, and external commerce; that they

are the *carriers* for the southern, south-western, and north-western States; as far as that work is carried on on the seas; that, having hands to spare for such purposes, they, and they alone, have established *manufactories*; and that, in short, they are aiming to become the rivals of England, in commercial tonnage, as well as in manufactured goods.

Your Lordship will want nothing more to enable you to perceive that here is a natural division of interests, and of interests so powerful, too, as not to be counteracted by anything that man can do. The heavy duties imposed by the Congress upon British manufactured goods, is neither more nor less than so many millions a-year taken from the southern and western States and given to the northern States, where the effects of the unjust boon show themselves in lofty chimneys with thick smoke going out of their tops, in immense buildings with endless windows, in power-looms, in all the appearances of this kind, and particularly in the establishment of those deadly and accursed instruments of usury and monopoly, banks, paper-money, and accommodation-notes, which (as I have told the Americans a thousand times) were the sure forerunners of the breaking-up of their Union, or of the introduction of slavery.

But, it will be said, that the north and the south and the west are all *one* country; that every man in the country is an American; that we, in England, do not grumble at a tax, because it tends to favour one part of the kingdom more than another; and that, though the tariff burden happens to fall upon the southern and western States, they, doubtless, perceive that this burden is necessary to the safety and the greatness of the *whole* country, and that, therefore, they, considering their country as a *whole*, as we do in this kingdom, those that bear the tariff burden can hardly have an objection to it on account of its unequal pressure, seeing that it is an indirect and impartial tax in itself. Ah! my Lord, we must not reason in this way: when estimating feelings of this character in America, we must not take our own country as affording us an argument of analogy. Here we are one; here every man calls the whole kingdom his home: a wound inflicted on Cornwall is felt in Northumberland as acutely as in Cornwall itself. Divers causes have contributed to make Englishmen in particular attached exclusively to their own small country. In all the countries of Europe, except Russia and Switzerland, there may be said to be the *patriot-passion* in existence; but nowhere anything like so ardent as in this kingdom, and particularly in England; and, if it be found to be more feeble in some of the Scotch and some of the Irish, the difference has arisen from the unjust colonial, or sort of pro-consular, governments which have been carried on in those parts of the kingdom; and, if the Parliament had been wise and just when the legislative union with Ireland took place, all the English laws, English courts, English everything, would have been extended to both those countries, and the whole kingdom would have been called ENGLAND. I said this at the time when the Union took place; and I recommended at the same time that the established church should be so changed as to leave no part of the kingdom reason to complain: and if this had been done, how different would have been our state at this day.

This patriot-passion, which makes all men, the poor as well as the rich, and which I have always seen stronger in the breasts of the poor than in the breasts of the rich; this passion, strange as it may seem, has not the smallest existence in the United States, with the exception of the States of *New England*; namely, Connecticut, Rhode-Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and the little State of Maine; and these people take excellent care to preserve their name of *New Englanders*; and they

are distinguished from all the other people of that continent by their industry, their intelligence, the neatness of their houses and their dresses, by their "*steady habits*" (their country is called "the land of steady habits"), by their coolness, their slowness to anger, their perseverance, their punctuality in matters of business, their bravery, and, above all things, by their maritime skill, hardihood, and enterprise. These people have great attachment to country: they are the object of envy with the rest of the Union, who call them Yankees; and this envy is one of the distant causes of the strenuous opposition to the tariff in the south. The great commercial port of New York is, in fact, an appendage to New England. Nine-tenths of the commercial marine is, I should suppose, the property of the New Englanders. The tariff, your Lordship will perceive, tends to give the northern States a monopoly of tonnage as well as of the benefits of manufacturing. The southern and western States, in estimating the interests of different parts of the country, by no means view those parts as a *whole*; but look upon the tariff as a robbery of them committed for the benefit of the States of the north.

Besides the manufacturing *for sale*, the northern States provide themselves with a very large part of their wearing apparel from the truly domestic manufacture of the *farm-houses*. They spin and weave their own cloth for coats, and the like. I was at a horse-race once in Long Island, at which there were about two thousand men and boys (*women* in America do not go to such places); and except about a dozen Englishmen and others that had come up from New York, I did not see one single person that was dressed in any cloth but home-spun, which is all nearly of one colour, being a sort of russet-grey. They make their own linen for sheeting, for shirting, and for sacking; they make their own ticking for beds and for mattresses; they purchase *fineries* for the women, but they make their flannels, their blankets, their winter gowns, and those other parts of their dress which the extreme delicacy of this modest age prevents me from naming; but they make their own winter cloaks and their own bonnets of various descriptions.

Now, please to observe that the southern and western States do nothing of this sort; that every thing they want in the way of dress must come from without; and that they well know that the tariff-duties make them pay for those things, expense of collecting and monopoly and everything included, twice as much as they would otherwise have to pay; and, not being able to perceive that they derive any compensatory advantage from the imposing of those duties, they have always protested against them. The general government very judiciously chose this mode of taxation; because it was *imperceptible*, and kept the odious tax-gatherer out of sight. As long as the burden was light, though it was not unheeded, it was borne without open resistance; but, when it was made so heavy as it is now; when a coat or a gown was made to cost (monopoly and all) twice as much as it would have cost without the tariff-duties, this was not to be endured without a great deal better reasons than any that could be offered for it. Besides this, the southern and south-western States were the great *exporters* to England, and they could not fail to perceive that the tariff-duties tended to create a preference to cotton and rice coming from other parts of the world. This was their great *market*, as well as the great place for supplying their wants in exchange, and, therefore, they could not fail to see that their interests were sacrificed, for the sake of aggrandizing the maritime and manufacturing people of the north.

The *American navy* too. Circumstances arose to make the Americans

proud of this navy ; to cause its great increase to be approved of, and to make it a favourite with the country ; but English statesmen ought to know a little more about this affair than the flashy Mr. Canning seemed to know when he, after a visit at Liverpool to an American frigate, put forth, at a dinner with an American consul, one of his boarding-school-girl-like figures about the "*mother and the daughter.*" This navy, from the laying down of the keel of the very first frigate, was an object of jealousy with the southern States. Its very existence was strenuously opposed by Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, and many other very *eminent* men ; and, it may be said to have been created by the just indignation of the people of the United States, at the numerous and wanton acts of aggression committed by our cruisers on the coast of America, from, apparently, no other motive than that of rapacity or of insolence, which our Government had not the wisdom to foresee or the justice to repress. These acts of aggression, and particularly the unjust impressment of native American seamen, produced the late war, which added seventy millions to our Debt, and yielded us so plentiful a harvest of disgrace. But a very large part of the *solid heads in America* have always viewed this navy with dislike and very great suspicion. Jefferson, Madison, and others, yielded to the popular cry produced by the wrongs of the impressed Americans ; but they, as well as all the sensible men in the country, saw the danger of this captivating beginning of a *showy and expensive Government.* A very sensible man in New York, standing along with me, and seeing a little naval youth strut by us both, upright as if he had swallowed a curtain-rod, with a cockaded hat on his head, and a silver-hilted dirk belted round his body, and a couple of yellow tassels upon his shoulders, said, " Ah ! there goes one of our *defenders.*" " Well," said I, " but they did defend you." To which he replied, that his country wanted no defence but the arms of its farmers ; that any other species of defence must put too much power into the hands of the Government ; and that, in the end, a standing navy must lead to a standing army ; that these must lead to great and permanent taxes, and that these would produce disunion or slavery. I do not hazard going a particle beyond the truth in saying, that this is the opinion of nineteen-twentieths of the proprietors of the land in the United States, who, adhering to the opinions of Mr. Jefferson, of forty years ago, say, What is the use of a navy, unless we be able by that navy to control the power of Great Britain on the seas ; and, to do that, whence are to come the means without loading ourselves with internal taxes enormous ? For, to effect our purpose by foreign aid and alliances, will involve us in treaties and obligations prodigiously expensive ; will make our independence rest, in some measure, upon the will of those foreign nations ; and will compel us to introduce a system of taxation incompatible with our peace and our happiness. And, without a navy capable of coping with Great Britain on the seas, to have a navy at all will only be to treasure up for ourselves mortification, and the mockery of the world.

If these were, and are, the opinions of the people in general throughout the United States, the southern and western States have had particular ground of dislike to this navy, in which they have seen little other than the means of aggrandizing the northern States, and adding to their power over the southern and western States ; for, in fact, the navy belongs exclusively to the northern States, and its great purpose is to protect those interests in which the southern and western States do not participate.

Thus, then, my Lord, I have done myself the honour to lay before your Lordship as clear a view as I am able of the real causes of this resistance on the part of South Carolina, the *principle* of which resistance, you will please to perceive, the President by no means denies to be just, supposing the necessary degree of oppression to exist. Whether the tariff-laws do amount to that degree of oppression, I leave it to the better judgment of your Lordship to decide; and I will now, in conclusion, respectfully offer you a few observations on my *formerly* delivered opinions on *American manufactures* and on the *American navy*; because I am aware that you will remember, that I expressed *my pleasure* at the passing of the *heavy tariff-law*, and that I repeatedly called upon the Americans to "*build ships and to cast cannons.*" But, these, as touching the old charge of "*inconsistency,*" and as touching, in a very tender part, the interests and honour of England, is "*high matter,*" and must form the subject of another letter to your Lordship, from

Your Lordship's most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF RADNOR.

(*Political Register, January, 1833*)

LETTER II.

Bolt-court, Fleet-street, January 21, 1833.

MY LORD,

At the conclusion of my former letter (published in the last *Register*), I observed, that I would, "respectfully offer your Lordship a few observations on my *formerly* delivered opinions on *American manufactures*, " and on the *American navy*;" because, I was aware, that I expressed *my pleasure* at the passing of the heavy tariff-law, and that I repeatedly called upon the Americans to *build ships* and *cast cannons*; and because I was aware also, that, here, the old, and ten thousand times refuted charge of "*inconsistency*" might be again conjured up.

Now, my Lord, with regard to the inconsistency, there would be none even if I were to confess, that I gave this advice, and expressed the pleasure with no feeling other than that of a desire to promote the good of the United States; for, there may have arisen circumstances to make me change my opinion as to these matters; and I know of no rule, divine, moral, or legal, that makes it faulty in me to change my opinions more than any of the rest of mankind. Not, however, putting forward this defence at all, I might, in the first place, call upon your Lordship to recollect, that the giver of the advice is an Englishman and not an American,

and that I, who was that giver, was by no means bound to give the rivals of my own country, good advice; and that it is quite enough for me to show, that the advice had rationally for its object, *to produce good to my own country*. And, what have I more to do than to state the plain truth, which is this: namely, that I wished the Americans to cramp the import of English manufactures; that I wished them to build ships, cast cannons, and make a formidable navy; that I wished them to do anything, and to do everything, calculated to induce the people of England to demand a Reform of the Parliament, by making them see and feel the consequences of being governed by a Parliament consisting of nominees.

Aye! but some one will say, "Where was your *sincerity*, then? And "had you a moral right to give this advice to the Americans from such a " *motive*, as this? And did you act the part of a friend to mankind, and " especially of a friend to the Americans, whose character you have so " much praised, and whose hospitality and friendship towards yourself you " have so much extolled?" My Lord, I am not so enlarged of soul as to be able to extend either my personal or political affections to all the nations of the earth. It was my lot to be born in this clump of little islands; and I never have been able, rationally speaking, to extend my affections one inch beyond their confines. So that I look upon myself as under no sort of obligation to do anything, or to say anything, in behalf of any other country or people, unless I can do it, or say it, without the smallest risk of diminishing either the happiness, the power, or the renown of my own country; and this, as your Lordship well knows, has always been my profession of faith, as far as this matter goes.

And, as to my sincerity with regard to the United States, I have a hundred times over declared, in print, that I would, if I had the power, prevent them from having any maritime force beyond what was barely necessary to protect their own coasts against pirates or piratical enterprises; and I have never done any one act, in the whole course of my life, to prevent me from having a moral as well as a legal right *to cause such prevention*. When I was in that country last, I, upon all occasions, openly declared that their navy had been created, was creating, and was suffered to exist, only by imbecility of mind and of action, which had arisen out of the misgovernment of England, and particularly out of the ill-constitution of the House of Commons. I invariably told those with whom I conversed, that if the boroughmonger sway were put an end to in England, their boasted naval power must soon hide its head; and that, for my part, whenever a Reform of the Parliament should take place, I, as far as any particle of power that might be lodged in my hands might go, would compel them to put a stop to that navy, which was manifestly intended to join France and Russia, and any other powers, in order to wrest from England her ancient, her rightful, her just, her reasonable, and (for the rest of the world, as well as for herself) her necessary and salutary *dominion of the seas*. To hundreds of men, and in scores of public companies, I have made this declaration, and in every city and town of America in which I happened to be.

So that, my Lord, my views as to this matter are by no means new, nor have they ever been disguised in one single instance. Foreseeing the *possibility* that I might be so placed, one day or another, as to make me a real actor in the great affairs of my own country, I beg your Lordship to observe, how scrupulously I avoided doing anything that might, in

such possible case, operate as a tie upon me not to pursue the exclusive interests of my own country. I was in the United States, the first time, eight years. I saw thousands of *loyal* Englishmen, amongst whom, I believe, were two gentlemen of the name of BARING; I saw thousands of these persons become what they call "*citizens*" of the United States, and making and causing to be recorded a solemn declaration to that effect. There was no crime in this, either legal or moral; it was done by numerous persons, as worthy as ever lived in the world; it did not invalidate any of their rights at home as English subjects; while, at the same time, the Americans received them with a greater degree of cordiality; and while it removed many little obstacles to the dealing in lands, and the carrying on transactions in commerce and trade; and it also gave certain political and civil rights, which could not be enjoyed without it. I was in very considerable business for eight years; and to adopt this measure, which others did, would have been very convenient to me, but I never did it; not because I had at that time the smallest idea of its ever interfering, by any possibility, with the performance of any duty towards my own country, but because it seemed to look like an act either of perfidy or of hypocrisy; an act, either of abandoning my own country or of pretending to abandon it. I was many and many a time pressed by my friends to do it; but I always answered, that I belonged to England and England partly belonged to me, and that I would never do any act which should only seem to say that I abandoned my duty or gave up my rights as an Englishman. When I was in America the last time, circumstances had very much changed; and, as every friend there concluded, naturally enough, that I must be sick of England, I was still more pressingly urged to become a citizen, as it is called, and to make a declaration, first of my intention, afterwards of the fact, that I *owed allegiance* to the United States of America. But this, however, I not only did not do; but I avoided, with the greatest care, going near any person in public authority. The governor of the State in which I resided, the President of the United States himself when he came to New York, both desired to see me, in order to show me a mark of their hospitality. I was very much obliged to them; I felt the invitation as an act of great goodness, and I retain the recollection of it with great gratitude towards them both. But I obstinately refused to do even this, lest it should be interpreted into an overt act of preference given to that country over my own; and, to the gentlemen who came from New York to press me to go and see the President, I made my objection in something very near to the following words: "This present state of things must change in England; I hope to live to see that change; if I do live to see it, I shall, by possibility, have something to say, if not something to do, in the adoption of measures hostile to the United States. I shall be bound to assist in enforcing those measures, if I shall deem them necessary to the interest and the honour of England; I think it very likely that such necessity may arise; it is possible that it may be my duty to take a part in that necessity, and it never shall be said of me, that I, being here especially, ever uttered a word or did an act which would amount to a sort of promise on my part not to give my support to such hostility." In his sleeve, I dare say he laughed at me; and, if Mr. FEARON had heard me, he probably would have laughed still more, as, in his book, he did, at the idea of my thinking myself (as he said I did) "the Atlas of England"; I, never having interfered with Mr. FEARON in any way whatsoever, and now

unreluctantly leaving him to dispense gin upon Holborn-hill, while I steadily pursue my quiet course, serving my constituents and my country to the best of my ability.

So that, my Lord, there never has been any disguise, on my part, with relation to this matter. Numerous were the "fierce contests" (to borrow a phrase from the Right Hon. Secretary at War) which I had to carry on, and especially with the Scotch and English and Irish citizenized gentlemen, who seemed and who are ten thousand times more bitter against their native country than the Americans themselves. These renegadoes (as I used abusively to call them) never pronounced the name of England unaccompanied with execrations. This is the old story: none are so bitterly hostile as deserters: none so bitterly hostile, none so unfor- giving, none bear so deadly a weapon as deserters. This term does not apply to men whose wants have driven them to America, and who have, in fact, gone thither to preserve their wives and families from starvation, or from the loss of what little property they had; but, to men of considerable property it does apply: and they ought to have remained here, to labour, according to their means, for the deliverance of their country.

During these contests, one of which I remember to have had, of a most fierce character, with that Mr. MRLISH, whose name I mentioned in my former letter; during these contests, they used to talk in a very high strain, about "equal rights on the seas"; a doctrine which JEFFERSON, MADISON, and many others, used to put forth as so much gospel, and in which they were backed, by all the fellows, calling themselves *jurisconsults*, on the continent of Europe. To be sure! Where are there a parcel of poor weak fellows, in the whole world, who do not want to share in the powers of a rich and strong fellow? The doctrine, however, is perfectly innoxious without an attempt to put it in practice; but, we must have been paying about two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, in salaries to a secretary for foreign affairs, and about six millions of money to ambassadors, envoys, consuls, and the like, and about three millions more to defray the contingent expenses of their several offices; we must, within the last forty years, have been paying this enormous sum of money, to very little purpose, if our Government do not know (and they *appear* to know nothing of the matter), that this "*American navy*" was, and is, intended to be the heart and soul of a combination between Russia, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and France; for pulling down, on the first fair occasion, the power of Great Britain on the seas. Nothing can be more crafty than the pretences on which this scheme will proceed. The Americans are animated by no ambitious views: O, no! They, quiet innocent souls! only want to carry on their traffic quietly; only want, in the most inoffensive and *fairest* manner possible, to carry the produce of France, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden, to and from their colonies, while they are at war with us! Only want to preserve the strictest neutrality by covering the property of our enemies, and carrying it all about the world! Only want to sail in safety all over the world, while our ships and goods must be insured at an enormously high rate, being constantly exposed to seizure by the power, or powers, that are at war with us. In short, not to go on till one bursts with indignation; only want very modestly to take from us all the sources of our strength and of our wealth.

It is very plausible, to be sure, to call the seas, as JEFFERSON, MADISON, and MUNROE, did, "*the highway of nations*"; but, my Lord, it

is plausible only with shallow minds. Very easy to call them the *highway*”; and, then, to apply to it all the rules of the Highway-act; but not quite so easy to make out any analogy in the two cases: and, above all things, not so easy to produce any water Highway ACT, or tell us of anybody that ever had authority to pass such an act. It is at this point where all such reasoners must stop. It is a question to be tried by the reason of the case itself; and, still more, a question to be settled without any arbiter whatsoever: and, if there be any sense in the words, “equal right on the seas,” they mean neither more nor less, than this, that every nation is to have a right in just and due proportion to its power.

To give your Lordship an idea of the foaming rage of my opponents, when I used to talk in this strain, is quite out of my power; but, when they used to ask this question? “Why should not we have a navy as well as you.” I used to answer, “Why should not your country be an island as well as mine? Why are not you an ancient people, instead of being a parcel of colonists planted by England?” But my great question always was, “What do you want a navy for?” They did not dare say, “to humble England,” for that would have been my argument for putting a stop to it; and then, giving them no time for deliberation, I used to proceed: “You have been very happy for a hundred years without any navy at all; and you may continue so if you like for a thousand years longer; whereas, if you attempt to rival England, or to plot against her with the despots of Europe, however you may embarrass her for a little, she will finally beat you, and break up your Union. You do not want cannons and ball-cartridge to carry on commerce with. Go on, however, till we have beaten our boroughmongers: then sell your ships to us second-hand, or turn them into the carriers of flour or of blubber.”

This has been invariably the language which I have held upon this subject. Mr. STANLEY’S mind must be so occupied, at present, in his capacity of *tithe-war-minister*, so occupied with causing “the oblations of the faithful” to be collected by means of the bayonet, that it may seem unreasonable to draw his attention to other matters; otherwise, I would remind him, that, at the opening of the election at PRATON, in the spring of 1826, I said, if I were Minister of England, it should not be many months before I would put a stop to the increase of the American navy. At a lecture at the Mechanics’ Institute, in London, in the winter of 1830, I, in speaking of the necessity of maintaining a great and noble navy of England, adverted to the navy in America, and told my hearers, that, *first or last, we must have to fight that*, and all the European combination that it would draw about it; whereupon there was one man, out of twelve hundred men, who hissed me; and that one man was a Mr. BOWRING, who, for what reason God only knows, is called a *Doctor*. Doctor means a learned man, which I suppose this Doctor is; in physic, in divinity, in ecclesiastical law, he may be learned; but of foreign politics the poor *Doctor* knows no more than the little black-faced printer’s boy who will wash the types, by the means of which this letter to your Lordship will be printed. When we are talking about national interests, we must totally divest ourselves of all private feelings and personal considerations; and the only question for a statesman to put to himself is this: “What is most conducive to the happiness of the people of this kingdom, conjointly with the preservation or restoration of the power of the country in the world?” Having ascertained, or arrived at a fixed opinion

in answer to this question, all that he has to do is to adopt measures accordingly, to the utmost of his power. Were I allowed to reason otherwise, I having anything to do with the matter, should hesitate very long, should be very squeamish about adopting measures relative to the United States and its navy : should recollect my numerous friends there ; should have some scruples about endangering the existence of a political compact, attended with so much social happiness. But, when a question arises, in which the happiness and permanent greatness of my own country are concerned, I must dismiss all these from my mind ; and if I do not, I am a traitor to the land that gave me birth, and to which I owe the manifest risking of my life, if its happiness and safety demand it.

In conclusion, a few words on the debt of *gratitude* which I owe to the Americans for giving me shelter from the claws of SIDMOUTH and CASTLEREAGH. In the first place, I neither asked, nor received, any particular favour at their hands. I landed there in virtue of the law of nations, and of treaties existing with my own country. While I remained there I owed a temporary allegiance to the State ; and I obeyed its laws accordingly. It had no right to demand from me any other species of allegiance or obedience : it demanded no other, and no other did I yield, or profess to yield. From hundreds of individuals, indeed, I received kindness which created claims of gratitude on me. These claims I did not overlook, and have not overlooked ; and I have endeavoured to satisfy them, first, by introducing the field culture of the Swedish turnip, a prodigious benefit to the whole country, and which I did with a degree of zeal and diligence as great as if all the farms in the country had been my own ; second, I wrote, for the climate of the United States alone, a book on *gardening*, which I published here in England, and sent the edition over to NEW YORK ; and at a price which prevented the possibility of my gaining a farthing by the book, to which book I prefixed a dedication to one of the kindest of my neighbours, in which dedication I expressed the grateful motives which had led me to write the book, and which dedication the scoundrel booksellers in America, who reprinted the book, had the baseness to omit ; the names of which booksellers I have forgotten, or I would stick them into this letter, which will be sure to be read from one end of their country to the other. Besides this, owing to the very unjust copy-right law of the United States, *I can secure no copy-right there, while Americans (on Poulett Thomson's principles of free trade), though living at home, can secure their copy-rights here!* By-the-by, POULETT THOMSON was got in for Manchester by one Dyer ; or, at least, Dyer proposed him at the hustings. This Dyer is an American by birth, and not a denizen here ; or was not at the time of the election. He is a *patentee* of a *carding-machine*, and he can secure the patent in America ; but, an Englishman could not do it ; though an American, discovering a thing in America, can secure a patent for it here. This is the true "reciprocity system." In consequence of this law, my books are all republished there ; and I have now in my left-hand, a copy of my "*French Grammar*," published in *stereotype*, at NEW YORK, in the year that has just expired. I do not complain of Mr. DOYLE, who has sent forth this edition ; for if he had not done it somebody else would ; probably it has been done, long ago, by three or four booksellers in the United States ; this, that I mention, being a new edition. If I had *citizenized myself*, when I was in that country, *I should now have had the power of securing all my copy-rights there ;* and, probably, here is a loss of five hundred a

year for the last seven years, and for many years yet to come. This I knew, your Lordship will please to observe, while I was there. This, therefore, is another great sacrifice of interest which I have made, rather than suffer one particle to be deducted from my claim to retain, morally as well as legally, my whole unbroken character of *Englishman*.

Therefore, your Lordship will be perfectly satisfied, that I owe neither allegiance nor moral obligation to any portion of the United States of America. I owe great regard to my numerous friends there; but, as I observed before, that must weigh not a feather when put in the balance against the interests and honour of my country. I hope that the Government of that country will be too wise and too just to contemplate any attempt hostile to our undoubted right to maritime dominion; and I hope that the Government here will become too wise and too just to continue to squander our resources in NOVA SCOTIA and CANADA, under the vain pretence of defending those beggarly countries against the Americans, but in reality, to keep up great numbers of persons to feed upon English taxes: I hope that the two Governments will be thus wise and thus just; but, if contrary to those hopes, the American Government should persevere in its present manifest hostile designs, I will, as far as I am concerned and can go, exert myself to the utmost of my power, not only to thwart those designs, but to destroy the existence of the means on which the designs are founded.

Such are my opinions and my views with regard to the United States of America, and especially with regard to the CAROLINIAN resistance, which will, in all probability, end as the PENNSYLVANIAN resistance, to the excise-laws ended; namely, the general Government will obtain a *seeming obedience* from the resisters; and will then repeal the unjust and partial taxes which have caused the resistance. But, this event will sufficiently prove to all statesmen but our own, that, if this kingdom ever experience danger from that American navy (which is manifestly intended to be the soul of the maritime combination against us) the fault will not be in the Americans, but in the Government of this kingdom itself.

I am,

Your Lordship's most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P O P A Y.*

(*Political Register*, August, 1833.)

Bolt-court, 15th August, 1833.

THIS affair is now come to a close. The minutes of evidence, taken before the Committee, together with the report of the Committee, are

* The affair of Popay occurred in the first session of Mr. COBBETT's return to Parliament. It was a discovery of a Spy in the employ of Government, and, as

now before the House of Commons, and before the public, any man of whom has a right to put into print, the whole, or any part, of these minutes, or of this report. It is impossible for me to republish the whole in this work of mine. It consists of a hundred and eighty-two folio pages, exclusive of the report and the petition on which the Committee was founded. I will publish the whole of the evidence by degrees, week after week, as I have room, beginning with a part of the *Register* of next week; but, in the meanwhile, I wish to lay before the public, a sort of summing up of the whole; and that I shall do under the name and form of a report, such as I would have laid before the House, if I could have had my wish. I am not presumptuous enough to say, that my judgment, in this respect, or in any respect, ought to be put in competition with that of twenty other gentlemen, each of whom of much greater experience than I can pretend to; but, having laid before my readers the report which they agreed on, I have a clear right to lay before those same readers, such a report as it appeared to me proper to make, asking no one to give a preference to that which, in my judgment, would have been proper. Besides, I lay the minutes of evidence before my readers; or shall do it as fast as I can. I request them to read with attention the whole of the evidence as fast as they get it; and, in the meanwhile, I give, in the summing up, not my *reasonings*; not my *own observations*; not any commentary, interpretation, or construction; but I fairly take extracts from the evidence itself, leaving every reader to form his own judgment upon that evidence.

I repeat here that which I have said with regard to this affair from the beginning to the end; namely, that I have a rooted hatred to this police establishment; that I hate it, because it is of *foreign growth*, and because it is *French*; that I hate it because it really tears up the Government; that good-natured Government, that gentle, that confiding, that neighbourly and friendly Government, under which I was born, and under which my forefathers lived. Whether this hatred be well or ill founded, it is real, and it must have an influence on my mind in every thing relating to this matter. Most of the other gentlemen of the Committee might be under the influence of no such prejudice: they might, on the contrary, deem this establishment necessary to the peace of the Metropolis, although they might lament that necessity. This great difference in the prevailing bent of our minds, would naturally produce a difference equally great in the conclusions to which we should come. While, therefore, I impute not the smallest degree of blame to those who differ from me in regard to those conclusions, I only claim the right of laying my own before the public, through the same channel that I have already laid theirs. There is this little difference on my side. The other members of the Committee were members of other Committees at the same time. Sir ROBERT PEEL, for instance, and Mr. ESTCOURT, were, I believe, each of them, members of two, or three or four, other Committees, that were all sitting at the same hours that our Committee was, or pretty nearly the same. This was more or less the case with every member of the Committee except myself. Even the chairman was obliged to be absent twice; a part of two of the

it casts a strong light on the character of *Police Establishments*, we give here the Report which Mr. COBBETT proposed to the House of Commons' Committee, but which was not adopted by the Committee. The Report to the House, and the evidence, are entitled "Petition of Frederick Young and others."—Ed.

sittings. Therefore, the other members could not pay that attention to the matter which I did; for, I was never absent from any one sitting, and never one minute out of the room during one sitting. I was called away by none of those duties which called other members away; and, if I neglected my duty in this case, I should have justly exposed myself to the censure of the people at large, and particularly of the petitioners. Some of the members of the Committee might *wish*, and very laudably wish, the result to be different from what it was; but, I am bound to say, that I perceived in no one any desire whatsoever, to stifle the truth, or to do any thing not consistent with the strictest impartiality. I differed with the majority upon the subject of printing, in an appendix to the Report, the written reports of POPAY; but, I impute to them no improper motive for their differing in opinion with me upon this point; and, in conclusion of this introduction, I beg my readers to receive from me an assurance, that every thing was fair, from the beginning to the end, on the part of this whole Committee; and I really deem it one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life-time, that the petitioners deemed me a person fit to be intrusted with their petition. I have now only to add the names of the petitioners, with this observation, that I trust, that the people will here see a proof of the *value of the right of petition*; and, that they will never suffer their indignation and disgust, however natural, to induce them to be slack in exercising this invaluable right. Sometimes petitions seem to be disregarded; but they have always their weight, if their contents be true, and their prayers reasonable. *Disgust* is but too frequently a natural feeling in our present situation; but, whenever *disgust* is pleaded as a ground for *inaction*, it is not disgust in reality, but a *want of public spirit*, which, however, thank God, is not yet extinguished in England; but which is still felt to that extent which will, in due time, and by peaceable means, make a suitable impression on those who govern, and produce, in the end, a restoration of that freedom and that happiness which so much national virtue and such matchless industry so well deserve. The petitioners in this case, were all, except one, working men; and that one a gentleman of real property, become such by a life of industry and care. The first thing that I endeavoured to ascertain was, whether the petitioners *got their bread by the sweat of their brow*; and, having ascertained that fact, I was not at all afraid to rely upon their word. A set of men more frank, more undisguised, more free to confess, even their own indiscretions (if they might be called such), I never saw in my life; and I believe that the whole of the Committee must have entertained the same opinion of their character and conduct. Their names and places of abode were as follows:

JAMES BURRELL BROWN, shoemaker, No. 9, East-street, Walworth.

JAMES PRICE, shoemaker, No. 2, Park-place, Walworth.

FREDERICK YOUNG, braid-maker, No. 2, Richmond-place, East-street, Walworth.

JOHN SIMPSON, cooper, &c., Elm Cottage, Camberwell.

SHEM SHELLEY, carpenter, George-street, Camberwell.

THOMAS DEAN, clerk, Waterloo-street, Hour-Glass-lane, Walworth-common.

WILLIAM WOODFORD, carpenter, No. 1, George-street, Camberwell.

HENRY HERSEB, builder, East-street, Walworth.

WILLIAM RUSSELL COLLINS, chair-maker, No. 65, Brandon-street, Walworth.

JOHN FREDERICK YOUNG, copper-smith, No. 2, Richmond-street, East-street, Walworth.

REPORT.

The select Committee, appointed to inquire into the matter of the petition of Frederick Young and others, of Walworth and Camberwell, complaining that policemen are employed as spies, and praying that the people may not be taxed to maintain those spies, have, upon the said matter, agreed to the following Report.

Paragraph 1. Your Committee, which was appointed by the House on the 1st of July, having met on the 3rd, and chosen a chairman and summoned most of the petitioners to appear as witnesses, met again on the 5th, and proceeded in the inquiry, and again for the same purpose on the 8th, 10th, 12th, 17th, 19th, 22nd, and 23rd; on which last day they concluded their examination of the witnesses; and, as the foundation of the whole of the proceedings, your Committee have first to state, that the petition, into the matter of which they were appointed to inquire, was in the following words, to wit:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

The Petition of the undersigned inhabitants of Camberwell and Walworth, being Members of a Political Union in those villages,

Humbly sheweth,

That one William S. Popay became a member of their Union about fifteen months ago; that he attended the meetings of the Union, which was called a Class of the National Political Union of the Working Classes; that he used to urge the members of the Union to use stronger language than they did in their resolutions and other papers, which he sometimes altered with his own pen, in order to introduce such stronger language; that in his conversation with one of your petitioners particularly, he railed against the Government, damned the Ministers for villains, and said he would expel them from the earth; that he told one of your petitioners that he should like to establish a shooting gallery, and wanted some of them to learn the use of the broad-sword, and did give one lesson of the broad-sword to one of your petitioners; that he subscribed towards the expense of providing a banner; that he subscribed for music at a meeting of the working classes at Kennington Common, held for the purpose of petitioning against the flogging of soldiers; that he attended and took an active part in a procession of the working-classes to Copenhagen House in July last, to celebrate the anniversary of the French revolution, when he walked among the foremost, arm-in-arm with one of your petitioners, who was a member of the Union; that in or about the month of August last he went with one of your petitioners and other persons to visit a class of the Political Union at Richmond, when he paid out of his own pocket the expenses of the day, making the division and settlement at night, though the day before he had represented himself to this petitioner as so poor as not to have the means of getting food for his family; that he used to take notes of the speeches made at the divers meetings; that in the last autumn he walked in procession with one of your petitioners at the funeral of Thomas Hardy, and that while the procession was moving on, this your petitioner perceiving several men whom he knew to be policemen disguised in private clothes, he noticed this, with marks of indignation, to Popay, who told him to "hush," and used every effort to restrain him from speaking aloud; that while the oration was making over the grave, Popay placed himself on a tombstone, and took notes of what was said; that he constantly represented himself

as in a state of great poverty and misery, and thereby got himself and his wife into the houses of some of your petitioners, and received food and drink and entertainment from them; that he represented himself as having been deprived of his due by some persons in authority, and as having been brought to misery from such cause, and his tales of woe to some of your petitioners and their wives were such as to bring tears in their eyes; that he generally carried a bag or portfolio with him, representing himself as an unfortunate person, picking up his bread by miniature and landscape drawing or painting; that he enrolled himself in the Union class under the name, first, of A. B., and afterwards under the name of "Pearce," alleging that he declined using his real name, lest his respectable connexions, amongst whom he named Alderman Wilson, might be offended if they knew that he belonged to a Political Union; that all this time, wholly unknown to your petitioners, he belonged to the "police," having entered that service about twenty-two months ago; that he wore the uniform for about four or five months, and was stationed on what is called a "beat," at Brixton; that at the end of those four or five months, or thereabouts, he ceased to wear the uniform; that he was further promoted about a month ago to be a deputy-inspector, and is now acting as such at Park House, Park-place, Walworth; that he was amongst the people at Calthorpe-street meeting, dressed in common private clothes, and was there seen and spoken to by one of your petitioners; that in or about the month of February last, some of your petitioners had heard that he belonged to the police; that they found him at the house of one of your petitioners, and charged him with the fact, which he most positively and vehemently denied to be true; that G. Furzey was the man who first made the discovery of this important fact, and that this same George Furzey went, along with two others of your petitioners, and preferred the charge against him. That your petitioners are men faithful to their allegiance, and laborious in their lives; that they contemplate with indignation the fact that they are compelled to pay for the maintenance of spies, under pretence of their being persons employed for the preservation of the peace, and the protection of their property and their lives; while the business of this man evidently was to delude the thoughtless into the commission of crimes, to bring misery upon their wives and families, and themselves to deaths ignominious. That some of your petitioners have frequently seen those whom they knew to be policemen disguised in clothing of various descriptions; sometimes in the garb of gentlemen, sometimes in that of tradesmen or artisans, sometimes in sailors' jackets, and sometimes in ploughmen's frocks. That thus feeling themselves living amongst spies seeking their lives, and sorely feeling the taxes heaped upon them for the maintenance of those spies, they make this appeal to your honourable House, and implore you to be pleased to make inquiry into the matter, being willing and ready to come forward with proof of all the facts that they have stated; and beg leave to express at the same time an anxious hope that the result of such inquiry will be some act of your honourable House to afford them and their families and fellow-subjects protection against such wrongs and such perils for the future.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

Par. 2. Your Committee, deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, an investigation of which has been committed to their charge, and knowing the anxiety of the House to do justice at all times, and, in this particular case, to give contentment to the people, and to remove from their minds all cause of alarm; and, considering, moreover, the effect which the result of this inquiry may probably have in securing willing obedience to the laws in the Metropolis and in exciting, throughout the kingdom, confidence in the House, and respect for his Majesty's Government; your Committee, thus impressed with a sense of the duties imposed upon them, have spared neither time nor attention in their endeavours fully to discharge those duties.

Par. 3. To this end your Committæe have summoned to appear before them, as witnesses, nine out of ten of the petitioners; namely, Frederick B. Young, John B. Young, John Simpson, Shem Shelley, William Woodford, Henry Hersee, William R. Collins, James B. Brown, and

James Price; and, as having been pointed out by these petitioners to give evidence in support of their allegations, Michael M'Henry, Charles Parr, Jonathan Hawkins, George Hawkins, William H. Sturges, James Parker, and George Fortzer; and, in behalf of the police, your Committee have received the evidence of William S. Popay, of the superintendent, Andrew M'Lean, of the police commissioners, Charles Rowan, and Richard Mayne, and of Mr. Phillips, Under Secretary of State for the Home Department. Besides this oral testimony, your Committee have caused to be laid before them, the written reports, forty-nine in number, made by Popay to the superintendent M'Lean, communicated by him to the commissioners, submitted by the commissioners to the Secretary of State, and by them delivered to your Committee, along with three other written reports from officers of the police appertaining to districts in Middlesex.

Par. 4. The petition above recited, contains matter which your Committee conceive may be conveniently considered under eighteen distinct heads, the sixteen first of which, relating more especially to Popay and to the manner of his being employed, and the two last, to complaints of a more general character, and relating to things of more extensive effect; each head containing a distinct allegation, and the allegations being as follows:

- I. That, during nearly twelve months, William S. Popay, while being a policeman, went about in a dress different from that of the police, and got acquainted with the petitioners as being not at all connected with the police.
- II. That, at the end of about a year, and sometime in the month of February last, he was discovered and detected by some of the petitioners, amongst whom was George Furzey (lately tried and acquitted at the Old Bailey), the man who first made the charge; and that Popay denied the fact, in the presence of five of the petitioners.
- III. That, very shortly after this his detection, he ceased to wear private clothes; that is to say, clothes such as are worn by persons in private life; that he now openly resumed the policeman's uniform, and that he was almost immediately promoted to be a clerk, and very soon after to be a deputy-inspector, or sergeant.
- IV. That, during the above-mentioned space of nearly a year, he became, and continued to be, a member of the National Political Union of the Working Classes; and that he attended their meetings accordingly.
- V. That he was enrolled in their lists, first under the name of *A. B.* and afterwards under the name of *Pearce*; and he gave as a reason for such fictitious enrolment, that, by the use of his own name in the lists, he might possibly give offence to his respectable connexions, amongst whom he mentioned Mr. Alderman Wilson.
- VI. That, the better to disguise his real calling, he pretended to get his living by miniature painting or drawing of landscapes; and that he carried a portfolio, or sometimes a bag, about with him, under that pretence.
- VII. That, he took a zealous part in all the proceedings of the Union, and that he walked arm-in-arm with one of the petitioners, in a procession to Copenhagen House, in the month of July, 1832, to

- celebrate the anniversary of the last French Revolution ; and that, to show his joy on account of the event, he was not behind the most zealous.
- VIII. That, sometime after the procession to Copenhagen House, he walked arm-in-arm in the procession to Hardy's funeral ; and that he stood upon a tomb-stone at the interment, and took notes of Mr. Thelwall's oration.
- IX. That he suggested to one of the petitioners, that it would be desirable to establish a shooting-gallery, and wanted to teach some of them the broad-sword exercise, and gave a lesson to one of them.
- X. That he subscribed towards a banner and music for the use of the Union, and went with the Union to Kennington-common, to petition against the flogging of soldiers.
- XI. That, in the month of August last, he went with one of the petitioners and other persons to visit a class of the Political Union at Richmond, when he paid out of his own pocket the whole of the expenses of the party for the day, making the division and settlement at night, though the day before he represented himself to one of the petitioners as so poor as not to have the means of getting food for his family.
- XII. That he used to take notes of speeches made at the meetings of the Union.
- XIII. That he used to urge the members of the Union to use stronger language than they did in their resolutions and other papers, which he sometimes altered with his own pen, in order to introduce such stronger language.
- XIV. That in his conversation with one of the petitioners in particular, he railed against the Government, damned the Ministers for villains, and said he would expel them from the earth.
- XV. That he constantly represented himself as in a state of great poverty and misery, and thereby got himself and his wife into the houses of some of the petitioners, and received food and drink and entertainment from them, representing himself at the same time as having been deprived of his bread by some persons in authority.
- XVI. That he was amongst the people at the Calthorpe-street Meeting, and was there seen and spoken to by one of the petitioners ; and that he was then dressed in private clothes.
- XVII. That the petitioners feel that they live amongst spies, seeking their lives.
- XVIII. That the petitioners are compelled to pay for the maintenance of those spies, under the pretence that they are employed for the protection of their property and their lives.

Par. 5. Your Committee having thus stated the allegations contained in the petition, would proceed, now, to lay before the House a summary of the evidence in support of each allegation, and also of that which was adduced on the other side ; but before they enter upon this summary, they have to observe that, to the full extent of their power, they granted to Popay every indulgence and advantage ; that a manuscript copy of the evidence of the petitioners was permitted to be furnished to the office of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, even before that evi-

dence was printed for the use of the members of the Committee, and that Popay himself had been informed of the nature of this evidence previous to his coming before the Committee; that the petitioners had given their evidence on the 5. and on the 8.; that Popay came before the Committee, for the first time, on the 10., and that it appears, from the following evidence given by him, on that day, that he had been with Commissioner Mayne on the 9., and had conversed with him, and had been questioned and cautioned by him relative to the inquiry before the Committee, and particularly as to the pistol, which had not been mentioned in the petition, and only in the evidence, a copy of which had been sent to the Secretary of State.

1704. *Since this petition has been presented to the House by Mr. Cobbett, have you had any conversation with Mr. M'Lean, your superintendant, with reference to the circumstances detailed in the petition, before to-day?*—I have repeatedly called on Mr. M'Lean, in order to induce the commissioners to take some active steps towards the redeeming of my character; I called on him when the letter appeared in the *True Sun*, for the commissioners to allow me to prosecute. I have called on Mr. M'Lean to know what was to be done. I drew out a string of questions, which I submitted to the commissioners last Monday week, begging that they might be submitted to you, and that you would put these questions to the witnesses here, to elucidate the truth. I think I have seen the commissioners three times. I was directed not to request an interview with the commissioners at this particular time, for fear it should be whispered that there was any collusion going forward.

1705. Did you leave those questions with the commissioners?—Yes.

1706. I am to understand, that you have had no conversation with Mr. M'Lean, with reference to the evidence you are now giving?—Not with respect to the evidence, decidedly not.

1707. Neither has he attempted, directly or indirectly, to influence you in the evidence you are giving?—Most clearly not.

1708. Have you seen the commissioners lately?—Yes.

1709. When?—I saw Mr. Mayne last night.

1710. What passed?—On the subject of my general defence respecting my character, whether I should send down to Yarmouth to bring up persons to come before this Committee to testify of my former conduct; that I was incapable of such conduct as I am charged with by the petition.

1711. Did you see Mr. Mayne at your own desire, or by his order, last night?—By his own order. I had repeatedly asked permission to see Mr. Mayne on the subject, that I might be better prepared for what was going forward.

1712. Tell us what Mr. Mayne said with reference to the petition, or any matter connected with it?—My application to see Mr. Mayne was, that I might adopt some plan to appear in the light I have formerly appeared in the eyes of the world.

1713. What passed between you and Mr. Mayne last night, as to the petition, and the evidence you are giving?—As to the evidence I am giving, nothing, not a word passed, only in the general way of directing me to keep my spirits up, and not suffer my nerves to be depressed, as I have been unfortunately much hurt during the time I have been so libelled, and not a word spoken in my defence. To appear before you and speak in the same way as I was doing to him; asking me the real state of the case; if I had told anything that was untrue as to the *story of the pistol*; advising me, if I had committed myself in any way, that I would tell him candidly and openly of it; assuring me that it was of no use disguising the matter.

Par. 6. On the 12. Popay came before the Committee again, when, as appears from the following, he had seen and read all the evidence.

1849. Have you seen the evidence given by the other witnesses?—I have.

1850. You have seen it all through?—I have read it all through carefully.

1851. Have you anything to suggest upon that, as to calling any of the parties or otherwise before the Committee?—I must beg that they, each and all of them, are called, if you please.

Par. 7. On this occasion Popay was asked whether he wished to call any witnesses, and he answered as follows :

1857. Do you wish to call any witnesses?—I do.

1859. Will you give in their names?—I beg you will allow me time for that purpose. I can produce witnesses that are of very essential consequence to this case.

1860. Do I understand that you could produce essential witnesses to this case, if you have a delay?—Yes, to the case generally.

1861. What delay do you ask for?—Could you give me a week.

1862. I presume that all the witnesses relating to the case, having any knowledge of the circumstances into which the Committee is inquiring, live within Walworth or Camberwell?—Yes, with the exception of those I would call to my own private character; all the rest are living within the neighbourhood.

1863. Can you tell us of any names at present that occur to you?—I have had communication with a gentleman who is, I believe, well-known to two of the gentlemen present, and he is of opinion that one of the persons who now impeach my character is deranged; I should wish to bring proof to that fact.

1864. What is the shortest time within which you could prepare yourself to give the list of witnesses; do you think by Tuesday?—The evidence is very voluminous. Many of the cases it would be very difficult for me to disprove, almost impossible to disprove; I want to look over them with care and caution; they are false, decidedly false.

1868. Do you presume that your friend will come forward for you voluntarily?—I have no friends; I have been living, unfortunately, among persons to whom I am a stranger; I must draw the facts of this case from the lips of my opponents.

1869. You are to call such persons as you think proper; and if they will not come voluntarily, you will give a list of their names, and they will be summoned.

Par. 8. Your Committee have here to state that, in order to give him an opportunity of bringing forward his witnesses, they resolved to adjourn from this day, Friday the 12. to Wednesday the 17., thus giving him five days for the purpose of determining as to who should be his witnesses; that he never did bring any witness, and never did apply to have any one summoned as a witness, from first to last; that, on this same Friday, the 12., he requested the Committee to permit him to have a barrister to cross-examine the witnesses who had come against him; that he was (after the Committee had consulted on the subject) informed by the chairman, that he would be allowed to have a barrister for that purpose; but that he never brought any barrister before the Committee.

Par. 9. Your Committee having thus given an account of these preliminary matters, now proceed to lay before the House that summary of the evidence, of which they have spoken in paragraph 5 of this their report, taking the allegations one by one, in the order in which they stand under paragraph 4, and stating the evidence in the manner described in paragraph 5.

ALLEGATION I.

Par. 10. This allegation is, as far as relates to Popay's wearing private clothes, and his getting acquainted with the petitioners by that means, asserted by all the nine of them who have been called, to be true; and this is also asserted by the seven other witnesses, named above, as having been brought by the petitioners to sustain their allegations. The fact is also acknowledged by Popay himself and by M'Lean, the superintendent of the division P, to which Popay belonged, thus :

1327. [To Popay.] Is your general order that you shall at all times appear out of doors in your uniform, except you have orders to the contrary?—I believe I have stated the very words used, that we shall at all times appear in our police uniform.

1328. But, if you have instructions to the contrary, you appear in other sort of clothes?—Yes.

1329. By other sort of clothes, do you mean plain clothes?—Yes, that is what I suppose is meant.

1330. A plain black or blue coat, or something of that sort?—Yes.

1331. Have you appeared in anything else but plain clothes, such as anything of disguise, as a sailor's dress, or a frock, or anything of that sort?—I certainly never did; nor did I ever see any one so disguised since I belonged to the force.

1332. You have had on a plain dress, as any other individual would wear?—Yes, exactly so.

1333. When did you begin to wear a different dress from the police dress?—After I had been removed into the Walworth detachment; I think it was but a few days, when I received directions to go to a certain meeting in private clothes.

1334. Who did you receive those directions from?—Mr. M'Lean, the superintendent of the division.

1098. [To M'Lean]. Have you ever appointed Popay to discharge his duty in plain clothes?—I have.

1099. For what purposes?—First, I have employed him to attend Political Unions, and to look after characters suspected of intent to commit felony.

Par. 11. With regard to that part of this allegation which relates to the length of time, during which Popay was thus employed, M'Lean says (question 1068) that he entered the police in September, 1831; that he at first was on duty at Streatham and Brixton (1074); that he was removed to the East-lane station in April 1832 (1076); that he was promoted to be sergeant in March 1833; and all the petitioners and other witnesses, in their evidence, make the period of his being seen in plain clothes to extend over nine or ten months, beginning with the spring of 1832.

ALLEGATION II.

Par. 12. This allegation, which is made and supported by the evidence of James Brown (114 to 126, inclusive), by that of F. B. Young (561 and 566 to 569, inclusive), and by John Simpson (722); and is acknowledged to be true by Popay himself in the following extract from his evidence:

1375. How long did you continue to visit with your wife at Young's?—Up to the time at which I was clerk in Mr. M'Lean's office.

1376. Did George Furzey, Simpson, and Thomas Dean, come and find you there on Sunday night, and accuse you of being a policeman?—They did.

1377. What did you say in answer to that?—I felt it necessary to suppress the knowledge of the fact, from knowing the persons whom I was with.

1378. How did you suppress a knowledge of the fact?—I cannot say that it was by positively denying it. It was by a stratagem: a few days before, Simpson and myself had had some warm words. I was not charged with being a policeman; but Thomas Dean asserted that he had some knowledge of me, having been a policeman at the same time that I was. In answer to it, I turned to Simpson, and charged him with having raised the report merely to injure me.

1379. Did you not go further; what else did you say; did you still continue to deny being a policeman?—I did.

1380. And you always associated with them as being an indifferent person, not connected with the police?—As an indifferent person and not connected with the police.

ALLEGATION III.

Par. 13. By examining the dates, the Committee find that Popay began to wear the uniform clothes again, and that he was promoted to be a sergeant almost immediately. These facts appear in the following extracts from his evidence:

1393. I am asking you when you began to wear again the same clothes you wear now, after having left off those clothes?—At the time of becoming clerk in Mr. M'Lean's office.

1394. When was that?—The 3. of March.

1395. How long was that after Furzey charged you with being a policeman?—Very near the same time.

1396. How long after?—I really cannot tell; but there could be but a very few days. I was in Mr. M'Lean's office assisting to make up the books, as the clerk was about leaving, having obtained a situation in the Brazils; on his embarking I was appointed clerk in his stead: the few days that I was there setting the accounts square was the time when I was seen in Mr. M'Lean's office, and this conversation took place between Furzey and Simpson.

1397. It was just after that that you resumed the dress you now wear?—Just so.

1314. What rank are you in now?—A sergeant.

1315. You were in the first place a private?—I was.

1316. When did you cease to be a private, and become something else?—I think in the month of March last.

1317. Is not every man who enters the police establishment police clerk or private?—I believe they are.

1318. Is there any rank between private and that of sergeant?—None.

1319. What is the difference in the pay?—The pay of a private is 19s.; the full pay of a sergeant is 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

Par. 14. Thus, then, it appears from Popay's own evidence, that he was detected, and that he was charged by Furzey and others, late in the month of February; that he then began to wear the uniform clothes; and that he was thereupon promoted so as to receive 1*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, instead of the 19*s.* a week which he had received before.

ALLEGATION IV.

Par. 15. It appeared to your Committee to be of the greatest possible importance to ascertain, beyond all doubt, the truth or falsehood of this allegation; and, therefore, they spared no pains to come at a certainty as to the fact. And here they deem it necessary to describe to the House the constitution and arrangements of this Political Union of the Working Classes. It appears, as well from the written reports delivered in by Popay to M'Lean, and by him delivered to the Commissioners, as from the evidence of the petitioners themselves, that this constitution and these arrangements are as follow: 1. That the title of the Association is, "The National Political Union of the Working Classes;" 2nd. That the Central Committee or body of managers, meet at a place in Theobald's-road; 3rd. That the body, or the whole of the members of the Association, divide themselves into classes, after the manner of the Wesleyan Methodists; 4th. That each class has, after the manner of those Methodists, what is called a "leader," who collects the contributions, pays the expenses, and manages the business of the class; 5th. That the class-meetings are confined to the members of the Union, exclusively; but, two or more classes very frequently meet at some place, and then the meetings are called public meetings; and to these meetings any person whatever might be admitted. These divisions and these customs of the Union are necessary to be kept in view, in order clearly to understand the evidence relative to the allegation, to which the Committee is now endeavouring to draw the attention of the House, and which alleges, that Popay became, and continued to be, a member of this Union, during the time before specified.

Par. 16. The whole of the petitioning witnesses asserted, most distinctly, that Popay was a member of the Union; that he attended the

meetings with more regularity than almost any other member; and that he was a member of great activity and usefulness. Popay, on his part, has positively denied this fact, as in the following manner:

1344. Were you instructed to go to political union meetings?—I was.

1345. Were you instructed to get to be a member of them?—Certainly not; but I had a positive order to the contrary.

1346. Were you ever a member of one of them?—Never, never, Sir.

1347. Did you ever make any motion, or amend any resolution, or anything of that sort at these meetings?—Certainly never. The resolutions which are usually discussed at those meetings I had attended, had been previously drawn out and written by some person in the committee or council of the Union. They are then read from the chair, and discussed by the persons present at the meeting, those who belong to the class in the neighbourhood. There are itinerant speakers, men whose names are published, and who attend there for the purpose. I never, during any meeting at which I was present, to the best of my knowledge, saw a resolution altered or amended.

1348. Did you ever speak at any of these meetings?—Certainly not; certainly not.

1349. You were neither a member, nor spoke there?—Certainly not.

Par. 17. Being asked whether he ever saw any person but himself at their class-meeting; any persons who did not belong to the Union, he answered, "It is difficult to say; I cannot name any of them." Then being asked, whether any one not a member could attend those class-meetings, he answered: "The meetings are always open."

Par. 18. Your Committee think it necessary, this evidence being so positive on both sides, to state to the House that, in a report of Popay, made to M'Lean, indorsed by Commissioner Mayne, and dated 30. July, 1832, he tells M'LEAN, that "*all their class-meetings are strictly private.*"

Par. 19. This passage of his reports admitting of an interpretation which would confine it to the thirty-fourth class, it may not be wholly unnecessary to take an extract from his report of the 20. August, in which he gives a general description of the practice of the classes, and which is the more worthy of the attention of the House, from its having been shown to Lord Melbourne, and from his lordship having written in pencil on the back of it (as was proved to your Committee by Mr. Phillips, the Under Secretary of State), "This information is not unimportant, and should not be lost sight of." In the passage here alluded to, POPAY gives a sort of general description of the proceedings in the classes, which description is in perfect correspondence with the report before-mentioned relative to the thirty-fourth class.

Par. 20. To this may be added, that of his written reports, eleven relate to the proceedings in class-meetings. But, after long endeavours to come at positive proof of his having been a member, over and above that proof which consisted of the repeated assertions of all the nine petitioning witnesses, Simpson, during his cross-examination by Popay, produced, as an instance of his perfect membership, the circumstance of his having on one occasion, actually been chairman of a class-meeting. This circumstance, if established in truth, appeared conclusive; and, therefore, the Committee, as far as related to this important circumstance of membership, now proceeded to investigate that point. Popay most positively denied the fact, which was insisted on by Simpson with equal positiveness; when Shem Shelley, one of the petitioners, was called in, and when the examination, of which the following is an extract, took place:

2833. Upon any occasion, when you have been at meetings of political unions along with Popay, have you seen him in the chair as chairman?—Yes.

2834. Where was it?—At the Red Cap, and Duke of York too.

2835. When did you see him in the chair at the Red Cap?—I do not know the night it was exactly.

2836. As nearly as you can recollect?—I do not know the night that it was, but it can be ascertained; he has been appointed chairman.

2837. Was there a motion made that he should take the chair in the usual way?—Yes, by Mr. Simpson.

2838. Was the motion seconded?—Yes; I do not know who it was by: he took the chair.

2839. You are sure Mr. Simpson moved he should take the chair?—Yes; and every one of that opinion were to hold up their hands.

2840. Mr. Simpson said that?—Yes.

2841. Do you know the subject discussed?—No, I do not.

2842. Do you recollect what he said?—No; but I am sensible, sure of it; I can take my oath of it, and I dare say other people can swear it.

2843. Did he sign any of the resolutions?—Yes; he has drawn them up and signed them.

2868. Did you ever know any person take the chair who was not a member of the Union?—Certainly not.

2869. Would any person be allowed to take the chair at the meeting of a class, or at a public meeting, who was not a member?—No, certainly not; it was not allowed, except he was a member of the Union, as I have always understood.

Par. 21. After this, Shelley was cross-examined further by the Committee and by Popay; and Popay was asked by the Committee,

[Committee].—Do you deny that you ever took the chair?

[Popay].—Most decidedly.

[Committee].—Are you prepared to say that what these persons have said is untrue?

[Popay].—Yes.

[Committee].—You mean to say, that you did not take the chair at any of the class-meetings, or the public meetings?

[Popay].—Yes.

[Committee].—You wish to be understood that you stake your character upon that point?

[Popay].—Yes; at the meetings of the National Political Union, either at class or general meetings, I never attempted to take the chair; and that I have been there oftentimes, perhaps a score of times, when Mr. Simpson has proposed I should take the chair, and I have always declined doing so.

Par. 22. Hereupon, Michael M^rHenry was called in, and underwent the following examination:

2875. When you have been present at the political unions and Popay has been there, have you seen him take the chair?—Yes, and I have documents in my pocket to prove it; I was elected a committee-man on the same night, the 4th of September. [The witness delivered in a book.]

2876. What is that document?—The minutes of the proceedings, and it shows who was in the chair.

2877. Does it state that Popay was in the chair?—Yes, and it states every other chairman up to the time at which the book ends.

2878. How came it to be in your custody?—I went to our secretary and got it.

2879. Who is he?—The man at the Duke of York; he was secretary then.

2880. What is his name?—Parr.

2881. In whose handwriting is that?—Parr's; he was secretary at the time.

2882. Was it made at the time?—Yes, that very night.

2883. Have you any doubt it was made at that time?—No doubt.

2884. You are sure that Parr would certify that it was made within two or three days?—On that very night.

2885. Do you speak from recollection?—Yes, and Popay knows it; and Mr. Parker, the man that I work for, and me, were elected that very night.

2886. You recollect seeing the writing at that very time?—Yes, I recollect the book and some papers.

2887. What was the subject for discussion that night?—It always appeared in the "Poor Man's Guardian" that comes out on Sunday; Church Property and things of that kind. The subject was never entered in the book, which you can see from the beginning.

2888. Was any notice of motion given on that evening?—I cannot say as to that.

2889. You were chosen committee-man that same evening?—Yes, me and Parker, the master-tailor I work for; I was his man, and we both went into the meeting at the same time and place, and him and me were chosen to attend the committee at Theobald's-road to represent our class, No. 46.

2890. This was a class-meeting?—Yes, the 46th class.

2891. Was it a very full meeting?—Yes, there were more than twenty on this night.

2892. When you say that Popay was in the chair, do you mean that man opposite you?—Yes; there are two men I can bring forward to prove it, Mr. Wilkins of No. 2 in the Clapham-road, smith and farrier, and Mr. Parker of Cold Harbour-lane.

2893. Did you see Parr writes these minutes?—Yes, I sat next to him.

2894. Did he write the proceedings of each evening on the evening that they occurred?—Yes, just so.

2895. Were they signed by any person?—No, no more than by himself.

2896. Were they signed by himself?—I do not know that he signed his name to them, unless money was collected and handed over, and then he signed his name to it.

2897. Did he sign his name to these minutes?—That I cannot say.

2898. It was not usual for the chairman to be called upon at the end of the proceedings to sign the minutes?—No.

2899. This is the minute: "4th Sept. 1832, Mr. Popay in the chair; the proceedings of the preceding meeting are read and confirmed, when the subject for discussion, as appeared in the 'Poor Man's Guardian,' was put and carried unanimously; Mr. M'Henry and Mr. Parker were nominated as committee-men to the 46th class; Mr. Alchin gave notice that on Tuesday fortnight he should move that the committee sit three months instead of one month, one-half to go out in rotation, eligible to be re-elected." What was this meeting?—The Political Union.

2900. A class-meeting or an open meeting?—A class-meeting.

Par. 23. M'Henry was afterwards questioned by the Committee as follows, and gave the following answers:

2921. Have you any doubt whatever, that on the night you were admitted a member you saw this person acting as chairman?—I have no doubt that I saw him myself, and what made me go and look after this document is, that the police have got a sort of gazette, which they call the "Police Gazette," and through that they cast every slur upon our character that they can, and I thought it right to get this document.

2922. You deliberately affirm that you were present and saw Popay in the chair?—Yes, I do, candidly and honestly.

2923. Is that Parr's handwriting?—Yes, it is.

2924. You say Mr. Parker was present?—Yes, he was.

Par. 24. There now remained Parr and Parker to be called with regard to this point, Popay having denied the authenticity of the book produced by M'Henry. On the 22nd they came, and Parr was examined first. After having told the Committee that he did not now belong to the Union, but that he had belonged to it until his wife died, in the fall of the year, he was asked and answered as follows:

2930. Did you officiate as secretary?—Yes, we were forming a fund of benevolence for the purpose of any little money that might be wanted for any little emergency, and I kept the account of it a long while, till Mr. Alchin took it.

2931. Did you officiate as secretary?—Yes.

2932. And took down minutes of the meeting?—Yes.

2933. What meeting was this?—It was the meeting of the Political Union; more than one class met; mine was the forty-sixth class; the ninety-first class used to meet there.

2934. Just look at this (handing to the witness the book which had been produced on Friday) book.—Yes, I recollect this.

2935. Is that your handwriting?—Yes.

Par. 25. Having given answers relative to other meetings recorded in the book, his evidence proceeded thus :

2945. What is the date of the next entry?—September 4, 1832, Mr. Popay in the chair; I proposed him to the chair.

2946. Did you make that minute?—It is my handwriting.

2947. Did you make it after the proceedings of the day were over?—I made it at the time, to the best of my recollection.

2948. Did you make that last entry?—Yes; Mr. Fox was in the chair.

2949. You were not appointed secretary at all the meetings?—No; I did it of my own free-will; I had nothing for it, and I undertook to do it while they were forming this fund.

2950. What was the object of this meeting when Popay was in the chair?—It would appear in the *Poor Man's Guardian*.

Par. 26. After this, Mr. Parr was asked whether the subject of discussion for the evening was political or not, and whether, if the *Poor Man's Guardian* were put into his hand, he could point out the subject that was discussed that evening. Having looked at the *Guardian*, and having had read to him the following article, he said, "That he had no doubt but that was the subject." His evidence relating to this matter was as follows :

2962. The entry is this: "That this Union, feeling at this important time the necessity of expressing their opinions of the conduct of the present administration, as compared with the former, do hereby call upon the people of this country to beware of pledging themselves to support any candidate during the ensuing elections, who may belong to the treacherous, cowardly, and malignant Whigs, or the no less tyrannical Tory faction. And that we further call upon the people to exert all their influence, to secure the return of all candidates, who are willing to carry into effect the principles of the National Union of the Working Classes, as set forth in their objects and laws."—I have no doubt that was the subject.

2963. You think that was the subject?—Yes.

2964. It was discussed when Popay was in the chair?—Yes.

2965. Do you know whether it was carried in the affirmative or negative?—It was carried unanimously.

2966. Are you in work now?—No; I am doing nothing at present.

2967. You have left the Union?—I withdrew from it after the death of my wife; I go sometimes to some of the meetings.

2968. Did you meet Popay at the class-meetings on more than one occasion?—Several.

Par. 27. After this there came Mr. Parker, Mr. Hawkins (the landlord of the Duke of York), Mr. Hawkins's brother, who lived at the Duke of York and served there as an assistant, and John B. Young, all of whom stated that they had seen him in the chair, acting as chairman. As John B. Young was the last amongst those who gave evidence relative to Popay being in the chair, that evidence is here cited in conclusion of the statements relative to this fourth allegation, first giving insertion to the evidence of Popay himself with regard to the character of Young, with whom of all the petitioners and witnesses Popay was most intimate, and at whose house he and his wife and children most frequently visited.

1525. Is that J. Young or F. Young?—F. Young lived with his brother.

1526. Were these men of bad character?—Most decidedly not. I had, and have now to this very hour, although we unfortunately differ as we do, a very high opinion of F. B. Young.

1527. You believe them to be persons of great worth and integrity?—I believe them to be very honest men.

Par. 28. The following is the evidence of J. B. Young :—

3251. You knew him (Popay) a considerable time?—Yes.

3252. Was he ever at your house?—Very frequently.

3253. And his wife?—Yes, and children.

3254. Did they frequently eat and drink there?—Yes.

3255. Did you know him very well?—We were very intimate; particularly so; we always considered him a friend.

3256. Was he a member of the Political Union?—I have always considered him as such; he used to attend all the Union meetings.

3257. Did you ever see him take an active part there?—Yes, very; I always considered him a very active member.

3258. Did you ever see him in the chair?—I have frequently seen him in the chair; I cannot say whether it was the Union nights, but I have seen him in the chair.

3259. At these meetings, is any body allowed to enter but the members of the Union?—At the weekly meetings they are; at the public meetings any one is allowed to enter.

3260. Did you ever see him at any of those meetings, when none but members are allowed to enter?—Yes, I did.

3261. Very frequently?—Yes, very frequently.

ALLEGATION V.

Par. 29. In support of this allegation, the petitioner, Simpson, who was the class-leader of the class to which he asserted Popay belonged, produced one paper, containing a list of the names of members, and an account of the money paid by them; there was the name "A. B." with the sum placed against it; and, in another paper (both papers being manifestly written long ago) there appeared the name of "Pearce." The authenticity of these papers was denied by Popay, and Simpson did not pretend that Popay had ever written in them in his own hand. It appears, that each member of the Union received a card from his class-leader, as a sort of passport for admission to the Union upon all occasions; and, that these cards were taken out afresh every quarter of a year. Simpson declared that he had furnished Popay with suitable cards, and received payment from him for the cards. Popay acknowledged that he had received cards from Simpson; but said that he got them *as specimens to be shown by him to other persons*; but this was positively denied by Simpson, who was corroborated by James Brown, who had, upon one of these occasions (he being a class-leader of another class), lent Simpson a card to give to Popay. By referring to questions 163, 632, 827, 2513 of the minutes of evidence, the House can have no doubt upon this point. Popay being questioned with regard to the friendship of Mr. Alderman Wilson, answered as follows:

1307. Have you a daughter going to live with Alderman Wilson?—The eldest went to live with Alderman Wilson till some short time since.

1308. How did you get acquainted there?—During the time she was living at Streatham, Mrs. Popay worked at her needle in the ornamental way, for some ladies at Streatham, who took some considerable notice of her.

1309. You considered Alderman Wilson as a friend, did you?—Most decidedly so.

Par. 30. This acknowledgment of the mention of Alderman Wilson, which was confirmed by the positive assertion of so many witnesses, and which, on that account, was absolutely undeniable, was a strong proof of the truth of this allegation; because, without the motives imputed to him, or some similar motive, your Committee can perceive no reason whatever for Popay's mentioning this circumstance relative to Mr. Alderman Wilson, a circumstance which these petitioners could, in all human probability, never have learned, except from Popay himself.

ALLEGATION VI.

Par. 31. This allegation is supported by the most positive assertion of James Brown, James Price, John Simpson, and, more particularly, by Mr. Sturges. By referring to questions 14, 158, 372, 3356, 3389, of the minutes of evidence, the House will perceive abundant proof of this allegation; but, indeed, the fact was confessed by Popay himself in the following terms:

1851. Have you any thing to suggest upon that, as to calling any of the parties or otherwise before the Committee?—There is not only one question or answer, but a whole line of questions, which, although they are answered truly, I believe leave a different impression on the mind of the Committee than I wish they should arrive at. It is those questions regarding my being in the capacity of a drawing-master. It is the impression on the mind of the Committee that I assumed that dress for the exclusive purpose of imposing on the Union. I judge so from the other evidence. To me it does appear to be of very material importance. I beg leave to set myself right in the eyes of the Committee: after I had attended many of the Union meetings, I became acquainted with Mr. Sturges, of the Canberwell New-road, as I before stated. He asked me to his house, and introduced me to his wife; and I felt that, in my then circumstances, it would be very desirable indeed that I should introduce Mrs. Popay, who was in a very weak state of health and mind. I thought I could not with propriety do it, unless I assumed some active habits; therefore, that was the first origin of my carrying the portfolio, in order that I might appear to him to have some rational occupation.

1852. That was done with an intention to deceive?—It was done decidedly as I have stated. I had one of two alternatives; either of candidly and openly confessing to Mr. Sturges who and what I was as connected with the police, or that I might have some other means of keeping myself. I was fearful it might be impressed on the Committee, that I assumed this dress for the purpose of deceiving the Union; had it not been for the purpose of introducing Mrs. Popay, I never should have taken those steps.

1853. Did you hesitate to communicate to Mr. Sturges, that you were a member of the police-establishment, under the idea that, if he was aware of your being in that situation, he would consider you were not holding a sufficient rank in life for you to have been acquainted with Mrs. Sturges?—He would have looked on me as holding a situation such as he would not have liked to have had any sort of intercourse with.

1854. He being a member of the Political Union himself at that time?—He being a member of the Union at that time.

ALLEGATION VII.

Par. 32. By every one of the witnesses, not only by the petitioners, but by Mr. M'Henry, the two Messrs. Hawkins, Messrs. Parr, Sturges, Parker, and Fortzer, some of them not now belonging to the Unions, and one of them never having belonged to any Union, this allegation is, all through, as to Popay's general zeal, sustained by the most positive assertions. With regard to the specific fact of his walking arm-in-arm in the procession to Copenhagen House, James Brown and James Price are both

positive, he having had Brown by the arm. Popay himself speaks of this in the following manner :

1557. Did you go to the meeting at Copenhagen House?—I did.

1558. Did you walk arm-in-arm with James Brown?—Some part of the way I think it is very likely I did. I believe I did.

1559. Did you so walk arm-in-arm past Scotland-yard?—No.

1560. Where did you walk at that period of it?—I believe on the foot-way; it was only after we crossed the road that I jostled in with the procession.

1561. Brown was a violent young man, too?—Brown was warm in his politics and in his mode of expressing himself.

1562. You did not think he was too warm for you to walk arm-in-arm with?—I believe all the written documents that have ever fallen from my hand have described Brown as a man harmless in his way, for want, if I may so term it, of ability, although he was of great republican principles.

Par. 33. At a subsequent examination, he acknowledged that he danced with Simpson's wife a part of the evening at Copenhagen House; and the House will observe, that this is that same John Simpson with whom he, in his written reports, says he went to the Grand Committee at Theobald's-road, and from whom he, in the same written reports, says he obtained a knowledge relative to the female dirks, and other matters of that kind. The House will not fail to observe, that this was John Simpson, the class-leader, from whom he obtained the cards above-mentioned, and with whose family he denies an intimacy, though, in the following manner, he acknowledges having danced with Simpson's wife at the celebration of the anniversary of the last French Revolution.

3684. How often were you at Copenhagen House?—Once in my life.

3685. That is the meeting at which you danced with Simpson's wife?—Yes.

ALLEGATION VIII.

Par. 34 This allegation is supported by the testimony of Collins and Frederick B. Young, as will be seen by reference to questions 596, 993, 1000, of the minutes of evidence; and it is spoken of by Popay himself in the following manner :

1539. You did not walk arm-in-arm with Collins to Hardy's funeral?—No.

1540. You are quite positive of that?—I am confident that I did not take him by the arm to walk with him: whether in the bustle he took hold of my arm, I really cannot positively say.

1541. It is very particular. Endeavour to recollect yourself: Had you Collins by the arm or not, in the procession walking to Hardy's funeral, in any part of the town?—To the very best of my recollection, I had not.

1542. Were you with him in the procession?—I do not remember him in the procession. I remember F. B. Young; that he had hold of my arm is very likely. We three left the procession at Newgate-street, and went off to Buu-hill-fields.

1543. Then Collins did not speak to you, as you were in the procession; you cannot recollect his being near to you?—He did not speak to me in the procession; after we left the procession, we conversed together as we went along.

1544. You were by the side of him then?—We three left the procession: Collins, F. B. Young, and myself.

1545. When you got to the place of interment, did you stand on a tomb-stone and take notes?—I did.

1547. Did you go after the funeral to a public-house with Collins?—I did, and with F. B. Young.

Par. 35. The House will not fail to observe, that the Collins here

spoken of is that same Collins whom Popay describes as a very violent young man ; as a man always going armed to public meetings.

ALLEGATION IX.

Par. 36. This allegation is supported by the evidence of Frederick B. Young, of James Brown, and of Collins, as far as relates to the proposition relative to a shooting-gallery ; and by Brown and Frederick B. Young, relative to the broad-sword exercise. Popay denied that this proposition about the shooting-gallery had any thing political in it ; and he asserted that it was a lesson on the single-stick, and not on the broad-sword, that he gave to Frederick B. Young, relative to which matters, his statement was as follows :

1604. Do you remember James Brown and you walking together towards Paddington, and your pointing him out a shooting-gallery there ?—Yes.

1605. Did you say you should like to establish one at Walworth ?—No. I will explain what is meant by the shooting-gallery. The one that struck our view was the shooting-gallery used for archery. I stated, that when I lived at Harlston, there were large premises that had formerly belonged to a gentleman of great note, which house had been taken down, and the pleasure-grounds let out, and that archery there was one of our favourite sports. I think I said I had, once or twice, been in the gallery and shot there.

1606. You did not express a wish to have one at Walworth ?—I knew that Walworth was a place where, from the lowness of the neighbourhood, had I been at liberty to open a shooting gallery there, it would not have answered.

1607. Did you ever give a lesson on the broad-sword exercise ?—No ; I have played at single-stick with Frederick Burton Young on one occasion ; I have too good an opinion of him to suppose that he would charge me with the fact of teaching the broad sword ; we did play one day for a few minutes at single-stick.

1608. Was it proposed by you to play, or by him ?—I believe that I had stated on some former occasion that I could play at single-stick, and that begat a wish on his part to play with me, and on one occasion we did.

1609. Did Young understand it at all ?—No.

1610. Then you broke his head, I suppose ?—No, I played with him as a brother would with a brother.

Par. 37. But, these questions, relative to arming and learning the use of arms brought out, incidentally, new facts. Woodford, Shelley, and Collins, asserted that Popay proposed and subscribed towards a depôt of arms ; that they subscribed sixpence each, and that Furzey subscribed half-a crown ; but, that, thinking of it the next day and coming to the resolution that it was not a proper thing, they told Simpson, the class-leader, who had the money, to apply the money towards paying for a banner, which was, at that time, prepared for the use of the Union. Simpson says, that he was not present when the proposition was made, but that the subscribers told him that Popay made the proposition, he, Simpson, having spoken of it as a wrong thing ; but Simpson added, that he heard Popay speak in favour of the proposition. It came out also from the evidence of the petitioners, that a pistol had been produced by the chairman at one of the meetings, and that Popay eagerly took hold of the pistol, would have purchased it if he had had change, and recommended to the members to provide themselves with pistols of the same sort. This fact, as well as the fact of the depôt of arms, was denied by Popay, in regard to the arms, positively denied altogether, and with regard to the pistol, denied as far as related to the recommendation to members. On this subject your Committee have to add, that they find in the written

report of Popay of 11. October, 1832, an account of this pistol, and a representation of the views of the Union with regard to it, to which report is attached an original card containing the precise address of Mr. Yearly, the chairman, who produced the pistol at the meeting. It also came out, that Popay offered to subscribe five shillings towards a prize of five pounds which had been offered in the *Poor Man's Guardian* for the best shooter in the Union. This came out on the cross-examination of Price, who, at the same time stated, that Popay suggested to him that his (Price's) garden would be a good place to put up a target for learning to shoot. James Brown related that, being at Popay's house, he showed him some sword-sticks, and, pointing to them, significantly asked Brown whether they would not be good things. Mr. Sturges in his evidence stated to the Committee as follows :

3417. Have you had any reason since to know that his stories of distress were feigned?—Yes, I do think so now; I find he has been introducing himself into my family for espionage, and there is one circumstance which I consider very improper; I exceedingly regret that any man should introduce himself into my house as an armed spy; he had a sword-stick with him upon one occasion; upon looking at it, I observed it opened; he said yes, and he drew it out and showed me it was a sword-stick.

3418. Did he give you any reason for having it in his possession?—Not any.

Par. 38. Popay denied the allegations as to the five pound prize, and as to the target; but acknowledged that he had had sword-sticks; and put no question to Mr. Sturges when he gave the evidence just cited. Upon this subject of arming and using arms, the Committee refer to the questions 40, 57, 78, 366, 603, 652, 682, 690, 695, 731, 781, 860, 875, 901, 918, 1004, 1994, 2007, 3298. But, with regard to this matter of arms and of arming, your Committee think that they should not discharge their duty to the House, if they did not here refer the House to the whole of Popay's written report of the 20. July (No. 31).

Par. 39. This report having been shown to Popay, he acknowledged that it was his handwriting. Being asked what he did with the knife here mentioned, he said that he had given it to M'Lean. M'Lean being asked what he had done with it, he said that he had carried it to Scotland-yard. Price being asked about the knife, positively denied that he had ever showed a knife to Popay of any description whatever, while he acknowledged that he had a pistol and a sword, and that he kept them for the purpose of defending his house and asserting his political rights. Your Committee cannot refrain from observing here, that this was that same James Price who went with his wife along with Popay, as mentioned in Allegation XI., on a friendly and family party to Richmond, in the month of August succeeding this 20. July.

Par. 40. Another most interesting matter connected with the arming came out before the Committee, from an examination of written reports of Popay. In his report of the 23. of August, your Committee find that he represents that, in a desultory conversation with Price, Simpson, and Matthews, he learned that an arming was intended, and that arms were to be purchased at half-price, in Middle-row, Holborn. This report is indorsed as having been shown to Lord Melbourne, and there is a memorandum that his Lordship caused a gun to be purchased in Holborn. This story, which engaged the attention of the Home-Office, requires a statement from the evidence of Simpson and Collins, as follows :

691. Did he advise you to go and look at a pair of pistols?—He did; coming

once from Theobald's-road Institution from a meeting of the Union, somewhere near Gray's Inn Lane, he said to me, "I have been to look at a pair of pistols to-day; the price is 36s., and, if you are a judge of these things, having been in the navy, and travelled a good deal, I should wish you to go and look at them, pass your opinion on them, and purchase them for me." I was astonished for two or three minutes, and I then recollected other circumstances that did not altogether please me. I said "No, it is better you should look at these things yourself." He said, I might get them cheaper. I told him if he wished to go to the most economical place, that I understood there was a depot in Holborn at which they sold second-hand arms.

Par. 41. The evidence of Collins is to the same effect, as the following specimen will convince the House :

1003. Did you go with Simpson and Popay to Theobald's-road?—I met them on one occasion, going to Theobald's-road.

1004. Did you converse about arms at that time?—They were conversing when I met them. I overheard Popay say to Simpson that he had seen something which he thought would suit him; that there was a pair that was 36s., and as he was a judge of them himself, he would like him to look at them.

1005. A pair of pistols, you mean?—He said "a pair;" I suppose he meant pistols.

1006. Did you understand, that Popay was about to arm himself?—I considered that was his motive for asking Simpson to look at them.

1007. What do you suppose he meant by arming and the use of arming himself?—If I am to speak my mind honestly, from conversations that had taken place at various times, we considered that we were oppressed, and kept down by force of arms, and that it was necessary to protect ourselves against such attacks as had been made on the people at Clitheroe and various other places.

1008. Was that your opinion or the opinion of Popay?—That was my opinion, from his conversation, that it was necessary to have them, as I heard him express similar sentiments.

1009. From his conversation you gathered that he thought it was necessary for you to have arms to protect yourselves?—That was my opinion.

Par. 42. The Committee have to point out that Simpson and Collins could not by any possibility have known anything about the Holborn affair, as stated to Lord Melbourne, because they gave this evidence on the 8., and the reports of Popay were not delivered into the Committee until the 10.

ALLEGATION X.

Par. 43. This allegation is asserted to be true by Simpson, Brown, and others. Popay himself acknowledges that he has thrown money into a hat, when it has been going round, for purposes similar to those mentioned in the first part of this allegation. He also acknowledges that he was at Kennington-common on the occasion here mentioned, and that he was in the van; and M'Lean acknowledges that he saw him there.

ALLEGATION XI.

Par. 44. This allegation was not denied by Popay, except that he said there was no meeting of the Union at Richmond, which was explained by Brown, F. B. Young, and Price, to have arisen from a mistake on the part of their friends at Richmond: except also, as far as this allegation relates to his having described himself as so poor as not to have the means of getting food for his family. The rest of the allegation he acknowledges to be true, and describes the party as a friendly and family party, though consisting, as the House will observe, partly of Brown and of Price, whom he describes in his evidence as well as in his written reports, as violent men, men entertaining republican principles, and Price as the man who gave

him the desperate weapon, the knife, which he thought it to be his duty to carry to M'Lean, and which M'Lean thought it his duty to carry to the Commissioners. This family and friendly party having taken place, in two or three weeks after this report relative to the desperate knife was made.

ALLEGATION XII.

Par. 45. All the petitioners and all the witnesses they brought asserted the truth of this; but the Committee found all other proof on the subject unnecessary, when on the 10th, the Commissioners delivered in forty-nine reports, written in Popay's own hand, several of which reports contained an account of what took place in the class meetings and other meetings of the Union.

ALLEGATION XIII.

Par. 46. This allegation is maintained by Brown, by Simpson, by Shelley, by George Hawkins, by F. B. Young, and by several other witnesses; and Simpson states positively that he drew up a resolution for him, condemning the conduct of the metropolitan police; an extract from his evidence is in the following words:—

699. Did he ever advise you to go to Peckham and set up a Union there?—The last time he was in my company was in the Albany-road, where the class met on the Monday night. He said, "Friend Simpson, I want my card;" as I was delivering the cards to the new members, he said, "I want my card." "Well," said I, "what name?" Now I began to look around me; he said, "Pearce;" I said, "Am I to put down Pearce; I must be answerable for this card?" It was agreed, and he gave me twopence. "Now," said he, "Simpson, you are doing no good in this place; you had better go down to Peckham" (Peckham I knew was particularly obnoxious to the police); "go down there, and I will come to your elbow and assist you on all occasions." I thought that he considered the neighbourhood too respectable, and that there were not many of the working classes. I told him I should not move; that it was a very comfortable room, and the place was very respectable. He begged me to go down into Peckham, where he would assist me, and said we should do some good in Peckham.

Par. 47. Simpson being asked whether Popay had not consented to draw up a resolution to be proposed at a meeting of the Union, condemnatory of the police, he answered as follows:

704. What did Popay say?—He said, "I will draw it up for you; you call at my house;" I called for it and said, "I am going up to the Committee, I will propose it to-night." After some time, he drew it up and I took it to the Committee, but it was not brought forward that night, as there was more important business.

705. Did he draw up the resolution?—He drew it up.

706. What was the tenor of the resolution?—It gave a vote of thanks for the good conduct of the city authorities in trying to outvie and assist us in keeping order and peace in the city, to show the difference between the two parties.

707. Did the language express it?—I cannot call to mind the words.

708. Did the resolution find fault with the metropolitan police?—It found fault with them, and praised the opposite party.

709. Do you mean to say, that Popay wrote out a resolution condemnatory of the police?—He wrote out this motion that I was to lay before the Committee and move.

710. With his own hand?—With his own hand.

711. Did you see him write it?—I did, in the presence of his wife.

Par. 48 Frederick Young being asked what he knew respecting

Popay's language, and the advice he gave at the Union meetings, answered as follows :

552. Can you remember that he made use of any expressions, either approving or abusing the Government?—He used generally to coincide with the speaker, but I cannot recollect any particular expression. I recollect his taking part in a meeting that was held at the Champion, when he suggested an amendment. It was called a "Meeting of the Borough and Lambeth Election Association."

553. Was it an Election meeting?—Yes, it was; a proposition was made to publish a list of all those members who voted in favour of Mr. Hawes. It was published to know friends from enemies. It was considered that the proposition was not strong enough, and I believe he suggested from our "*most determined and inveterate enemies.*"

Par. 49. John B. Young states that he (Popay) drew up a report to the Committee for the purpose of raising money to retrieve the pecuniary affairs of the Union, and your Committee find one of his written reports, to which is attached a letter he sent in to the Commissioners through M'Lean, upon which subject your Committee cannot forbear from laying the evidence before the House, as follows :

3666. Here is a letter, attached to a report of yours, shown to you yesterday ; is that (report) your handwriting?—Yes.

3667. Where did you get this letter?—It is not clear to my mind, but this is my present impression, that after the meeting, it was left lying upon the table, and that I took it from the table after the business of the meeting was over. It was left by those who had it in charge. Mr. Burking Young gives a very different version of the affair, but I have no knowledge of it.

3668. You took it from John Young's table?—Most decidedly not ; had I that impression on my mind, that I came by it in that way, I should have considered it a breach of confidence. It might have been handed to me at the time, but if it was, it was returned again. This is the impression on my mind, that the letter was produced at the time, and it was left lying on the table, and I then took it. I thought it of no consequence, and I made the use you see of it.

3669. You did not take it from Mr. Young's table?—No ; I know what Young says upon the business.

3670. Having got it, you carried it to Mr. M'Lean?—Yes.

3671. Did Mr. M'Lean make any observation upon your delivering him that letter?—I do not remember that he did.

3672. He did not disapprove of your taking it and bringing it to him?—He would have disapproved of it if I had come by it as Mr. Young accuses me ; the thing is of no use or value, and I could have had no inducement to commit a thing of the kind.

3673. Mr. M'Lean asked you no questions, finding fault with you for bringing it?—No, if he had found fault it would not have been preserved ; it would have been destroyed.

Par. 50. M'Lean being questioned upon this point, said that he had no recollection of the letter.

Par. 51. Mr. Young said that this letter, which was a letter to Simpson from Chalan, relative to money-matters connected with the Union, was shown by Simpson to him, Young, while Popay was in the room ; that Simpson left it with Young ; that it was lying on the table, and was afterwards missing ; and that he saw it again for the first time in the Committee-room, attached to a report which Popay had sent in to the Government.

ALLEGATION XIV.

Par. 52. This allegation is asserted to be true by Simpson, by Brown,

by Hearsee, by Price, by Shelley, and by Collins; and also by M'Henry, who was not one of the petitioners. Simpson says that he spoke of the "damnable Government," as having deprived him of part of his coal-duties. Brown and Collins say that he called the Government "villains," and the like; and Price being questioned upon the subject, answers as follows :

344. Relate any of the conversations you might have had with him, and the sort of language he used?—The conversation used to be political; on coming home, it generally turned upon that. In common conversation we used to give each other ideas concerning things, and once or twice I told him I did not think I should speak at any more of the meetings, because one or two of my acquaintances had said that I was too hasty, and that I did not put my words properly together; now, one or two have said that I spoke too harsh, and he has several times told me that I was *not half harsh enough*. He said that they were a set of *villains*, or something to that purpose, and "*they would expel them from the earth, — damn the villains!*"

345. Who were?—Meaning the Government; I took him to mean the Government; we were talking about the Government.

346. Who did you understand him to mean by the term "villains?"—The Government.

347. What do you mean by Government?—The Ministers.

348. Persons in authority?—Those who have the framing of the laws, and so on. He appeared to me a gentleman who had been entirely ruined by Government.

349. Did you learn that from his conversation?—He told me that he had given 500*l.* for a coal-meter's place, and he had not enjoyed it two months before it became worth not 40*l.* a year, and he was a ruined man.

350. Now did he use the precise expressions, "I will expel the villains from the earth?"—Yes, I am positive.

Par. 53. Mr. Hearsee said that Popay's language was very violent against the Government, and such as he himself should not have thought of uttering. The remaining witness on this head was M'Henry, who came before the Committee voluntarily, from having read the petition in the newspapers. This young man is a journeyman tailor, who lived at Camberwell at the time when he belonged to the Unions, who has quitted the Unions since, and now works for a master in Bond-street. His evidence was as follows :

1024. You met Popay one day in the road; explain to the Committee how that happened?—I was doing some tailoring on my own account, and I had a bag in my hand in which was a coat for Miss Gay's coachman. Popay was coming down Denmark-hill at the time, with a man with him. The man was rather shabbily dressed, and Popay wore a blue frock with an old-fashioned white hat. I crossed the road to shake hands with him; we got talking; I had not been at the Union for two or three of the meeting-nights; I asked how they were going on, and we got talking about different political things that had occurred some time previous. He turned the subject to the state of Ireland, and to enumerate the number of widows and orphans made by Stanley, and said it would be a damned good thing if some one would take and assassinate that bloody villain Stanley. That was the expression he made use of.

1025. This was Popay, was it?—Popay.

1026. Did he say anything to you about the number of Irish living in and about London?—That it was a pity that more of the Irish did not belong to the Unions; he believed there were not less than a hundred thousand, in and about London, and said that I was the only Irishman that belonged to the 46th class.

1027. How came you to tell me of this?—I was horror-struck, at reading the petition that was presented, at a man's trying to entrap me and put my life in danger, if I had sided with him on the attack he would have made on Stanley.

Par. 54. Popay being questioned as to this point, two days after M'Henry had given his evidence, answered as follows :

1617. Do you know a young man of the name of M'Henry?—I have seen him a long time since.

1618. Where did you meet him?—The last time I met him was on Herne-hill; or Denmark-hill.

1619. Where did you see him any time before that?—It was not for a considerable time; he withdrew from the Unions.

1620. You saw him at the Unions?—I have seen him at the Duke of York.

1621. Was he a member?—I cannot speak to that.

1622. You met him there frequently?—Yes.

1623. Did anything pass between him and you, on Denmark-hill, about Mr. Stanley?—No, our conversation was one of very few minutes at that time.

1624. You did not tell him it was a pity some one would not kill Mr. Stanley?—Certainly not.

1625. Assassinate him, or some word of that sort?—O dear, no; on the affairs of Ireland, in private, when I have been talking politics, I have, *certainly, regretted the state of Ireland*; when conversing with him as to assassination of the leaders, I have endeavoured to show these men the danger and folly of it.

1626. You did not say that there were a hundred thousand Irishmen in and near London, and regretted that more of them did not belong to the Union?—No, certainly not.

Par. 55. It is to be observed that M'Henry was, afterwards, face to face with Popay, before the Committee, giving evidence as to Popay's having been in the chair, and that Popay did not put any question relative to the project of assassinating Mr. Stanley. Further, as to this allegation relating to the violent language of Popay, the Committee refer to questions 344, 673, 878, 914, 934, 2162.

ALLEGATION XV.

Par. 56. This allegation is sustained by the positive assertions of all the nine petitioners, as well as by most of those persons whom they called in support of their evidence; and particularly by Mr. Sturges, who gives the following account of the matter :

3368. Did he plead great poverty and pecuniary distress?—He did.

3369. Did he thereby get those little civilities from you and your wife that such a representation would naturally bring from you?—Yes, he did.

3370. Did he get any articles of dress for any part of his family?—On occasions when his wife has been visiting Mrs. Sturges, on going home late, she has borrowed a shawl to keep her from the inclement weather, and they have been returned; but I have heard Mrs. Sturges say, that there are two trifling articles, not worth mentioning, that are still in her possession.

3411. Did you ever suspect him of pretending distress to extort charity?—No, I did not; I thought it was real and unfeigned.

3412. How did you ascertain that it was real?—Merely from his own confession I thought it was.

3413. Did you ever visit at his house?—Yes.

3414. Did that indicate distress or comparative comfort?—It indicated distress, very much so. I was surprised to observe that when out he appeared to spend money very freely, but at home his family seemed to be in want of the very necessaries of life.

3415. Did you ever remark upon the inconsistency of his leaving his family in want and spending money abroad so freely?—No, I did not, for our friendship did not subsist any length of time afterwards. On one occasion Mrs. Sturges went to visit Mrs. Popay, she represented to me, because Mrs. Sturges had known we always endeavoured to treat them as well as we could in our circumstances; she said she had had very bad tea, and at supper she was asked to partake of a few

slices of cold potatoes warmed upon the gridiron, and she observed to me that that showed the poverty of the place; whether real or feigned, I cannot say.

Par. 57. The account given by James Brown (97, 168), and the account of the two Youngs, especially by J. Young (questions 3281 to 3292), your Committee think well worthy of the attention of the House, as being strongly characteristic, not only of the proceedings of Popay, but of the characters of these petitioners. Your Committee would wish to impress on the attention of the House, the fact that this John Young belonged to the thirty-fourth class; that this very man, who actually entertained and fed Popay, and his family, was a member of that thirty-fourth class of the Union, which Popay, in his written report of the 20th July, above recited, denounced to the Government as being denominated the fighting class, and as having arms which were monthly inspected by the class-leader. Besides these witnesses there were several others who spoke to the same point, particularly in answers to the questions 361, 468, 559, 583, 626, 734, 895, 904, 2023, 2374.

Par. 58. Popay denied that he feigned poverty (question 1511); he said that he was poor, but that it was very seldom that he had not five or six sovereigns in his pocket.

ALLEGATION XVI.

Par. 59. This allegation is by Woodford asserted to be true; and acknowledged to be true by Popay himself, who says that he was directed to go to Calthorpe-street, by Commissioner Rowan, himself, who had an interview with him on the occasion at White Horse-yard.

ALLEGATION XVII.

Par. 60. A spy being, according to Dr. Johnson, a "person sent to watch the conduct or movement of others," there needed, on the part of the petitioners, nothing in support of this allegation as far as related to Popay; the fact of his having been for nearly a year employed for this purpose being acknowledged by Popay himself, by M'Lean, and by the Commissioners, and the fact of some of his reports having been laid before the Secretary of State being proved by evidence written as well as oral. And as to the spies in the plural number, several of the petitioners assert, that they have seen many policemen in different dresses; M'Lean says that he had, and has, in his division always two and sometimes twenty in plain clothes, and the Commissioners acknowledge that they authorise this and authorise the employing of policemen in plain clothes to go to public meetings of all sorts; to mix with the people at Epsom Races; and when the King goes to the Houses of Parliament; to mix with the people at the Bible Meetings at Exeter-hall: to mix with them at the church doors, and even in the churches themselves.

Par. 61. When, however, the Commissioners were before your Committee the first time (10th July), they gave the following account of the authority as to this species of employment:

1817. Is Lord Melbourne acquainted with the fact of your employing the police to attend in plain clothes at political meetings?—Not at political meetings nor at Political Unions; it was one peculiar system of Union; nobody ever attended on our part any Political Union except the National Union of the Working Classes.

1818. Was it within your knowledge that either Popay or any other person attended any election-meetings?—There were never any orders given to attend any election-meetings whatever; I believe some were attended with a view, as it was afterwards stated, to know whether it was likely there would be any breach of the peace; we never sent to any place with any other view than that of preserving the peace.

1819. Were your instructions to attend public meetings, such as a meeting Mr. Hume would preside at?—No, certainly not.

1822. I wish to know whether, with your approbation, any of your people out of uniform were desired to attend any public meeting out of doors or in doors?—Certainly not; Mr. Alderman Wood will remember, that at a meeting at the Crown and Anchor, when some police were there, some excitement was created. I ought to state why we sent them there: the Secretary of the meeting said he was apprehensive of a disturbance, and we sent as many police as he requested.

Par. 62. This was the evidence of the Commissioners on the 10. On the 23. they were examined again, relative to Popay's reports, several of which related to public meetings and to parochial meetings; and then the following questions and answers were put and given, relative to these reports, made by Popay from public meetings:

3893. Here is a report of what took place at the Town Hall in the Borough, where there were several speakers, and one of them a member of Parliament: did you approve of a report like that being made from this policeman?—I should think he had better not have wasted his time in attending such meetings or reporting any such speeches. We had no wish to have reports from meetings of that sort; as Commissioners of Police, we should not have employed them to attend, if we had understood beforehand the character of the meeting.

3894. Did you reprove the man for making such a report?—No, I did not; I have no recollection of ever having read it; it is marked by me, but if there was nothing in it relating to a public meeting, I should have marked "seen" upon it, that it might be put away.

3895. You do not mean that you have read it?—No, there were many I did not read.

3896. You have no recollection of having read it?—None whatsoever.

3897. Is it of a description likely to impress itself upon your mind, if you had read it?—Yes, it is; there was something of the same kind reported in the newspapers, and I may have some recollection of it from them.—[Rowan]. But the Commissioners would not have approved of anything of that kind being reported.

3898. Have you any recollection of a report being made to you from a meeting where Mr. Hume was in the chair?—[Mayne.] In the Regent's Park, was it?

3899. No, Montpellier House, Walworth.—I have no recollection of it.

3900. There is the report (handing it to Mr. Mayne).—I have no doubt that this has been read, because it is marked that it was shown to Mr. Phillips.

3901. Whose handwriting is that?—It is marked by me, and also Col. Rowan has marked "put away."

3902. Then you approved of this man being sent to a meeting like that and making a report of it?—No, I do not say that; I do not know what the report is; it seems to be of a meeting of the Political Union of the Working Classes; if the meeting was not of that description, he ought not to have attended it. The general directions were, that he should attend public meetings of the National Union of the Working Classes.

3903. Did you ever desire to have reports of the public meetings, except such as you might think dangerous to the public peace?—[Mr. Mayne.] Certainly not; I should not approve of any others had they been made. [Col. Rowan.]—Nor should I.

3904. Should you approve of reports being made to you of meetings, except such as you considered might be dangerous to the public peace?—[Col. Rowan.] Certainly not.

3905. Nevertheless there was a public meeting at which Mr. Hume was in the

chair?—It was our practice to send a policeman (one or two) to public meetings, without any intention of their reporting what they heard to the Commissioners. We did so, because, whatever good intentions the parties might have, who called the meeting together, or however legal their object might have been, the meetings were likely to be attended by others with a different view, who might commit a breach of the peace, and we generally had, at the nearest police-station in the neighbourhood, some men in readiness, in case they should be wanted, or if it became necessary further to be called upon to preserve the peace.

3906. Sometimes these men were not in policemen's clothes?—Sometimes they were not, and sometimes they were.—[Mr. Mayne.] Some of them were in plain clothes.

3907. On those occasions do they make reports?—Sometimes; we frequently find that they make reports that we do not want.

3908. Nevertheless, this report was shown by you to Mr. Phillips?—It was.

3909. Here is a report of the speech of Mr. Hume upon the occasion.—[Col. Rowan.] I am quite sure I have not desired the report to be made, nor read the report of the speech of Mr. Hume, or any other member upon the occasion; I should not conceive it to be within the line of our duty.

3910. You would read it before you showed it to Mr. Phillips?—I do not know that I read it.—[Mr. Mayne.] It was probably reported in the newspaper.—[Col. Rowan.] But if it was taken to Mr. Phillips, that would exonerate us from all responsibility.

Par 63. With regard to the latter part of this allegation of the petitioners, your Committee having pointed out to your attention the denunciation of Popay against Price, in the report of 20. July recited above; his proposition relative to the depôt of arms, in contradiction of which he never put a single question to either of the witnesses; his temptations relative to the shooting-gallery, the broad-sword, the five-pound prize, the pistol, and the sword-sticks; his being present in plain clothes at Calthorpe-street, and Furzey, who had been the man first to charge him with being a spy, being brought to trial on a charge arising at that place; his conversation with M'Henry on Denmark-hill about assassination, in contradiction to which he put not one question to M'Henry: your Committee having pointed out these things to the attention of the House, leave it to the House to determine, whether the petitioners were founded in their allegation, that they were "living amongst spies, seeking their lives?"

ALLEGATION XVIII.

Par. 64. There can now be no doubt that those petitioners were and are compelled to pay for the maintenance of policemen who are employed as spies; but, it is the duty of your Committee to show to the House, that the people are taxed for the purpose of giving extra money to the policemen thus employed; or, at least, to this particular spy. Both Popay and M'Lean denied this, at first, but afterwards confessed the fact.

[To Popay.] 1716. Did you receive any extraordinary payment for such service?—Nothing.

1717. You were ordered to do it, and you found it necessary to obey the orders?—Decidedly so.

Par. 65. But, some considerable time afterwards.

[To Popay.] 1775. Were you put to any expense by attending these meetings?—Yes.

1776. To any considerable amount?—No, very small indeed.

1777. Can you recollect any expense you were put to: did you keep a memorandum?—I have been, perhaps, at the expense of 3d. 4d. or 6d. in an evening.

1778. Have you charged that to your employer?—Yes, I charged that to Mr. M'Lean.

1779. As an expense incurred at the Meeting?—Yes.

1780. Do you know to what amount?—It would not make above 22s. or 23s. in the course of three months.

1781. By whom has that been paid?—By Mr. M'Lean.

[To Mr. M'Lean, on the 8. July.] 1145. Was he (Popay) allowed any extra money for going to the Unions?—Not a farthing.

1146. Does he have no extra allowance for wearing his own clothes?—Not a penny.

1147. Do you find him in plain clothes?—Not at all.

1148. It would be rather a punishment than an advantage?—I should consider it a very hard task for a man to be supplying his plain clothes, while at the end of the year his uniform would go into store nearly as good as when it came out.

1149. If the duty is well performed, it generally leads to promotion?—It would be impossible to promote every man whose conduct merits it.

1150. But he has been promoted?—Not on those grounds. My clerk that I had then obtained a situation to go to America, and I took Popay into the office, as I saw he was a person fit for it.

1151. What pay did he get then?—A guinea a week; now he has 11. 2s. 6d.

1152. Having allowed him to go to the Union to learn what he could, did you not think he would be put to some expense?—I never dreamed it would cost him two-pence.

[To M'Lean, on the 23. July.] 3727. Popay has told us that he got money from you to pay his expenses at those Union meetings?—Not to pay his expenses that I am aware of; he did give me two or three bills, which I delivered in and got money for them; I believe it was merely to clear whatever little expense he might have been at, perhaps a pint of beer or anything of that kind that he said he had.

3728. You gave him some little matter for attending the Unions?—I do not know that it was because he attended them; he was money out of pocket.

3729. In what way?—In consequence of his attending the Unions.

3730. Then he did get money for attending those Unions; I should suppose it was for that he gave in a bill; perhaps a few shillings.

3788. Was he paid any expenses for that day (the day he went to Copenhagen-house)?—He never got anything by that day that I am aware of; he tendered me, I think, two or three small accounts; the whole did not amount to above two or three pounds; but, *what* it was on that day I cannot say.

3790. Little or much, out of what fund did the money come?—That I cannot say, what fund it came out of; there are funds in Scotland-yard, but where they come from I do not know.

[To the Commissioner, 23. July.] 3977. Popay has told the Committee he has received money from the superintendent, and he has acknowledged that he gave him extra money for attending those meetings; do you recollect in the account of the disbursements of the superintendent that such sums were charged?—[Colonel Rowan.] Yes, there are such charges.

3958. For money given to this man on account of his attending those meetings?—[Mr. Mayne.] No, it was for expenses incurred; 2d. 3d. or 6d. at a time.—[Colonel Rowan.] Some of it was for stationery.

3979. For expenses he incurred in attending those meetings?—Yes.

3980. What is the utmost sum that has been paid?—[Mr. Mayne.] I think four or five pounds.

3981. Do you mean that four or five pounds is the total sum paid?—Yes, throughout the whole course of his attending.

3982. Do you recollect the length of time?—Between two or three years.

3983. During that time the only sum paid to him is under ten pounds?—Yes, it is under that.

3984. Paid in small sums?—Yes.

3985. The money does not come out of the police-rate levied upon the metropolis?—No.

3986. Whence do you derive the funds for that purpose?—From the Home-Office; it is not paid out of the police-establishment; it is paid by the Home-Office through us.

3987. Of course all these payments have been sanctioned by the cashier of the Home Office?—By the Under Secretary of State.

Par. 66. Your Committee having thus laid before the House as clear a statement of the evidence as they have been able to make, think it right to observe, before they proceed to submit their opinions with regard to the *prayer* of the petition, that, though every opportunity was allowed for the purpose, not a single witness was brought, either to rebut the evidence or to impeach the character of any one of the witnesses, all of whom except one, were house-keepers or living with relations who were, and that *one*, working for a most respectable master, while some of them were either master-tradesmen or carrying on business on their own account; all of whom, and all the connexions and all the lives and conversations of whom, were well known to Popay, and to the whole vicinage, in which he, as well as they resided; and on no one of whom was there to be found the means of affixing spot or blemish.

Par. 67. With regard to the *prayer* of the petition, your Committee request the House, first to cast their eyes over the ten months' deeds of this most indefatigable and unrelenting spy; to survey the circuit of his exploits from the Borough Town-hall to Blackheath, and from Copenhagen-house to Finsbury-square; to behold him dancing with the wife of a man whom he had denounced in his reports, and standing on a tombstone writing down and then reporting the words uttered over the grave of a departed reformer; to trace him going from meeting to meeting and from group to group, collecting matter for accusation in the night, and going regularly in the morning bearing the fruits of his perfidy to his immediate employer, to be by him conveyed to the Government; to follow him into the houses of John B. Young and of Mr. Sturges, and then see him and his wife and children relieved and fed and warmed and cherished, and then look at one of his written reports, and see him describe Young's Union class as armed to a man, and, at another, see him describe Mr. Sturges as the teacher of a doctrine that "fitted man for the worst of offences," and see Lord Melbourne writing on the back of this report that "it is not unimportant, and ought not to be lost sight of"; to look at him making the hearts of these honest and kind petitioners ache, and bringing tears into their eyes by his piteous tales of poverty, and hear him now brag that he was seldom without five or six sovereigns in his pocket; to contemplate his profound hypocrisy, his assumed melancholy and distress of mind, his affected inclination to self-destruction, and his putting his wife forward as an auxiliary in the work of perfidy: your Committee request the House to cast their eyes over these ten months of the life of this man, and then to consider whether it be possible for a Government to preserve the affections of a frank and confiding people, unless it, at once, and in the most unequivocal manner, give proof of its resolution to put an end, and for ever, to a system which could have created such a monster in human shape.

Par. 68. And your Committee neither can nor will pass in silence over the conduct of his employers, who having, as stated by the Commissioners on the 10. July, given instructions to men thus employed, to confine their attendance and reports to meetings and proceedings of the Unions of the working classes, receive from this spy written reports of public political meetings, of election meetings, and of parochial meetings; who, after having received from him a report, saying that all the class-meetings are strictly private, and excluding all but members of the Union, received from him reports of the proceedings in class-meetings, while they assert that they did not know that he was a member; who, while they treat

with scorn the thought of having ever sanctioned reports of private conversations, receive and preserve reports of such private conversations; who, at the end of many months, when the spy is, at last, discovered, detected, and exposed, reward him for his services by immediately raising him in rank, and by raising his pay from 19s. to 22s. 6d. a week; and who, with all this in proof before the Committee, came before that same Committee, and expressly claim to be regarded as gentlemen and men of honour.

Par. 69. In conclusion, your Committee observe, that a Government, which resorts to the employing of spies, must of necessity be a hated Government; that it must, therefore, be a Government of mere and direct force; that it, in reality, declares war against the people, invites their hostility, and rests its existence on its power of keeping them forcibly in subjection; that, in such a state of things, there can be no willing obedience even to just and good laws, and no obedience to any laws except from the principle of fear, which, in whatever degree it produces submission, in that same degree engenders revenge; that as to the people of this country in particular, renowned, and justly honoured throughout the world for their blunt sincerity, their confiding disposition, and their abhorrence of all disguise, what must their pleasure have been, when, over the grave of Hardy, they heard Mr. THELWALL exclaim, "*Where are your engines of perjury now; where your SPIES so thickly lain, that in the hurry to hang those for whose hanging they were employed, you handsomely rewarded them with a halter, and an executioner to increase the gift*"; and, what their shame, what their indignation, when they see, in the reports delivered to your Committee, that there were *two spies*, taking down the words from his lips, and conveying them to the Secretary of State, and that he thought it worth while to write with his own hand on the back of one of these reports!

Par. 70. The House is the guardian of the peace and confidence, as well as of the purse of the kingdom; to the House these petitioners appeal for the adoption of such measures as shall protect them against such wrongs and such perils for the future; and your Committee, in laying before the House the results of the inquiry committed to them, having endeavoured to show the nature and extent of those wrongs and those perils, leaving it to the wisdom of the House to suggest, and to their justice to apply, those remedies which the case may appear to them to demand.

TO THE
 PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
 AMERICA.

(Political Register, November, 1833.)

London, 31st October, 1833.

SIR,

Your letter to your cabinet ministers, dated at WASHINGTON on the 18th of September, 1833, has been read by me with the greatest possible attention, and with the greatest possible delight. This letter is the first great blow; and, indeed, the very first blow, which, by a man in great power, has been levelled at that infernal system of paper-money, in a combat against which I have spent a very considerable part of my pretty long life. I shall have to beg your attention, by-and-by, to a letter which I addressed to Mr. DALLAS, then Secretary of the Treasury, on the 13th of January, 1816, which was republished at NEW YORK on the 25th of May of that year; from which you will see, that I, even then, when the proposition for establishing your accursed Bank first came forth, foresaw, not the monstrous things which you have now so manfully and so ably exposed to the world; but, though I could not foresee the detail of these infamies, I foresaw the thing in the gross; and that I endeavoured to prevent the mighty mischief being done to your country; not, however, for the sake of that country only; and, indeed, principally, for the sake of my own.

Before I proceed further, I will here state explicitly the character in which I wish to be considered in addressing this letter to you. I, feeling that I represent a considerable body of the people of England; considering that there are great numbers of persons who go all through with me in my political opinions and views; considering this; considering the station which I have now the honour to hold, in virtue of the constitutional voice of a very large, industrious, and valuable town; considering these things, I deem it necessary very explicitly to state the character in which I wish to be viewed while addressing myself to the chief of a great republic, the commercial rival, and, in some sort, the naval rival of my own country.

Sir, I am no republican in principle, any more than I am in law and allegiance. I hold, that this, which we have here, is the best sort of government in the world; that is to say, that this sort of government is the best, provided that we have it; I hold that a government of king, lords, and commons, the last of which chosen by all men who are of full age, of sound mind, and untainted by indelible crime, is the best of governments. Names do not amuse me. I lived eight years under the republican government of PENNSYLVANIA; and I declare, that I believe that to

have been the most corrupt and tyrannical government that the world ever knew. I was several weeks at HARRISBURGH, during the session of the legislature there, in the winter of 1818; and, upon my honour and soul, I believe that there was more personal corruption, more bribery of persons in the legislature, and in office, than has ever taken place; more of this during that one session of the legislature, than has ever taken place at WHITEHALL and ST. STEPHEN'S during any ten or twenty years that I have ever known them; added to which, were the *lowness*, the dirtiness of the villany, the vulgarity, the disregard of all sense of morality and of honour, making the whole thing so disgusting, as to drive an Englishman half mad at the thought of ever seeing his country subjected to such rulers. O! sir! I must forget the votes in the legislature bought by losing a game at cards at the tavern; I must forget the great game which the Bank of PHILADELPHIA lost, in that room of borrowed light in the centre of the tavern, where the card-playing was going on, day and night, Sundays not excepted, during the whole of that session, for the purposes of bribery; I must forget these things; I must forget the "*betting banks*" of PENNSYLVANIA; I must forget the court-house at HARRISBURGH, and the judge, with a twisted silk handkerchief round his neck, and a quid of tobacco in his cheek; I must forget that dirty-faced and unshaven jury, sitting with their hats on, talking over the back of the box to the parties or their friends, and having glasses of grog handed to them to drink in the box; I must forget all these things, and a great many others, before I can begin to think that kings and lords are the worst people in the world, to say nothing about the acts of real tyranny of that Government, some of which were the very basest that ever were heard of in the world.

Far be it from me to affect to believe that PENNSYLVANIA exhibited a fair specimen of the republican governments of America. On the contrary, I believe some of the state governments, to be as pure, and the state of freedom under them as perfect, as under any governments in the world, where an accursed paper-money is tolerated; and, with regard to the general government, I believe that it is, in all respects, as good and as pure as we ever can expect to see anything, of which mere men are the inventors and executors. But I have seen enough of republican government to convince me that the mere *name* is not worth a straw.

With regard to my personal feeling and motives in this case, I will not profess to be animated with any very anxious desire to promote the well-being of America as a state. Numerous, indeed, have been, and still are, the Americans for whom I have very great regard and affection, and to whom I owe gratitude which never ought to end but with my life. Then, I have always held in great admiration, the excellent character of the agricultural part of the people; I admire their mercantile seafaring men; and I have always endeavoured to do justice to that bravery and love of liberty which are the distinguishing characteristics of the whole nation taken as a body. But, when we come to talk of national interests, affecting the power of other countries, I must prefer my own; I am bound to that by those principles of allegiance which are born in the heart of man, or else the man has no heart. I cannot admire the never-exceeded excellence of the conduct of the Americans in DARTMOOR prison, without holding in abhorrence the Englishman who shall affect to like any other country so well as England herself. I cannot admire the farmers who rode two hundred miles from the back countries, to drive the English away from before BALTIMORE, in spite of the no-nation paper-money scoundrels,

who were about to let them in, and think, for one moment, without shame, of any man pretending to love another country as well as his own.

Therefore, I must naturally wish that England should always preserve the mastership of the seas; and it is my bounden duty to give effect to that wish by every means in my power: it is my duty to employ all the resources of my mind, if necessary, to keep the rivalship of America in check, and to prevent her from ever possessing the means of lessening the power, or of doing injury in any possible way to my own country: this is the duty of every Englishman, though in private life, and it is now more particularly a duty belonging to me.

But, relative to matters, such as those of which this excellent letter from you to your cabinet treats; relative to matters of this sort, affecting the domestic liberty and happiness of a great country abounding with good people, most intimately connected with England, and descended from England herself; in such a case, I am at full liberty, not only anxiously to wish for success to efforts like those which you are now making; but, to do every thing that may happen to lie in my power to promote that success, especially when I know, that, if you succeed in your measures, it must have a good effect with regard to my own country. I was justified in rejoicing at that famous victory which you won at NEW ORLEANS, which was, in fact, a victory won for England, and not over her. "*The deposing of JAMES MADISON*" was the openly avowed object of that war; and, if that had succeeded, even to utter the words "reform in Parliament," would have become a criminal libel in England. Upon the same principle, I shall sincerely rejoice if you succeed now against your paper-money conspirators. I shall rejoice for the sake of your country; but rejoice much more heartily for the sake of my own.

To enter into a minute examination of the several parts of your letter; or to make a commentary on every part, would be unnecessary to my readers in England, and would be impertinent with regard to yourself; but there are certain parts which must attract great attention in England, one of which is, that part which relates to the bribing of the American press by the traitors of paper-money. It is more than twenty years since I have been accusing this London press of being in the pay, the actual pay of the paper-money people, of which we have swarms of various descriptions, of most of whom you happily know nothing, owing to the circumstances which I shall have to state by-and-by. There is, however, a "*delicacy*" in the manner of bribing here, which is wholly unknown to your tribe of paper-money ruffians. The press is as base here as it is there; and it swallows ten thousand times the amount of bribes that yours swallows; but the manner of the bribery is so indirect; the source is at so great a distance from the reservoir; the stream meanders through so many and such covert channels, that it would take a year for the most acute man in the world, though with full powers to send for persons and papers, to trace the bribe back from the last hand to the first.

Then, there is another difference: we have, as yet, had no open struggle between the executive Government and the Bank. PITT made them as nearly as possible one and the same concern; and thus they must continue as long as the paper-money system shall last. Yours is a very different affair. There is no union between the two bodies; and it is the duty of the Government to watch and control the proceedings of the Bank. Yet, they must agree, or the paper-money cannot be upheld.

The Bank is, in its very essence, a robber of the people : it is a body of men getting rich out of the fruit of the labour of others, without giving to those others any thing valuable in exchange : the paper-money is a mere instrument for unjustly taking away the fruit of the labour of the people at large. As long as the executive government and the legislature agree with the makers of paper-money, this species of robbery goes quietly on, and the people have no means of resistance. Indeed they become parties to the injury inflicted upon themselves : they go and pray to be accommodated with the means of their own ruin.

You have disagreed with your Bank ; and this has brought out an exposure of the whole mystery. The Bank saw that it must fall ; or, that it must triumph over you. Our Bank has a security in the DEBT, which yours has not. Yours, therefore, was compelled to come into the field against you, in a contested election ; and, if it had triumphed, there would have been, at once, an end of the real liberties of America.

Here, sir, I will quote my own words in my letter before-mentioned, written to Mr. DALLAS, in 1816. " America is so happily situated as to the
 " distribution of property, and the consequent independence of all classes
 " of the people, that there may not be much ground to fear that a bank-
 " ing system, even upon the plan of ours, would, in a very short time,
 " have a dangerous power as to elections ; but, I cannot help fearing,
 " that, by degrees, it would, in some measure, at least, acquire such
 " power ; and, whenever this power began to operate to any considerable
 " extent, the liberties, the real liberties of the country, must be impaired.
 " If, sir, you have done me the honour to read *Paper against Gold*, your
 " recollection will have been called to the rise and progress of this system
 " of paper-money, which has, at last, actually brought misery home to the
 " very door of every man, not paid out of the taxes. The same work
 " will have convinced you, that taxation, pauperism, and a loss of liberty,
 " have all kept an exact pace with the growth of that system. A bank,
 " such as ours is, and necessarily must be, is a most powerful instrument
 " in the hands of men at the head of affairs ; it corrupts public morals,
 " it creates a fallacious appearance of wealth, it induces men to look at
 " trick and speculation rather than industry for the means of rising in
 " the world, it sets a whole people upon the notion of living upon trust ;
 " and, above all things, it tends to render a government, in a great mea-
 " sure, *independent of the people.*"

This would have been the case, if you had been a tyrant. If you had no regard for the liberties of your country, you might have been re-elected to the end of your life ; you might have been made perpetual President, and might have settled the title in your family. But, not being a man of that description ; seeing the evils of paper money, and resolved to put an end to those evils, if possible, you found in the Bank an enemy instead of an ally ; it found an enemy in you ; took the field openly against you, after having secretly bribed the press for the purpose ; and, luckily for your country, and for the cause of liberty and justice, it was defeated.

In my letter to Mr. DALLAS, mentioned before, after having described the fatal effects of the paper-money system here, I proceed thus : " It would be
 " some time before a national Bank could thus metamorphose the inte-
 " rests of the people of America ; but, *time* does great things ; and the
 " evil there would come on more suddenly than it has done here, on ac-
 " count of the possible rivalship in the several states. *Union*, in America,
 " is every thing. United, you will be a great and happy nation ; but,

“ divided, you become a string of little, feeble, contending principalities,
 “ or republics, the sport of the European powers, and especially of Eng-
 “ land. Nay, it is quite within the scope of possibility, that, after bloody
 “ wars against each other, foreign nations would be called in, and that
 “ the price of their interference would be colonization and abject slavery.”

And, we now see, that this would have been the very likely consequence, had it not been for your wisdom and firmness, which have been such as the nation had no right to expect to meet with, even amongst all the brave and wise men which America has always contained. Even as it is, the country is now divided, and, in a great measure, distracted, by the power of this corrupt and all-corrupting body. All the Presidents, even before the establishment of this Bank, and ever since HAMILTON'S scheme of funding was adopted, have wielded a divided sceptre : not one of them has ever been independent of the paper-money power : the sound and fighting part of the community is with you now ; but still the country is divided, and still these atrocious paper-money men have the means of inflicting vengeance on a large part of those who stand by the legitimate and constitutional powers of the country.

Your exposures, sir, of the execrable measure of the vile gang of traitors who conduct the affairs of your Bank ; the measure for embarrassing and ruining your government, and, if necessary, overturning it, with the aid and assistance of the paper-money gang here in England : this exposure is absolutely invaluable. That it was an act of treason against America, no man can deny ; and I am sorry that the parties were not prosecuted for treason. But, the valuable view of the matter is this, that it affords us proof positive, that your paper-money traitors applied to paper-money people in England to assist them in defeating your election ; and that they readily found such assistance ! It was not the voice of the people of America that was to decide this important election ; it was a band of paper-money makers there, aided by a band of paper-money makers here, who were to decide, who was to be President of America ; and this, too, by the employment of taxes, raised out of the labour of the American people themselves.

But, it must be thus in every country where bands of paper-money makers obtain the sway. In taking the deposits of the public money from this one bank, and distributing them amongst the state banks, you certainly break up a great body of enemies ; but though you do not create others so *immediately* formidable to you, you create a great body of influence in each of those states, to which you transfer the money ; and this would, in time, create a formidable body against you in each state. Be assured that these bodies will combine against any government that could possibly be created, unless that government favour their views of pillaging the people. You may be assured that you can place reliance upon none of the persons belonging to those banks. They have all one interest ; and that interest is wholly incompatible with the interest and safety of the people. Even if composed of good men, morally speaking they all become of one character ; and the very existence of them endangers the political institutions of the country. It is impossible, absolutely impossible, to suffer banks, which issue paper-money and discount bills, not to have a great, an undue, and most dangerous influence in any country ; and in proportion as the institutions of the country are free ; that is to say, in proportion as the elective franchise is extensive, in precisely that proportion they are dangerous ; because, if the paper-

money be circulated without check or control, the banks must hold the pecuniary credit of every man in their hands; and, it is in their very nature to combine. We have a "*reformed Parliament*," for instance, but we have *above one hundred bankers in it*, notwithstanding the great body of nobility, clergy, baronets, and gentry, who are landed proprietors; and it remains to be shown yet, whether we should not be full as well in the hands of a hundred young lords.

So far from saying that these hundred bankers are bad men, I do not know one of them that I should call a bad man, or a man having intentions hostile to the liberties of his country. Those of them whom I personally know, I know to be very worthy men, and many of them very clever men. There is but one banker that I should take the liberty to call an intimate acquaintance; and in that man's hands I would trust my life. But, Sir, it is not personal character that has anything to do with the matter; it is not their wishes, it is not their designs, it is not their motives, that I call in question; it is their calling, it is the inevitable tendency of that calling, which, from the habit of their lives (if banking has been their principal pursuit), gives them a bias hostile to the liberties of their country.

I received some time ago, a book from PHILADELPHIA, which I have republished under the title of "*The Curse of Paper-Money and Banking; or, a Short History of Banking in the United States of America, with an Account of its ruinous Effects on Landowners, Farmers, Traders, and on all the Industrious Classes of the Community. By W. M. Gouge, of Philadelphia. To which is prefixed an Introduction, by Wm. Cobbett, M. P. for Oldham.*" Of this book I sent a copy to Lord ALTHORP, Lord LYNDRURST, and to the Speaker of the House of Commons. It ought to be read by every man in the world, who has anything to do with the making of laws for the government of a country. It contains a history of the *ruin of the happiness of the United States of America*. Sad words to utter; but words not more sad than true. For here is an account of the utter ruin of whole counties of farmers; farmers, amongst whom, for ages, the word "*ruin*" had no meaning; here is an account of townships overloaded with "*paupers*," a word, the very meaning of which was scarcely known, when I knew those very counties forty years ago; here is an account of thousands and thousands of men and women *starving for want of employment*; when I can remember the time when a man or woman wanting employment was not to be heard of from one end of the country to the other; here is an account of houses in PHILADELPHIA selling for a dollar a-piece; for rather an inferior house amongst which, I once paid fourteen hundred dollars a-year, for several years; and the whole of this change, the whole of this ruin and misery is traced, in this book, and proved to proceed from, the works of paper-money. So that good *institutions* are useless; free constitutions are of no avail; they are all waste paper, if you permit bodies of paper-money makers to infest the land. Like the air, it touches everything; it reaches ministries, legislative bodies, the sheriff's office, the bench, the bar, and the jury-box. Why, Sir, these paper-money makers become the inferior magistrates of a country; and some few years ago, an English bishop was seen behind a bank counter paying the notes in a time of panic.

But the first and great danger of all is the corruption of legislative bodies and the influence at elections, of which you have just had a

pretty good specimen. Here America is in greater danger than England; we have a great body of nobility; a great body of clergy; and a great body of baronets and other gentlemen not connected with banks. These bodies feel the influence of the banks, and especially of the Bank of England. Some of them are overawed and held in subjection by the paper-money people; but some of them are much too rich and too powerful to feel any such influence; and then the king not being elective, there is altogether still a body of wealth and power, wholly independent of the paper-money.

You in America have no such protection against the paper-system. It is there the ARISTOCRACY of money, the most damned of all aristocracies. And you are now engaged in a struggle against this monstrous aristocracy. In the book, the "*Curse of Paper-Money*," which I have mentioned above, there is a report of a committee of the State legislature of New York, which is so much to my present purpose, and so fully confirms the truth of the observations that I have been offering to you; that, though you have, doubtless, read it before, I must take the liberty to request that you will read it once more.

"Of all the aristocracies, none more completely enslaves a people than that of money; and in the opinion of your Committee, no system was ever better devised, so perfectly to enslave a community, as that of the present mode of conducting banking establishments. Like the Syren of the fable, they entice to destroy. They hold the purse-strings of society; and by monopolizing the whole of the circulating medium of the country, they form a precarious standard, by which all property in the country, houses, lands, debts, and credits, personal and real estate of all descriptions, are valued: thus rendering the whole community dependent on them; proscribing every man who dares to expose their unlawful practices: if he happens to be out of their reach, so as to require no favours from them, his friends are made the victims. So no one dares complain.

"The Committee, on taking a general view of our State, and comparing those parts where banks have been for some time established, with those that have none, are astonished at the alarming disparity. They see, in the one case, the desolations they have made in societies that were before prosperous and happy; the ruin they have brought on an immense number of the most wealthy farmers, and they and their families suddenly hurled from wealth and independence into the abyss of ruin and despair.

"If the facts stated in the foregoing be true, and your Committee have no doubt they are, together with others equally reprehensible and to be dreaded, such as that their influence, too frequently, nay, often already begins to assume a species of dictation altogether alarming, and unless some judicious remedy is provided by legislative wisdom, we shall soon witness attempts to control all selections to offices in our counties, nay, the elections to the very legislature. Senators and members of Assembly will be indebted to the Banks for their seats in this capital, and thus the wise end of our civil institutions will be prostrated in the dust of corporations of their own raising."

This is not a picture drawn by a writer in a newspaper or a book; but by a committee of the legislative assembly of a great State, containing the second, or third commercial city in the world; a state about as populous as, and far more rich than, Scotland, which is by no means a country devoid of riches of every description. When I was in that country, at a little town called New MILNS in Ayrshire, they told me of a man there who, by mere banking, had possessed himself of all the country for seven miles in length, with two or three miles in breadth; all the farms, all the cottages, all the tradesmen's houses. Yet, such a man is not so formidable here as he would be in America. There is the Marquis of HASTINGS close by, there is a Duke on the other side not far from him. These overshadow him, and make him an underling still. The strife here is, in reality, between these ancient landowners and the Jews and other

grubs, that have been swelled up by the paper-money. The latter would very soon devour the former, whose estates they would get away bit by bit; but these are entailed, and thus the noses of the grubs are compelled to stop when they come to their park-walls. We have a church, too, observe, which you have not; and, whatever it may be as a religious establishment, it presents everlasting obstacles to the grubs. The parson cannot sell his parsonage-house and the tithes, nor the church, nor the church-yard. These parcels of landed property lie scattered about all over England, so thickly that the paper-money men, like slugs upon a piece of ground scattered over with lime, are everlastingly poking their noses up against a lump which makes them hastily draw back. But, sir, if you have read an account of the proceedings of the last session of Parliament, you will have seen, that there is *something to be done with the property of the church*. What is to be done, I cannot even guess; and if I knew it, it would not, perhaps, be proper for me to say it; but, I know this, that whatever is done, will be done in consequence of the great pressure of the national Debt, which will first, in some way or other, devour the church, and all the patrimony of the landless people, which consists of the property of that church; and will then devour the estates of the nobility and gentry, unless they should have the courage to resist while they have strength enough for resistance. You perceive that the price of corn here is now much about what it was in the year 1792; that we are paying here fifty millions of taxes a year, instead of the thirteen millions a year which we were then paying. We are paying two bushels of wheat for one that was borrowed; and this goes from the land and the labourer to the Jews and other fundholders and money-dealers. This is notorious; every one knows it and acknowledges it; and, of course, the landowners know it; but such is the power of what the legislature of New York calls the "*aristocracy of money*"; so fast-bound are the landowners by the strings of that crew, that they dare not take any measure for their own protection and the protection of their children.

Things could not have come to this pass without the instrumentality of the accursed paper-money. This has been the instrument, or a great country like this, containing so much talent, and so much wisdom; having laws and institutions so long venerated by the people; having such inexhaustible resources of wealth in the industry and ingenuity of its inhabitants, spread over with estates descending from father to son for hundreds of years; having public charities and corporation estates equal in revenue to the revenue of a considerable kingdom: without an accursed instrument like this, such a country never could have been brought to such a pass: a debt, the interest of which exceeds the annual rental of the kingdom; an army, without which the interest of that debt could not be collected; and that army, with all its appurtenances, costing of itself fifty millions of dollars every year: without that accursed instrument, these effects never could have been produced.

The probable future progress of our affair will be this. The pressure had reached its utmost point of endurance when the Duke of WELLINGTON was turned out of office towards the close of the year 1830. The country was kept quiet by that turning out, by the promise of the new Ministers to make a reform of the Parliament, and by the confident expectation of the people that the new Parliament would *take off taxes to a great extent*. Some of us exdeavoured to cause this expectation to be fulfilled; but a very great majority was opposed to such fulfilment. The answer given to us by the Minister and his majority was, in substance, this: *that they should be*

very willing to take off taxes; but that, if they did so, they could not pay the interest of the debt, and could not pay the army which was necessary to the collection of that interest. And, indeed, they were perfectly right; their answer was sound and good and complete against every man who was not ready to vote for the reducing of that interest; because they could not pay the interest without having the money to pay with, and they could not have the money to pay with, without having the army ready, if necessary, to enforce the collection of the money. So that the Ministers and their majority had an answer complete; for, out of better than two hundred that voted for a repeal of part of the Malt-tax, I do not believe that there were six who would have voted for a reduction of the interest of the Debt.

Since the prorogation of Parliament, which took place on the 29. of August, this view of our situation has received a complete practical illustration. The repeal of the house and window tax was loudly demanded by the people of London, Westminster, and its environs. It was not done, except in a trifling degree; and the people of these cities have formed associations for resisting the collection of the tax. In some cases seizures have been made; in other cases the goods have been removed out of the way of seizure; but the Government has found itself greatly embarrassed, not knowing whether to give way, or to employ open and undisguised military force. The state of things at the present moment is described in the following manner, by a newspaper, called the *Morning Chronicle*, which is as much a drudge of our Ministers and their underlings, as your infamous newspapers were, and, perhaps, still are, of the paper-money villains, with whom you have to contend. The paper out of which I take it is dated on the 28. of this month of October.

“EXCITEMENT IN WESTMINSTER RESPECTING THE ASSESSED TAXES.—

“It is confidently expected that several seizures will be made this day in Westminster for the Assessed Taxes, and the excitement attending such a measure may be imagined. Government, it is said, have come to the determination of proceeding against all those in Westminster who will not pay the taxes; and yesterday a number of persons who expect to be seized upon, were busy in removing the most valuable portion of their goods. The military are under arms at the King’s-mews and the barracks in the Bird-cage-walk, also at other places. Forty rounds of ammunition have been served out to them. A number of the police were on Saturday ordered out in plain clothes.”

Aye, sir! It is thus that paper-money works here. With you it produces bribery of base newspapers, the reading of which forms part of the benefit of “headekashun.” Disinterested banking men of America: give bribes to the press to “enlighten” the people! To “enlighten” their minds, to make them attached to “liberal institutions”! Here we score dirty bribes; but then we have forty rounds of ball-cartridges; and policemen dressed in plain clothes; that is to say, prowling about in disguise, in which case, your and our less polite ancestors would have made use of the word spies. Oh, sir! If you have read my writings, how often have you seen me assert that the charge for the army was just so much that we had to pay on account of the interest of the debt! How often have you seen me assert, that all those were either hypocrites or fools, who called upon the Ministers to reduce the army, without at the same time declaring their readiness to stand by them while they reduce the interest of the debt.

You have no great debt; but it is curious to observe, that, little as it is,

it was very nearly big enough to enable the malignant paper-money makers to blow up your government altogether, rather than not defeat you. To accomplish this, they did everything short of putting their necks into immediate danger. But, though you have no debt, and scarcely any internal taxes, the paper-money of itself is sufficient to ruin the nation and destroy its liberties. We hear from all quarters of the United States, cries of distress, complaints of idleness and immorality, increase of crimes of all sorts, increase of pauperism, a thing heretofore unheard of, and the breaking up of the farmers of whole counties.

You have undertaken to check the progress of this damnable scourge ; and if you destroy this monster, your glorious victory of NEW ORLEANS will be forgotten, or will pass for very little in the describing of your merits. But, sir, you will not do this by merely changing the seat of the corruption. You must destroy the thing itself. You must put an end to the circulation of bank-notes, payable to bearer on demand. You must look at the old English Act of Parliament, quoted in my work, called *Paper against Gold*, and make your law accordingly. Then you may again know peace and happiness. Then your country will be what it formerly was, inhabited by virtuous and hospitable people, content with the fair fruits of their labour : until then, it will be a country becoming more and more miserable, till it be more wretched than any despot could or would make it ; because it would not be his interest to impoverish all the people, as it is the interest of a band of paper-money makers ; and because he could not inflict such general and cruel injuries, without bringing down upon his head that vengeance, which the paper-money mongers escape, because the people do not perceive from what hand the injury proceeds. Nay, the far greater part of them are unconscious of doing any injury at all ; but it is not less an injury to be prevented because they do not know that it is an injury. My pigs were unconscious one day, that they were doing anything wrong, when they were grubbing up my pinks and carnations. I should have taken care to keep them out of the flower-garden ; but these were no reasons for my not turning them out and shutting them up in the sty : and, because a great part of the paper-money people in America are not conscious of the injury that they are doing to their country, that is no reason why you should not put a stop to their injurious operations. There is this difference in the two cases : the injury done to my flowers was my *own affair* ; own flowers, own pigs. Mine was a matter of mere imprudence, affecting nobody but myself : yours is a matter of duty ; imperious duty imposed on you by your solemn engagements with the people of America. That you are ready to perform that duty is certain ; that you have skill and courage adequate to the performance is also certain ; and, that you will perform it, must be the hope of every good man in the world. Already you are entitled to greater admiration and to more gratitude than any man now living ; and that you may consummate the glory of a life so useful, and which must be so renowned ; that you will do this, by extirpating from your country this monster of all monsters, is the ardent prayer of him who has the honour to be

Your most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P.S. Sir, I publish your letter in England, in order that it may be read by numerous persons in this country ; and, particularly, by the Members of the two Houses of Parliament.

TO THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

 (Political Register, November, 1833.)

SIR,

London, 14th November, 1833.

We, in England, are looking with the greatest possible anxiety, or, at least, I, and great numbers who think with me, are, to the result of the battle between you and the monster of paper-money. We have received an account of the battle up to the 9th of October, and I perceive, with great delight, that the devouring monster is writhing and reeling under your blows. You, during the late war, rendered your country greater service, and the cause of freedom and justice greater service, than ever was rendered by any one man in the world before; and, in my history of the reign of that king who caused upwards of thirty thousand pounds to be expended upon a single arch-way leading to a palace, I shall endeavour to do justice to your deeds in that war; but, if I were to succeed in doing you ample justice there, I could not make your merit appear to be a ten thousandth part so great in that case, as it is in the present case already; how then are we to do you justice, if you succeed in crushing this monster?

I see that fears exist, even amongst the enemies of the monster, whom you have taken by the throat; fears of credit and commerce being injured by a sudden diminution of the present money. It is in the nature of this accursed thing to pervert the minds of men. They call the paper "*money*," till they think it is money; and they practise roguery till they look upon it as honesty. There are very sincere persons that now put forth their fears upon this score; but I would ask them, whether any thing can happen to America so fatal as that of a gradual taking away of the farms from their virtuous owners and their families, and giving them, for nothing, to scoundrels with pens stuck behind their ears, and the far greater part of whom never earned a pound of bread from the day of their birth to the present hour? I would ask these persons this question. It is advisable to put down the monster with the producing of as little individual suffering as possible; but the suffering must come, first or last; and the later it arrives, the greater it will be. It may be spread over a longer period of time; but, when summed up at the end, it never will be so little as it would be at this time; and as for the effects of a "*shock*," the industrious part of the people in America, and particularly the farmers and planters, are too wise, too just, too humane, to suffer any "*shock*" to produce great calamities in the country. It is not for me to presume that you are not, as far as *reading* can go, well acquainted with the effects of the paper-money in this country. But no reading can give you anything like an adequate idea of those effects. In another part of this *Register* (which I shall take care to forward to you), you will find a

Report of a Committee of the House of Commons, which Committee sat and received evidence for three months during the last session of Parliament. To this report was attached a thick folio volume of the minutes of evidence, which I will also send you, if I can find an opportunity for doing it. If you could read this evidence, and then read the report, you would want little more to give you a full view of the state of degradation to which this system has reduced this country, so completely unrivalled in resources of all sorts, and particularly in that of industry and integrity. The members of this committee consisted of thirty-seven, beginning with Lord ALTHORP, Sir JAMES GRAHAM, Lord JOHN RUSSELL, and Sir ROBERT PEEL, each of them, in his own person, the representative of a *principality* belonging either to himself or his family. Besides these, with the exception of seven or eight out of the thirty-seven, I should suppose that the rest, on an average, have estates of their own, with a rental of not less than ten thousand pounds each. It would not be proper for me to express, out of my place in the House, the opinions which I entertain with regard to this report; but, Sir, I beseech you to read the minutes of evidence; I beseech you to look at the state of agriculture in England, as depicted in that evidence, and I assure you that the picture falls very far short of the horrid features of the case.

What, then, can have restrained these thirty-seven gentlemen from laying before the House and the kingdom a summary of the facts thus deposed to before them? It was neither want of talent nor of integrity. In a vast majority of these gentlemen it *could not be* want of inclination; because they are so far above all temptation to seek any interest in disguising the real state of the facts. What was it, then? It was a sort of indescribable dread of recommending anything, of even *expressing an opinion*, with regard to the practicability of any remedy, lest a shock should be given to the accursed system of paper-money, which in their hearts they abhor; but which they think cannot be shaken without shaking the whole fabric of Government to pieces. They see the evils clearly enough; they feel them themselves; they see their tenants perishing by slow degrees; they see their rents dwindling away; they see the paupers (a name formerly unknown in England) their rivals in receiving the proceeds of their estates; they see now, that all efforts to get rid of the rivalship are, and must be, vain; for that there are no laws that man can devise to make the hungry labourer submit to starvation without the most desperate efforts: these gentlemen see and know all this; and yet they think it their duty to abstain from stating the facts, though they have it in evidence laid before them in a most solemn proceeding. They know that their own order is perishing by degrees; they can go and see the tumbling-down state of some ancient 'squire's house in almost every village and hamlet in the kingdom; they see the sons of these 'squires flocking around the Government for pensions and places and sinecures, while they see the Jews and paper-money men amassing their estates together, and speculating in those estates in the same manner that they speculate in stock; they see the natural magistracy of the country, once so respected and venerated, totally annihilated, and the parsons, and military and naval officers, sitting upon the benches. They see the people's veneration, formerly so great and so admirable; their veneration for every one who bore the behests of the law: they see that people, to reduce whom to instant obedience, the sight of the sheriff's wand, or of the constable's staff, was formerly more than sufficient; they see that people in that state

which they themselves say, justifies the maintenance of an army of a hundred thousand men, at the end of eighteen years of profound peace.

Why, Sir, it is impossible that the members of this committee, and particularly, that the noblemen and gentlemen of ancient families who were upon it, should not deeply deplore this disgraceful and ominous change, and still more deplore the new and severe and sanguinary laws that the change has rendered necessary for the preservation of property and of life; it is impossible, too, that they should not see the *cause*; impossible that they should not see, that this destruction of the happy order of society, and of the happiness and character of the common working people, has been produced by the workings of the accursed paper-money: in fact, they know the cause well; but fear of immediate danger restrains them from either stating the cause, or suggesting the remedy. Party strife, rivalry for power, personal anger; even all these put together, could hardly have the injustice to impute *interested* motives to a vast majority of the members of this committee. The motive is that of *fear*; fear of attacking this system, lest a general shock and convulsion should be produced; adding to this fear a vague, undefinable hope, that things will mend themselves, or, at any rate, that this system may be carried on for many years longer!

You, Sir, might have been influenced by similar motives; but you have had the courage to meet the monster face to face at once. You could have suffered the system to go on; you would have experienced no personal inconvenience from it: if your soul had been sordid enough to set itself on the acquisition of riches, instead of fields spread over with corn or tobacco, you might have spread them over with dollars; and as to the presidency of the United States, you might have had that for life, and have bequeathed it by will, with the concurrence of the Bank; for, the thing would not have been perceived by the industrious and working part of the people: every newspaper, big or little, would have been at your absolute command; and all the idlers and cheaters (whose numbers would have been tenfold augmented) would have been on your side, and the elections would have become a despicable farce: the whole country would have become as corrupt as the legislature of PENNSYLVANIA itself, and that was corruption personified. You rejected masses of wealth and a bed of roses; you understood your duty; you saw that the monster must be crushed, or your country degraded and enslaved, and you had the virtue and the courage to resolve on crushing the monster.

Now, though Lord GREY very sincerely desired to have me shut up in jail to the end of my life, instead of seeing me in a seat in the House of Commons; though he has done many things, particularly with regard to Hampshire and Wiltshire, which I disapprove of, and for which I shall never forgive him until he make atonement, I will do him the justice to say, that I believe, that if he had been in your place he would have acted as you have acted; and, if I be asked, why he does not make preparations for following your example, I beg to remind those who ask the question, that the circumstances are very different; that my Lord GREY has a thing to deal with, which has been growing into strength for nearly a century and a half, instead of having been hatched as your monster was, only seventeen years ago; and that for more than half a century the workings of this English system were *apparently* harmless, besides being conducted by persons of great skill, probity, and unshakable steadiness. Your thing was born with the monster imprinted on its features;

its manifold mischiefs were coeval with its birth; like the musquitto, the moment it came into being it began to sting. Besides this, there is such a difference between your Bank directors and our Bank directors! Yours are profligate and greedy adventurers, who really have nothing of their own, if sifted to the bottom, and whose moral characters are not worth a straw. Ours are quite the contrary: they are men whose words pass like sterling gold, and who, generally speaking, really think that they are doing good instead of harm: it is a corporation that has existed for a century and a half nearly and that are the managers of a concern for a set of proprietors of lands or of real money. This is a very different affair from yours. Besides this difference, we have a *debt*, the annual interest of which far surpasses the rental of the lands in the kingdom in amount. Here are pretty nearly three hundred thousand creditors, who, together with their dependants, make more than a million and a half of persons, and these, principally, though feeble creatures themselves, great readers of newspapers and great talkers; and they have, in fact, the press more at command than your monster had. Your debt is become a mere trifle, and that trifle keeps diminishing, while your revenue and means of national defence keep on increasing; and even that trifling debt is in great part owned by foreigners and principally in England: the people of the United States; the mass of the industrious people, own little or none of this debt. What need they care whether the interest be duly paid or not? All these circumstances were in your favour, and are in your favour, compared with the circumstances by which Lord GREY is surrounded.

On the other hand, your monster has supporters in England in great abundance; and you have acted wisely in making that fact known to the people of the United States; and I should not do my duty to my country, and particularly to my constituents, if I did not make the fact known to them, which I shall do here while I think of it. On the 13. of April, 1830, a Committee of the House of Representatives of the Congress, sitting on matters relative to the Bank of the United States, made a report, of which the following formed a part: "When to the circumstances we add that the stock of the Bank was PRINCIPALLY HELD BY BRITISH SUBJECTS, and Americans of the *unpopular party*, the House will readily perceive how great were the *national prejudices*, which must have been arrayed against the proposition to renew its charter. It was stated by Mr. CLAY, in a speech delivered in the Senate, that SEVEN TENTHS of the stock belonged to British subjects, and that certain ENGLISH NOBLEMEN, and a LATE LORD CHANCELLOR, were among the *very largest of the stockholders.*"

Here we see the reason why your monster resorted to England to get allies in embarrassing your government, and opposing your re-election: here we see how quietly this accursed thing gives "*English noblemen*" and *Jews* a power to govern, in some sort, the people of the United States. I shall send you, sir, the tenth number of the "*History of the Regency and Reign of George the Fourth.*" You will there see that one of the objects of bringing BONAPARTE back, was, to have a new peace made with the Bourbons, and to compel France to have a GREAT DEBT, in order to put her under the protection and the guidance of the paper-system here. Those objects were accomplished, and you now see France, in spite of all the genius and heroism of her people, ground down under a despotism of money, far more inexorable, and more productive of misery, than the despotism that existed before her first revolution.

Thanks to the good sense and love of liberty in the people of the United States, the aid which your monster has received from these English allies, has not been sufficient to make head against that justice, prudence, and courage, which you are exercising for us and the whole world, as well as for your sensible and industrious constituents. Paper-money is a monster existing in a constant state of hostility to the ease, peace, and happiness, of the world; and a government which upholds it, encourages the lazy and cunning knave in his depredations upon simple and honest industry; it encourages idleness, and discourages useful exertion; it excites a desire in young people to be impatient of all obedience to parents and masters, to aim at making fortunes at a hit, and to despise the means of acquiring a competence by labour, attention and care. This curse of all curses destroys the moral sense of a people; it habituates them to false appearances, false promises, and accustoms them to consider the ruin of their creditors as a jest. It tempts fathers of families to bring destruction upon those families; it sends the paternal estates to be gambled for in the "*Money-market*"; it effaces the name of families imprinted on the same spot from generation to generation.

It is quite impossible for the tongue or pen of man to describe adequately the evils attendant upon this curse; and equally impossible to do justice to the merits of that man who has had the unparalleled virtue and resolution to set to work to eradicate this curse from his country.

My Lord GREY has a heavier task to perform; but it is not a task which he *ought* to be afraid to undertake. You have the great mass of the people with you. I was delighted to see an account of associations of the young men throughout the United States to stand by you in your *reto* against the renewal of the charter of the Bank. It was a proof of their justice and their sense: it was a proof of their resolution not to beget children to be the slaves of bands of tyrants with pens behind their ears. But, is my Lord GREY destitute of such support? By no means. The young men in England of the industrious orders, have no taste for this species of slavery, any more than those of America have. For many years they have been hoodwinked; the miscreant newspapers have hitherto done that which could not have been done without them; namely, they have persuaded the mass of the people, that the debt is something which they really owe. They are now universally convinced that they owe no part of it; that the fundholders are receiving twice as much as they ought to receive, even if the debt were acknowledged to have been a good one. They now scout the idea, that their children now in the cradle are morally bound to give up half their earnings for life, on account of a debt contracted by their grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and contracted, too, for purposes hostile to the well-being even of those grandfathers. In short, let my Lord GREY, taking my MANCHESTER lectures in his hand (which lectures I now send to you), call upon the people to stand by him, or only intimate a wish that they will stand by him, and the monster of paper-money expires without a struggle; for this monster has no foreign aid to resort to. Let him do this, and the King, Lords, and Commons are safe; the constitution is safe; those which remain of the laws of England are safe; the liberties of England and the moral character of the people, and their willing obedience and their happiness will all be restored, and so quickly, too, as to astonish even the people themselves. You, if you pursue the path you are now in, will, along with the coin, bring back that patient industry, that hospitality that ab-

sence of greediness of gain, and that total absence of want which distinguished happy America forty years ago. Here the effects would be the same, proceeding from a similar cause; for there is no reason to suppose that human nature will ever deviate from its natural course, except from unnatural causes.

But, alas! my Lord GREY has not the courage to make this appeal to the *people* of England. He is much about my age: there is no knowing which will die first: I would consent to live, clad in home-spun, to eat nothing but bread, and drink nothing but water to the end of my days, if my doing that would cause this blessed change to my country. He has connexions, and out of those connexions have arisen feelings which make him tremble at the thought of undertaking the task. If it could be accomplished by a *wish*; begun when he goes to bed some night, and ended at his waking in the morning, and all set to rights again, with his Majesty's coin in our hands instead of the accursed paper, he would, unquestionably, instantly order it to be done; or, at least, such is my opinion of his justice and love of country. But a *wish* is not sufficient: there must be exertion; must be a struggle; there must be strife; there must be a deadly war of words; and, to a certain extent, there must be peril; and these he has not the courage to encounter. There are the remonstrances of great bodies of interested persons; there are the outcries of the sufferers, though their suffering be just and necessary; there are the loud clamours of the ruined, and the silence of the benefited; there are the interpositions of friends, and the supplications of persons still nearer and dearer. It requires, to meet all these and to overcome them, more than is to be expected from one man out of ten millions. America has had the happiness to produce and possess such a man; that my Lord GREY may prove such another man to England is my sincere wish, but far, very far, indeed, from being my expectation.

You, sir, will ask, and very rationally ask, *what then will Lord GREY do in this state of things?* He will do nothing; or, at least, so I fear. He dreads convulsion and revolution from the application of the American remedy. "But, then," you will ask, with astonishment on your countenance, "*does he not see, that revolution is inevitable, if he do not apply the remedy?*" Why, sir, here I *doubt*. I can hardly think so meanly of that understanding which has, in all other things, shown itself to be great; but, seeing what I see, and hearing what I hear, I am disposed to believe, that Lord GREY, Lord ALTHORP, and even Sir JAMES GRAHAM, who are unquestionably the three persons of the greatest consideration in this kingdom, as appertaining to matters of this sort; from what I see, and what I hear, I am disposed to believe, that these three distinguished persons think, that this system can be carried on, without limit as to duration, without producing revolution. So decided is my opinion to the contrary of this, that I would never enter the House of Commons again, if I did not believe, that in a comparatively short space of time, a change of the system would take place.

And, Sir, pray now look at our state. One considerable branch of taxation has, in fact, been put an end to by *the people themselves*; for, in spite of those coercive measures, mentioned in the former letter which I did myself the honour to address to you, the house and window tax is only partially collected, and indeed it cannot be collected. You have only to read the evidence attached to the report of the agricultural committee before mentioned, to be convinced, that another great branch of the revenue

must be lopped off. In answer to the incessant call of the people to lighten their burdens, there is nothing to present them with but the two words, "NATIONAL FAITH," which words have lost their power as completely as the words "*godly reformation*" lost their power during the strife for the passing of the Catholic Bill. It is very curious; but not more curious than strictly true, that the tradesmen and artizans and manufacturing work-people, and even the agricultural labourers, understand this matter a great deal better than even the nobility and gentry do. As to this science, I have been the great teacher in England. And that was quite enough for the nobility, gentry, loanmongers, and Jews, to reject the teaching. I have had, with a very few exceptions, all the newspapers, all the reviews, all the magazines, and all the pamphlets against me. For twenty-seven years I have carried on the fight against this monster of paper-money: very frequent essays in the *Register*, during the whole of the time; "*Paper against Gold*," a work, constantly selling, more or less, during the last twenty-three years; lectures delivered by me, throughout the principal towns and cities of all England, except in the counties of Devon, Dorset, and Cornwall; two hundred thousand two-penny pamphlets, under the name of "*Two-penny Trash*," a name given to it by me, for the same reason that the French republicans gloried in the name of "*sans-culottes*;" but, above all the rest, full a hundred thousand copies of "*Paper against Gold*," spread about in little Numbers at two-pence a-piece, which are now moulded into a volume which sells as regularly and as constantly as the Bible; so that I have finally beaten the paper-money crew, and prepared it for the natural effects of the united hostility of the people. Small as my portion of the press is in appearance, it is more than a match for all the rest. It sends forth that which the people understand; and without this, writing is useless. Subjects in their nature dry and unentertaining, are enlivened by the natural bent of the mind of the writer. If I cannot reclaim, I can expose to ridicule; and thus it is that I succeed. The high price of my periodical paper operates advantageously to the spread of my principles rather than otherwise. The expense is too great for one man; he gets others to join him, and here are several readers instead of one. In populous places there are large clubs of *Register* readers. One man reads to fifty or a hundred, and they comment as they proceed. After that, I can safely trust the members of that club with My Lord BROUGHAM's "*Penny Weekly Magazine*," which when read at all, is read by poor feeble creatures, who read for mere amusement; and who, politically considered, are of no more consequence than just the same number of gnats. I was delighted to find, being at a little village called EASTBOURNE, in Sussex, and equally surprised to find, that there was a *Register* taken even in that little village. I found that it was taken by a club of agricultural labourers consisting of twenty-one members, and that it was regularly read on the Sunday evening to the members who subscribed for the purchasing of it, and to pay for bringing it from the post-town by the carrier.

During all these twenty-three years of teaching, the nobility, gentry, and clergy, with very few exceptions, have been so far from being taught by me, that they have despitely used, and cruelly persecuted, when they have had the power, all those whom they discover to be readers of my writings. When Lord St. VINCENT was first Lord of the Admiralty, he issued an order, forbidding "*COBBETT'S REGISTER*" to be suffered to

be taken on board of any of the King's ships. Lord AYKELSFORD signed a paper, and caused it to be signed by his tenants and neighbours, threatening the landlord of an inn with the cessation of their custom, unless he compelled me to go out of his house, in which I was staying for a few days in consequence of a very severe cold. Therefore, these great and rich persons have never read what I have written; so that they are in a state of profound ignorance, while the common people are all enlightened upon the subject; and now, when all the elements of political strife and convulsion are making their appearance, they are staring at each other, and wondering what can be the cause. Combinations and open declarations of sober and worthy tradesmen against the payment of taxes; fires blazing in the homesteads, from one end of England to the other. They look astounded, and cry out against these un-English doings. If they had read my writings, instead of persecuting the author, and those who did read them, the present state of things never could have been. They treated me with injustice and cruelty; and they instructed their hirelings to pour out calumnies upon me. I, in return, assaulted them with scorn and ridicule. This produced more persecution and more calumny from them. This was returned with more bitterness of scorn and of ridicule, and with exultation at their embarrassment and danger. Whether we are to be reconciled at last I do not know; but I am determined never to cease to assault them, till they and their hirelings first cease to assault me. They, without provocation, began the war, and from them shall come the first overtures of peace. Or, let them cling to the Jews, if they like, till they be all swamped together.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Your most humble, and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO LORD ALTHORP.

ON THE AMERICAN PAPER-MONEY.

(*Political Register*, February, 1834.)

Bolt-court, 3. February, 1834.

MY LORD,

Towards the close of the last session of Parliament, I, as bookseller and part book-maker, did myself the honour to send you a little book, entitled *The Curse of Paper-Money; or, a Brief History of Banking in the United States of America*. This book, which I dedicated to the Speaker of the House of Commons, and to which I prefixed an introduction of my own, exposed to your lordship the monstrous mischiefs produced in the United States by the use of paper-money. I am sure that your lordship would read the book with great attention; I am also sure that it would produce a great effect upon your mind; and, great numbers of gentlemen having purchased the book, I am not without hope that it will have produced a proper effect upon the minds of others.

The picture presented to us in that book; the desolation produced by the paper-money, in a country before so happy, and almost without debt; the enormous increase of crime in the city of Philadelphia, in which I had lived for eight years, without ever having heard of a burglary or a theft; the multitude of "*paupers*" in those counties of Pennsylvania in which the name of pauper had never been heard of, when I was a resident there; the name given to the few persons who stood in need of township relief, being that of "*poor persons*," such as it stands in the just and benignant act of Queen Elizabeth, which was the real glory of her reign, and which was, for two hundred years, the boast of England.

This picture was, perhaps, the *most* interesting that statesman ever fixed his eyes on. What are treaties with foreign powers; what are negotiations and diplomatic intrigues; what are all the pride of letters and of arms, when put in competition with that science, a knowledge of which teaches rulers how to make a people happy! Here, then, in this picture, we have an account of that which made a people miserable, from having been the happiest in the world; which made a people criminal, from having been the most innocent in the world; which made want prevail where scarcely a human being existed who was not in possession of plenty; which introduced the use of the word "*pauper*" into a country where it had never before been pronounced. In this little book we see legislative assemblies, consisting of grave and sensible men, representing the foundations of society as actually breaking up, and not knowing how to go to work to arrest the dreadful progress; we hear judges proposing to the legislature to pass laws to justify the breaking of contracts between man and man; we hear other judges recommending the passing of laws not to suffer any money contract between man and man to be binding, unless first sanctioned by a court of justice: and all this, in a country with the cheapest Government upon earth; with a sensible and brave people, who had but the other day been able to fight England single-handed, without ever talking of a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

Upon beholding these effects, one is tempted to ask what great change in the course of nature can have been at work in the producing of them; whether some convulsion of nature, some change in the seasons, some disease communicating insanity as well as imbecility of frame; one is tempted to ask whether the Almighty has not interfered immediately, as in the case of the plagues of Egypt; and, when the answer is, that nothing of this sort has happened; that the dreadful sufferings and disgrace have arisen solely from the creating of a set of vagabonds, and the allowing of them to make paper-money, and to augment and diminish the quantity of it at their pleasure, we feel indignation resembling that which we feel when we see a group of chopsticks dining upon potatoes and salt, while a sinecure man and his troop of sinecure women and children, lie lolling back in his carriage as he goes by them, and return their bow with a haughty inclination of the head.

Where a country is borne down by taxation; where we almost see the farmer's, the tradesman's, or the artisan's dinner taken from his table, and handed over before his face to the pensioner, the sinecurist, or the whiskered receiver of dead-weight money; where we see this, we can account for the misery of a people; we are not surprised to see the nut-ton-bone come to and go from the tradesman's table, till it has not an atom of swallowable matter left either on the outside or on the inside of it; we are not surprised when we empty out the labourer's bag, and find

cold potatoes and a wisp of salt ; but, when we see a people who know hardly any thing of taxes, who have no soldiers, English or German, to cram ; who know nothing of gateways costing seventy-five thousand pounds ; who have no half-pay people to look through panes of glass costing five pounds a piece, and who are waited upon by waiters in silk stockings ; a people who would knock a man down, if he were to propose to them to pay taxes to the Government, in order that the Government might lend the money to city-jobbers, that they might pull down houses and make "*improvements*," and provide themselves with everlasting guttling and guzzling ; when we see a people who would no more submit to have their houses rummaged by excisemen, than they would submit to be boiled in oil ; when we see such a people reduced to the state described by the little book before mentioned, we have great difficulty in bringing our minds to the belief that the evil can have been produced by so contemptible a cause as that of paper-money.

We deceive ourselves, however, here : the cause is not *contemptible* : it is mighty : it is tremendous in performing works of mischief. It appears a trifling and inoffensive thing in itself, especially if you be not compelled to take the paper-money and to pass it ; for, in this case, it would appear that the people like it, and who is to say, that that which they like is not for their good ? This is the cheat ; this is the fraud ; and the fraud is extensively mischievous, because it is hidden. The business of law-making is two-fold ; it is to punish the guilty ; but, only because this is necessary to the protection of the innocent. The wrong-doer ought to be punished ; but it is not less the duty of the law-giver to protect the innocent against wrong being done to them. What would be thought of a government that neglected to endeavour to preserve the people against the evils of idleness, drunkenness, prostitution, adultery, and other moral offences ? Yet, it might be said, "The people like these : why not suffer them to have what they like ?" But, the paper-money work goes farther than these : what would be thought of a Government if it proclaimed that it highly approved of the existence of a great number of cunning men, who should be constantly at work in cheating the rest of the community ; in over-reaching them ; in living luxuriously on their labour ; in heaping riches together for themselves, from the earnings of the rest of the community ; in practising an invention, by which they must naturally get away men's estates, without giving any thing of value for them ? What would be thought of a Government that should openly profess its desire to see all this ? Yet this is in reality done by every Government that permits the existence of a paper-money.

In America, the debt is now become next to nothing, and the taxes required for the expenses of the Government are so inconsiderable, as to be seriously felt by no man ; yet, see the mischiefs which even in such a state of things can be effected by this tolerated swindle ! If, then, such mischiefs can be effected in the United States, what must be the magnitude of the mischiefs here, where the taxes add a hundred-fold to the power of paper-money in the doing of mischief ! The American people complain of the *MONOPOLIES*, which are engendered by this system of paper ; and a prodigious mischief these monopolies are. What can be more wicked than to give to any body of men the power of raising and of lowering prices at their pleasure, and to give to one individual, who is connected with banking, the power of purchasing that which is wanted by his neighbours, and who could purchase it, or share of it, or part of it,

out of the honest means which they possess, if he had not not the fraudulent means of purchasing away from them.

I have often complained, and I do complain, of the weight of the taxes; but, burdensome as they are, they would be bearable, were there no other burden attached to them; the monopolies arising out of them cost the country more than a very large part of the taxes themselves. I have often had to state the cost of the Malt-tax and the Hop-tax. The former, from which you receive into the Exchequer about four millions and a half a year, costs the people more than thirteen millions a year. There are the license, the exciseman, the restrictions, the penalties; but, besides these, there is the monopoly, and, without the paper-money, this monopoly could not exist. With regard to the hops, the monopoly is still greater and more mischievous in degree. Here is a tax, that generally yields next to nothing in clear money; and yet it costs the country two or three millions a year. It is the same in every thing: sugar, tallow, the power to make and lend paper-money, gives to a few persons such an advantage over all the rest of the community, that all the rest are in a great degree their slaves.

Upon the face of the thing, it is an impudent fraud. It is an obtaining of something valuable for nothing valuable: it is taking the produce of the land and the land itself away from the possessors, and giving them nothing that is valuable in exchange: it is, in short, a licensed and crafty system of fraud, by which a people are beggared, without perceiving the cause of their beggary; and, when it has been tolerated for any length of time, nine-tenths of those who carry on the fraud regard it as a thing, not only legal but laudable. The natural tendency of paper-money is to draw property into great masses, to make a few persons very rich, the community in general very poor, and totally to destroy the harmony and happiness of the people.

These opinions of mine, which are, indeed, no more than the opinions of other Englishmen, in great numbers, from the first moment of the establishment of the Bank of England to the present hour, have now been proved to be true beyond all possible question. In England the sufferings of the people, the disturbance of property, the want of employment, the deterioration of morals, had a duplicate cause to be ascribed to. We always had to say, that the poverty of the main body of the people; that their excessive misery was ascribable to the great weight of taxation, cooperating with, and aggravated by, the existence of a paper-money, issuable in whatever quantities the paper-money-makers chose. The chief outcry, therefore, with us has been against the taxes; against the burden of taxation, people in general not perceiving how that burden was aggravated by the paper-money. In the case of PEARL'S Bill even, though the thing was so plain, comparatively few persons saw it. Had there been no taxes, or none worth speaking of, PEARL'S Bill would not, as it is now, have been producing the terrible ruin that it is producing in 1834. In short, the Bill never would have been necessary in any degree. It is in America where we see the mischievous nature of paper-money: there is a country without taxes worth speaking of; without those tithes, which are said, now-a-days, to be injurious to the cultivation of the land; without a standing army in time of peace; without pensioners, sinecure placemen, or any of those numerous causes that afflict us; there is a country in which, fifty years ago, heinous crime was hardly known; and thefts and robberies were so very rare, as to be looked upon when they

occurred as something very extraordinary. Look at the book, my lord, which is mentioned at the outset of this letter : and that you have looked at it, I cannot but believe ; and in that book you see, that all the great evils with which a country can be afflicted, have been brought upon America by paper-money ; so that this curse is of itself sufficient to ruin a country. What must such a curse be, then, when in existence in a country like England at this time !

But it was not with a view of repeating these ten-thousand times stated sentiments of mine that I now took up the pen to address your lordship ; but with the view of laying before you my opinion of the probable consequences to us of the demolition of the paper-system in America. An Englishman, who is still an Englishman though living at New York, has recently written to me, and given it as his opinion, that the struggle that is now going on between real property and industry on the one side, and the paper-money phalanx on the other side, will end in a total demolition of the paper-money in that country. He tells me that popular indignation against the paper-money grinders is at a very great height. He tells me that "banker" is become a term of reproach, synonymous with that of "Jew." I know very well how things go in America. I have witnessed several distinct attempts to create a sort of aristocracy of one kind or another. These attempts have always crept on towards success, but have never attained it. It is some time before the people are aroused into general alarm ; but when once they are, the popular cause is sure to prevail. WASHINGTON, who was lucky all his life, and who deserved to be lucky, was still more lucky in his death ; for if he had lived but a very few years, nay, only one year longer, he would have seen the principal acts of his administration reprobated by the people.

My correspondent has this passage in his letter :—"If this (the demolition of the paper-money), were to take place, it would produce injury to nobody, except those who plunder the people by monopoly, which monopolies are created by the false money. It will not operate like your PEEL'S Bill ; because our debt is gone, and we have no fixed payments to make. The labouring man will get three quarters of a dollar instead of a dollar for his day's work ; but he will get for that three quarters of a dollar, just as much meat, drink, and clothing, as he can now get for a dollar. I need not tell you this, who have so often ridiculed the notion, that the quantity of money ought to be in proportion to the amount of pecuniary transactions in a country ; but it gives me pleasure to tell you, that this matter is clearly understood by every working man in the United States of America ; while they all see, clearly, that it is they who have to keep the bankers, their clerks, their carriages, their fine houses, and their expensive families. This being the case, I leave you to guess whether there be not a strong probability of the destruction of this paper-system ; and, if this destruction take place, let your Lord ALTHORP look sharply about him."

So say I, my lord. If that destruction should take place, you must look sharply about you. The commercial cities of the United States of America are little less closely connected with England than Liverpool is with London. Cash payments in reality taking place there, would have more effect upon our pecuniary concerns, than the total abolition and prohibition of bank-notes in Scotland and Ireland put together. Now, what would be the effect of a law to suppress bank-paper in Ireland ? A great drain upon the Bank of England for gold. And what the effect

of that? A lessening of the quantity of bank currency in circulation. And what the effect of that? A great and general lowering of prices. And what the effect of that? The taking away of the remnant of the estates of the landowners and giving them to the fundholders.

This is, therefore, a matter of prodigious importance to us. The distance of the United States is nothing. I need not tell your Lordship how great and how intimate, and how naturally and necessarily permanent the commercial connection between the two countries is: I need not tell you this, because you know it as well as I do; but I beg leave to remind you of the *great drain upon the Bank of England*, which must necessarily be occasioned by a return to specie currency in America. Your Lordship is, I trust, not of the PETER M'CALL-LOCH school: you have too sound a head upon your shoulders to talk about the advantages of a "cheap currency, mon"; and to think that a nation can *gain*, and continue to be permitted to gain, by using paper, while its neighbours use gold. You must see, in short, that a portion of the real money now spread over the world, must be drawn to America to supply the place of a demolished paper-money: you must know, too, that that portion must be large: you must know that the quantity will be in proportion to the valuable things possessed and dealt in by the United States. And therefore, you must know, that in the case contemplated, the drain upon England for specie must be very large, probably four times as large as the drain would be, in consequence of the abolition of a paper-money in Ireland.

The warning of my correspondent, therefore, and his advice, "that you look sharply about you," is by no means impertinent. For, I would beg leave to ask your lordship, how this great drain of specie from England is to be met, except in one of two ways: namely, *FIRST*, by a diminution of the quantity of bank-paper, producing all the effects above enumerated; or by a *Bank-restriction*, as it has been seriously called, and the history and mystery of which, I perceive, the people of America are reading in a new edition of my "*PAPER AGAINST GOLD*." And, I pray you, my lord, to let me stop here a little, to indulge in a small portion of that "*egotism*," which the "race that write" accuse me of. Let me do, like the girl, who, having the misfortune to be accused, took the resolution of not being accused for nothing. Well, then, let me boast that, from one end to the other of the republic of America, "*PAPER AGAINST GOLD*" (which I wrote while I was in jail for writing about Hanoverian troops, drawn round English local militia-men at the town of ELY, while they were flogged); let me boast, that this nice little book, written by me, for the purpose of taking vengeance on the system, under which I was suffering, is now sent forth in cheap editions in America, and is assisting the natural good sense of the people of that country, to urge their rulers to put an end to abominable cheats, frauds, and robberies, of paper-money; and, my real opinion is, that, if the members of both Houses of Parliament were all to take that book and read it through with attention, it would be impossible for this paper-system to exist for two years longer: it is the cause of all our troubles, all our distresses, and of all those odious inventions which have supplanted the institutions of England. In this book is told the whole story, from the enactment of the Bank, at the Revolution, up to the date of the report of the Bullion Committee in 1810. The history, the mystery, the roguery, the profound hypocrisy, the monstrous iniquity, of paper-money, are all there developed; and, if the nobility, gentry, and

clergy in England have not had the courage to look at it, they are now tasting the effects of it; and they will taste the effects of it still more largely, if the people of America should persevere and extinguish the monster in their country.

Upon the supposition that they should do this, the drain before-mentioned upon our real money must take place; the drain will extend itself to every part of the civilized world; prices must fall in all countries; but the fall will be greater in this than in any other, because its share of the currency of the world is much greater than that of any other; and because its connexion with America is so close. It must produce a great diminution of the quantity of the currency in England; it must add greatly to the value of money in England. It must make the present fifty millions of taxes worth more than they are now, by perhaps twenty millions a year. We are now paying the fundholders two for one, we shall then pay them three for one; and this is what cannot be done, if there were a soldier at every ten yards, placed along the streets and the roads, and a Bourbon-police station in every village, and a POPAY in every other house.

There is the other alternative to be sure: PETER M'CULLOCH'S "*cheap currency*": paper not payable in gold: assignats as neat as ever were made in the world. But come once to them, and away go everything that the twenty-two years' war was professed to be intended to preserve. In spite of any and of every earthly force, the gold and the paper will come into open war. Your Lordship's legal tender is a little beginning; it is the entering wedge which, driven up to the head, will shiver everything to pieces.* How, in the midst of these works, any part of this Government is to stand, I cannot perceive. It will be impossible to discharge the paper in gold; and when it becomes worthless, the holders of it will go to things of value, find them where they may.

Thus have I laid before your lordship my opinions relative to the effects upon us, of the probable demolition of the paper-money in America, which abolition I do most earnestly pray may speedily take place. In the book which I mentioned at the outset of this letter, and a copy of which I thought it my duty to send to your lordship, it is shown, not by paragraphs in newspapers; not by the contents of pamphlets; but by the reports of committees of the legislative assemblies all over the United States, that this accursed instrument of specious fraud has actually taken farms, by thousands upon thousands, from honest and industrious, and even prudent men; and has turned out their families to be mere labourers, at the best; and will you not, then, begin to consider of the means of delivering England from this scourge? I hold it to be next to impossible for a paper-money to be totally abolished in the United States; and for a paper-money payable in gold, to be payable in England; and, as I firmly believe, that the abolition will take place in the United States, I must think that it is incumbent on your lordship, in particular, to be well and resolutely prepared to meet that event. Already steps of importance have been taken towards that abolition: the lowering of the tariff has been judiciously provided for: the State of Pennsylvania (one of the largest and richest) has prohibited the circulation of all notes under five dollars, whether

* The legal-tender clause of the Bank Charter Act of 1833, which was followed by the panic of 1837.—ED.

of that or any other State. As silver is the great currency of that country, even this alteration will produce a depreciation of the paper in the other States, unless its quantity be diminished. If nothing under ten pounds in the way of notes were suffered to circulate in Northamptonshire, the counties round it must soon diminish their quantities of paper, or Northamptonshire would take away all their gold. In short, the paper-system seems to have gone on till it can go very little further; and, as great events, and great changes in the world, have almost always depended upon decisions taken in the minds of particular men; so it appears to me, that it will very much depend upon the decision of your lordship, whether this Government shall destroy the paper-money, and live itself; or, whether, by its efforts to preserve it, it should be dragged down into ruin along with it.

That your decision may lead to the former result, is the sincere and most anxious wish of

Your most obedient
And most humble servant,
WM. COBBETT.

CORN BILL.

TO THE PEOPLE OF GLASGOW.

(Political Register, March, 1834.)

Bolt-court, 25. March, 1834.

THERE is a paper, entitled "The LIBERATOR," published in your city. In that paper I find some very strong censure on me for what I was reported to have said on the presentation of the GLASGOW petition for a repeal of the Corn Laws. I will insert the article first; and then you shall see how I will twist down its at once stupid and malignant author.

"PARLIAMENT.—Only one hundred and fifty-five members of the precious House have been found, with energy of mind and honesty of purpose sufficient to vote for a committee to inquire into the propriety of a given annually diminishing duty on foreign corn. Three hundred and twelve voted directly against the proposition, who may be considered the bold and barefaced abettors of national robbery, and the rest of the members who deserted, the craven *footpads* of the plundering 'order.' In the minority, about eighteen Scottish members are enumerated; Messrs. Oswald and Ewing being included, the latter confessedly unable to resist the appeal of 60,000 of his fellow-citizens; and the whole of the Irish members, with the exception of O'Connell and about a dozen of his immediate friends, are either in the majority or among the *sneakers-off*. How these can excuse themselves, or again call for the responsive sympathy of the people of England and Scotland, in their appeals and repeal questions, let time determine: they have now broken faith with Britain, and exhibited the cloven-foot of *self*, as the supporters of injustice and oppression towards their

fellow-subjects; they have indeed proved 'who are the traitors,' and is *Sheil* also among them? Among the English *deserters*, we cannot be surprised, after his expression regarding those who signed the Glasgow petition, to find *Cobbett*. He would prove that the whole of the Glasgow male population (all at least who signed the petition), and who, according to Mr. Oswald, were most 'enlightened and intelligent,' a set of '*ignorant and deluded wretches*. And how could *Cobbett* prove this? Perhaps by referring to what he experienced while sojourning among us, when even the operatives put a few plain questions to him which he could neither comprehend nor answer, and we well recollect the hearty sneer emitted by the hoary veteran at the proposal as to the best means of educating and improving the literary taste of workmen—"Give them *learning* and books!" says he, 'fill their bellies with good beer and *bacon*!' a sentiment well worthy of the man who, in Paisley, *turned with contempt* from the *rich, vast*, and various productions of human *ingenuity*, to lick his lips, and gloat over, with the gross zeal of a beastly gourmand, the huge, flat, and *filthy occupants* of a pig-sty. '*Fill their bellies*,' says *Cobbett*; and at the same time he denies them corn at a sufficient price to do so. This is, however, but another instance of the consistent inconsistency of one who repudiates popular education, yet writes a *Register* weekly, on the exorbitant profits of which he lives, the ostensible purpose of which is to teach the people; of one who is a great admirer of *kingly pomp*, yet denounces the taxes by which such pomp is upheld and perpetuated."

I will first notice the barefaced lies in this paper.

1. That I am an admirer of *kingly pomp*. On the contrary; but, I do not grudge that which is necessary to support the King in the use of his palace, his gardens, and other objects calculated to make his life pleasant, and to enable him to live in a style greatly superior to that of any of his subjects.
2. I do not repudiate "*popular education*." I am for letting people do as they like about it; but I am against taxing the people, in order to enable the Government to appoint a schoolmaster and schoolmistress in every parish; I am against taxing the married people to pay for the "*heddekashun*" of bastards; I am against taxing single people to pay for the "*heddekashun*" of married people's children; I am against raising up hundreds of thousands of idlers to live upon the labour of those who work.
3. So far from "*turning with contempt*" from the wonderful performances of the manufacturers of PAISLEY, those which I did see I beheld with great admiration; but professed my want of knowledge as to such matters, and my want of taste; professed my incompetence to speak upon the subject; and contented myself with expressing my indignation at seeing the ingenious operators compelled to lie upon straw, and live upon miserable oat-meal.
4. I did not "*sneak away*" from the discussion on Mr. HUMPHREY'S motion; I stayed to hear him for an hour, Sir JAMES GRAHAM for two hours, and Mr. POULETT THOMSON for three hours. I could not dispute the turn with Mr. BARING; or, I should have shown, that which indeed was confessed by the advocates of the motion, that it had no tendency whatsoever to make corn at a lower price, either now or at any other time; and, wanting to go home to go to sleep, having heard all that could be said upon the subject by others, I went home instead of staying to vote against the motion, which I should if I had stayed, as something perfectly useless, and perfectly senseless.
5. It is asserted here, that I called the GLASGOW petitioners, "*ignorant and deluded wretches*." This is not only a falsehood, but a falsehood of great malignity. Mr. OSWALD having read the petition,

which petition ascribed all the calamities of the country to the Corn Laws ; which petition asserted that the Corn Laws were a cruel tax upon bread ; and asserted, that the repeal of those laws would relieve the working people from their present distresses ; Mr. OSWALD having read this petition, told the House, that " it came from sixty thousand of the best-educated and most enlightened people in the kingdom." I said that, " as the honourable Member had asserted the petitioners to be amongst the best educated people of the kingdom, I could not dispute the fact ; but that, whenever the subject came before the House for discussion, I would undertake to prove that, *as far as related to this particular subject, ignorance more gross, and delusion more complete, never were heard of in the world, than those which were manifest in this very petition.*"

And, not having had an opportunity to do it when Mr. HUME's motion was brought forward, I will do it now ; and I am very sure I shall do it to the satisfaction even of the sixty thousand men, who were prevailed upon to sign this petition : a petition worthy of the best attention of the House, and, of course, worthy of my best attention ; but a petition, much as I respected those who signed it, which was not to blind my judgment ; not to take from me my knowledge of facts ; and, above all things, not to prevent me from endeavouring to dissipate the delusion under which I was sure the petitioners were labouring ; a terrible and mischievous delusion, too ; because it draws the people aside from the real causes of sufferings, and tends to prevent those measures which would tend to relieve them from their distress.

I am now going to show the absurdity, the gross folly, the impudence, of this man, who calls the Corn Laws "*national robbery,*" and who calls those who voted against Mr. HUME's motion, or who did not vote at all, "*traitors to the people, and the footpads of the plundering order.*"

Before, however, I proceed into the real matter of the subject, let me observe, that the motion which Mr. HUME brought forward was not the motion of which he had given notice. He had given notice of a motion for such an alteration in the Corn-laws, as would lead to their total repeal, or abolition. This was not the motion that he made ; his motion was merely for a *fixed duty* on corn, instead of the present *graduated duty* ; and both he and Mr. POULETT THOMSON declared, that the proposition, if adopted, would not have a tendency to make corn cheaper than it would be if it were not adopted. Both of them said, that they scorned to seek popularity by the holding forth of *any such hope to the people!* So that here was not much in the way of response to the GLASGOW petition, which represented the Corn Bill as causing bread to be dearer than it otherwise would be : and which represented the dear bread, thus occasioned, to be the great source of all the sufferings of the country. It was, therefore, no very monstrous offence against the GLASGOW petitioners to vote against this inefficient, this inoperative, this unmeaning motion. Had the motion been for a repeal of the Corn-laws, I and my colleague would have *voted for the repeal* ; but, not without having an opportunity to prove to the country, that we gave that vote for reasons wholly and entirely other than those stated by the GLASGOW petitioners ; and also wholly and entirely different from the reasons stated by Mr.

HUME and by Mr. POULETT THOMSON. If ever the motion be made, in a plain and distinct manner, for a repeal of the Corn-laws, I will vote for it, unless, in the meanwhile, circumstances should arise different from those which exist at present: but it will not be because the Corn-laws are tyrannical or unjust in principle, nor because their existence is injurious to the working-people.

I now come to show the want of knowledge discovered in the GLASGOW petition. The petitioners represent the Corn-laws to be the sole cause of the miseries of the country; it represents that they make bread dear; and, therefore, prevent the working-people from having as much of it for their wages as they otherwise would have. It is curious that this is not the doctrine of Mr. HUME and Mr. POULETT THOMSON, who want the Corn-laws altered, in order that the WAGES OF THE MANUFACTURING OPERATIVES MAY BE LOWERED; so that if I had voted for Mr. HUME's motion, I should have voted for the lowering of the wages of the operative manufacturers of GLASGOW and PAISLEY.

However, leaving the Glasgow petitioners to praise Mr. HUME and Mr. POULETT THOMSON for their efforts to lower their wages, I will now proceed. The petitioners of GLASGOW want cheaper bread. They should then have petitioned for some law relative to the charges of *millers and bakers*; for, the wheat is as cheap now as it was in the time of their grandfathers; taking the average of the kingdom through, it is not more than forty shillings the quarter. How, then, would they get cheaper bread by repealing the Corn-laws? This is a matter from which these Corn-law gentry always fly off. It is *dear bread* and *cheap wheat*; and yet they turn away from the truth, and pitch in upon the landlords, as if they made the bread dear.

I mentioned, in my place in the House, a few days ago, a base and most atrocious misrepresentation, circulated gratis, in a stampless publication, called the "QUARTERN LOAF." At the head of this publication is a *vignette* encircling the following statement:

"THE QUARTERN LOAF.	
"Flour and baking . . .	$4\frac{3}{4}d.$
"Landlord's tax	$3\frac{1}{4}$
<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	
"Total	$8\frac{1}{4}d.$ "
<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	

And this is called "*useful knowledge*"; and a tax upon this paper is called a "*tax upon knowledge*." Now, let us see what sort of knowledge this is. At this time, a bushel of the very best wheat costs, at the most, six shillings and eightpence; that is to say, eighty pence. This bushel of wheat will make sixty-four pounds of the best bread. So that the FOUR-POUND LOAF (for there is no quatern loaf now) of the very best bread, made from the very best wheat, costs, as far as the wheat is concerned, fivepence; and it is sold for eightpence-halfpenny. All that the landlord, the farmer, the labourer, the poor of the parish, the high-wayward, the parson or tithe-owner, the county-rate to preserve the peace of the country; all that they charge upon this four-pound loaf, even on their very best wheat, is *fivepence*, and the loaf costs the eater *eightpence-halfpenny*. What a foolish, or what an excessively base man, then, must this quatern-loaf gentleman be! What pretty knowledge he circulates about; and what a sin it is to have a tax to prevent such knowledge from circulating!

One would hope that this exposition would suffice for honest and sensible and industrious persons, like the petitioners of GLASGOW, who have been deluded by statements of this sort, only because they have not taken time, or had opportunity to look into the matter. The knave, or fool, or both, who circulates this rubbish, does it for the purpose of picking up a few pennies, caring nothing at all about the consequences; but so far from sixty thousand men being to be found in GLASGOW, entertaining dishonest designs, I would pledge my life that there are not sixty men of that description to be found in that industrious city, taking PAISLEY into the account. One of the reasons which I would give for voting for a repeal of the Corn-bill, is, that it would effectually dissipate this delusion. From the very first mention of the Corn-bill, I was against it, I petitioned against it, and I pursued the Bill with my petition to the Lords; and my principal objection to it was, that, while it never could be a safe and sufficient protection to the land, it would be a constant source of heartburning amongst the people; it would constantly give lazy knaves a handle for deluding industrious men; it would be a constant means of withdrawing the attention from the people of the real cause of their sufferings, and would thus do great mischief to the nation at large, while it was impossible that it could be a protection to the land. For this reason, amongst others, I would now vote for its repeal; but never will I, either expressly or tacitly, give my countenance to the monstrous delusion, that the Corn-laws are the cause of the sufferings of the industrious part of the people.

Let us now take another look at the matter. The Glasgow petitioners seem to look upon Corn-laws, as something so tyrannical in their nature; so obviously tyrannical, that the fact ought to be taken for granted, unsupported by any argument, either of authority or assertion. As these sensible persons of GLASGOW (and I allow them to be amongst the most sensible persons in the kingdom) are not amongst those *doctrinaires*, who deny that there ever were any such things as real liberty and good laws in England, they will please to recollect, that we have, in the statute-book, still preserved, Corn-laws, from the time of Edward the Third to the present day; which shows, at any rate, that Corn-laws and free institutions and happy people can co-exist; and it shows, besides, that in all times such laws have been deemed consonant with the principles of freedom and of justice; but, let us concede to the *doctrinaires*, let us concede to that garret-bred crew; let us concede to this crew, who think that nobody ought to have public money but themselves; and who, having in their eye the old maxim that, "when the political pot boils, the scum gets to the top"; and feeling in every fibre of them, that they themselves are scum, are so anxious to set the pot a boiling; let us concede to this crew, that there never was anything good in England; that all has been bad and devilish; and that our forefathers who built the cathedrals and founded the abbeys, and who built the sixteen thousand parish churches in England, seven or eight hundred years ago; let us concede to the conceited, garret-bred vermin, that these our fathers were a mere handful of ragamuffins, without money, without goods, clad in skins with the hair on, and living upon acorns and pig nuts. Still, if we concede all this to them, they will hardly contend that there are neither free institutions, nor justice, nor good laws, nor good living, in the United States of America. They must allow that there is something *new* there. That which is there is not "*musty*," at any rate. They will allow, too, I think it possible, that America is a prosperous country, thriving in all sorts of ways. Indeed,

Mr. POULETT THOMSON, who appears to be the chief of the *doctrinaire* generation, told the House of Commons, that, if we would have taken American corn; if the landholders would let us have a free trade in American corn, God only knew what masses of prosperity would have fallen upon us.

Now, my friends, which shall we follow, the *precept*, or the *example*, of America? Ninety-nine times out of a hundred we are to judge of what people think, with regard to what they recommend to us, by what they do themselves, with regard to the same matter. In ticklish times, kings used to have *tasters*: that is to say, somebody to taste the thing first before they ventured to eat it. Now, these Americans shall be tasters for us. We will take their last list of duties; and we will see whether they have a "*landlords' tax*." We will begin with the divers sorts of corn; and then we will go to the other eatables and drinkables, and other products of the land, and just take a look at their "*taxes upon knowledge*." The following, then, are the duties which they impose on the following articles:

Wheat, the Winchester bushel (<i>more than 30 per cent. upon the usual price of wheat in that country</i>)	1s. 1d.
Barley	15 per cent.
Rye	15 per cent.
Oats, per Winchester Bushel, (<i>a third part of the usual price of oats in that country</i>)	5d.
Peas	15 per cent.
Beans	ditto.
Seeds of all kinds	ditto.

And yet it never came into the heads of the people of America to call this a "*landlords' tax*," or a "*farmers' tax*," or a "*tax upon bread*"; and especially to call those "*robbers*" and "*foot-pads*" who imposed the tax, or who voted against the repeal of it; or to call those "*deserters*," who went away and did not vote at all.

Let us now come to ready-prepared eatables and drinkables.

Ale	10d. per gallon.
Beer	10d. ditto.
Bacon	1½d. per pound.
Beef	1d. ditto.
Butter	2½d. ditto.
Cheese	4½d. ditto.
Flour	1s. 3d. per cwt.
Hazel Nuts	15 per cent.
Malt	15 ditto.
Mushrooms	15 ditto.
Mustard	15 ditto.
OATMEAL	15 ditto.

Stop, here! Here are barbarous fellows! Their country will not produce oats worth a straw, except they have the seed from Europe; and then but one crop good for anything; and yet they tax both the oats and the oatmeal. And yet it is a good and a free government, and a good-living people: nobody calls the Government "*robbers*" and "*footpads*"; and if the beast who writes thus against me at GLASGOW, were to hold such language, he being in America, he would be

turned from with scorn by every working man in that country. They would not kick him: they would despise him too much for that; but they would turn from him with scorn and contempt.

Pork	1d. per pound.
Potatoes (<i>a third part of their price</i>)	5d. per bushel.
Rice	15 per cent.
Snails (<i>the French and Italians eat snails</i>) ..	15 ditto.
TURNIPS	15 ditto.

And yet nobody calls the Government "robbers" and "footpads," nor talks of "a landlords' tax." As to wine and spirits and pepper and vinegar, tobacco, snuff, cigars, currants, figs, and fruits of all sorts, not omitting *acorns*, for which last there is a duty of 12 per cent.; even *melons*, there is tax on an average of from 15 to 30 per cent., and on all sorts of drugs. But, let us now go to the "taxes on knowledge."

Writing-paper and demy printing paper	8½d. per pound.
English books	1s. 3d. ditto.
Printing types and printing presses	25 per cent.

Now, observe, here is actually more duty upon the paper than the paper itself, exclusive of duty, costs in England at this time; and let it be observed that, while we charge *threepence* a pound for paper, as well as for books, bound or unbound, they charge *eightpence-halfpenny a pound* for the paper, and *one and threepence* a pound for books; and they tax the presses and the type at the same time; and yet, I will be bound to say, that there is not a single working man in the whole country, who is unmannerly beast enough to call the members of the Congress "robbers" and "footpads." No; he knows very well, that these taxes are useful in promoting the interests of his own country, in preference to the interests of other countries, and he acquiesces in the restriction accordingly. He is not fool enough not to perceive the utility, the benefit, the justice, of these restrictions. Now, to some other products of the land; and things absolutely necessary to the country.

Flax	13l. 10s. a ton.
Hemp	13l. 10s. ditto.
Cotton	25 per cent.
Tallow	2½d. per lb.
Hides, tanned	30 per cent.
Oak-bark (<i>though their own bark is greatly inferior to ours</i>)	15 ditto.
Bonnets or Hats, of grass or straw ..	50 ditto.
Baskets, of wood	30 ditto.
Bricks	15 ditto.
Brooms	15 ditto.
Casks	30 ditto.
Chalk	15 ditto.
Coals, the Winchester bushel	3d.
Lime	15 per cent.
Boards	30 ditto.
Plank	30 ditto.
Soap	2d. per lb.
Spoke staves	30 per cent.

Live Animals	15 per cent.
SINGING BIRDS	15 ditto.
Wool (<i>not manufactured</i>)	2d. per lb. and 50 per cent.

Here is enough, I think, for all the brood of garret-bred, smoke-dried, free-trade, doctrinaires in the universe; and much more than enough for the considerate and sensible people of GLASGOW and PAISLEY. Our tax upon wool is one penny a pound; and even that is grumbled at by the manufacturers, and said to be a "*tax upon their industry.*" What, then, must twopence a pound be! And, over and above that, fifty per cent. *ad valorem*! I take these taxes from the last tariff enacted in America. I have taken the pains to make out the list, not in answer to the unmannerly ruffian who has called me a "deserter" and a "foot-pad"; but for the information of the industrious and valuable persons, who, for want of knowledge upon the subject, were induced to sign the GLASGOW petition.

With regard to the heroes of free trade, I have very little hope of putting sober sense into their bothered brains. They have been carrying on their system for ten years; and the country has been getting more and more in distress all the while. America has adhered rigidly to that restrictive system, under which England was prosperous in her commerce for so many years; and while we see this nation rising into greatness and wealth, under this system, these horrible coxcombs have the insuperable conceit and audacity to tell us, that if we would but take away all protection whatever for the products of our own soil, we should get rid of all our difficulties, pay our enormous debt tripled in real amount by the laws which have been passed, and be bursting with wealth, and have no earthly danger left, but that of dying from an overflow of prosperity.

The worst of it is, that we are in the hands of these miserable doctrinaires. Our situation would be bad enough, even if the commercial system of our ancestors remained; but these conceited wretches have lighted the candle at both ends; and I am sorry not to perceive in the House of Commons, anybody who has spirit enough, even to bestow rebuke on their impudent pretensions to superior knowledge.

I am sure that I have said enough to the industrious and sensible people of GLASGOW and PAISLEY; but though I do it with reluctance, I must bestow one more observation on the article of this unmanly assailant. He accuses me of reproaching the working people for their taste for reading and writing; and abuses my taste in preferring for their use *beer* and *bacon* to books, or rather to *newspapers*. But what is it that he is doing? What is it that this modest and manly person is doing? He is calling me a footpad, because I did not vote for a motion which he says, had a tendency to make *victuals* cheap! What need he care about that? One would have thought that cheap books and newspapers were the sole object of his care. Books and newspapers, at any rate, do not grow out of the land; and as my vote, or want of vote, related to the produce of the land, one might ask him, why he should pester his muddled brains about that vote? However, as to bestow more words on such a man must be offensive to every reader, I here quit him, quite satisfied that I have most amply proved to the people of GLASGOW and PAISLEY, whose real interest, and whose happiness I have very much at heart, that I acted as I ought to have acted upon this occasion; that they

have entertained erroneous notions upon this subject; and that they ought to despise, and shun a man like this, whose object is to mislead and delude them; and by the means of that delusion, to lead a lazy and half-drunken life, on food and drink and raiment extorted from their virtuous industry.

With sentiments of the sincerest regard for their welfare,
I remain their faithful and obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

P.S. Just as I was sending the above letter to the press, I received from PAISLEY, a letter, relating to the recent election, concluding with the following words: "CRAWFORD wished to *abolish the Corn Laws and leave the Debt entire*; a proposition so absurd, that the more intelligent portion of the public considered they might as well have his opponent for their representative." Yes; that was like the sensible people of PAISLEY: they were not like the people of DUNDEE, to be humbugged by a cheap-bread story; when they saw all their neighbours ruined by the cheapness of wheat: they saw the real cause of their suffering; and they took a man, who would not condescend to act the part of a deluder.

TO THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA.

(Political Register, April, 1834.)

London, 31. March, 1834.

SIR,

In the former letters, addressed to you by me, and which were not sent to you in manuscript, as this will be, I informed you that the hopes and the fears of all good men in England were fixed upon you, in your struggle with the voracious and hellish monster of paper-money; hopes, that you would persevere until you had strangled the monster; fears, that, from feelings of compassion for the present sufferers, or from deception practised on you by the myriads of fraudulent deceivers whom the monster has always at his command, you might be induced to hold your hand, and to suffer the infernal monster to recover from the blow which you had already given it.

Amongst all the persons thus divided between their hopes and their fears, there was, perhaps, no man who felt so much anxiety as he who has the honour now to address you; but, sir, while I was in this state of mind, there came into my hands, by mere chance, *The History of your Life*, written by your brother senator and neighbour, JOHN HENRY EATON, and published at PHILADELPHIA in 1824; and, curious to relate, pub-

lished by Mr. BRADFORD, who published the very first book that ever I sent to the press. Having read this book of Mr. EATON, all my fears were removed. I had here quite evidence enough to prove to me, that, having once formed your determination, nothing but death would stay the execution of your purpose.

I need not tell you, sir, that our monster will, at the least, be brought upon its knees, by the execution of your determination. Already millions upon millions of dollars have been shipped off from this grand receptacle of the bullion of the world; the United States, instead of being the collector of bullion for England, as heretofore, is now drawing away the bullion from this place of deposit: our prices are already so low, as to spread ruin amongst merchants, amongst farmers, amongst manufacturers, amongst tradesmen, and amongst handicraftsmen of every description. All men who have any knowledge of the subject, know, that, if you persevere, one of two things must take place here: a blowing-up of the paper-system at once; or, a non-payment in specie: that is to say, a system of *assignats*.

Therefore, the question was, and yet is, *whether you will persevere?* That question is settled with me, by my having read the book of Mr. EATON; and, in order that it may be settled with others also, I, on the 29th instant, sent to the press, the book of Mr. EATON, abridged, in some cases; explained in other cases; corrected, with regard to dates, which, in numerous cases had been omitted; and, Mr. EATON having stopped with your defence of NEW ORLEANS, in 1815, I have continued the "*history*" down to the month of February, 1834. There needs nothing more than this book to convince every man, that the doom of the paper monster is sealed in America, at least, unless it should please God, in his anger against your country, very speedily to put an end to your life.

In another letter, to be written, probably, to-morrow, and to be sent you in print, unaccompanied by manuscript original, I shall have much more to address to you. I transmit this in manuscript, solely for the purpose of giving you this mark of my great respect; and requesting you to be pleased to understand clearly, that I can easily perceive the impropriety of your sending me any answer in return. In short, I thus address you with my own pen, as the strongest mark that I have it in my power to give you, of the admiration which I entertain of your character and your conduct, and of the boundless gratitude that I feel for the services which you have rendered to the cause of justice and of freedom; in which sentiments I only participate with millions of the people of this now oppressed, harassed, and distracted kingdom.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA.

(Political Register, April, 1834.)

London, 2. April, 1834.

SIR,

By the first ship that leaves the river, I shall do myself the honour to send you several official documents, which you will find, I am persuaded, worthy of your attention. The poet says :

“ Heav’n first taught letters for some wretch’s aid,
 “ Some banish’d lover, or some captive maid ;
 “ They speed the intercourse from soul to soul,
 “ And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.”

Begging pardon of this accomplished philosopher and beautiful poet, I must tell him, that Heaven taught letters for somebody else besides lovers. They are very good for them, to be sure ; but they are equally good, at the least, for the unfortunate wretches, who are suffering under the fangs of the paper-money monster. It is very good of them to waft *sighs* certainly, but better to waft execrations, and better still, to waft facts and arguments against the monster of paper-money : very good in them to “ waft a lover’s sigh from Indus to the Pole ” ; but a great deal better, to waft my letters (addressed to you) to the United States, and to cause them to be republished in the newspapers all over the country. It has been promised us, by him who could not err, that, if we work with good intention, and prudently work, our efforts will, first or last, never be thrown away. The official documents which I sent you in the fall of the year, will have shown you into what a turmoil the accursed paper-money had plunged this kingdom. In the present letter, and in the documents which I shall cause to go out as quickly as possible, you will see a great deal more than sufficient to convince you, that we have, at last, arrived at a state in which it is impossible for us long to remain ; and that we must come, either to some great change with regard to the public debt, or with regard to the paper-money : every man in the kingdom is satisfied, be he of what party he may, that we cannot proceed much further in our present course. The duration of our present course cannot be long ; but that duration will, in some measure, depend upon you.

In order to give you as full a view of our situation, as time and other circumstances will permit me, I will give a hasty sketch of the progress of our paper-money, which, you will please to observe, is the original cause of all the present calamities of this country. I need hardly tell you, that the Bank of England, and its paper, were invented for the sole purpose of upholding a foreigner upon the throne ; that immediately after its invention, the taxes raised upon the people became ten times as

great as they had been before; that, before the American war, it enabled the Government to make wars, wholly unnecessary to the well-being of England; that the American revolutionary war had for its object, the compelling of the people of that country to contribute towards the payment of the interest of the then debt; that the late French war was undertaken to put down those doctrines which had abolished tithes and nobility in France; that the last American war originated in a desire to extirpate the last free institutions; and that neither of these wars could ever have been attempted, without the aid of paper money; during these wars our enormous debts were contracted in paper-money; and an attempt to pay the interest of these debts in gold, which attempt arose out of a conviction (well founded) that, if we did not return to gold, we must go to *assignats*, and thus have a revolution complete from the top to the bottom: an attempt to pay these debts in gold, has now plunged us into a scene, the like of which the wildest dreamer could never have expected to see.

There are several things on foot at this moment; each of which contemplates what would be quite worthy of the name of revolution; contemplates a much more important change than was effected at *Old Glorious*, in 1688; but at present I will speak to you only of the revolution that is actually going on, under the auspices of the King's Ministers, with regard to the ESTABLISHED CHURCH. You, Sir, will probably exclaim, "Poh! what's the church! We think nothing about a church here: our Government and laws recognise no establishment in religion; what, therefore, has the Church to do with civil and political Government?" This is, I dare say, very much underrating your knowledge of the nature of our Government; but it would be perfectly excusable in you, if you did entertain this view of the matter; if you could not conceive it possible that the teachers of religion, excluded too, by law, from all civil and political functions, and shut out of the House of Commons by law; it would be very excusable, if you were unable to conceive, that even the total extinguishment of all these people, could have any effect upon the stability of the other orders in the state; and, if you were to deem it a sort of madness in any one to predict, that the peers and the King would not long survive the overthrow of the Church. A little closer view of the subject, however, would change your opinion as to this matter; and, as I look upon the work of annihilating the Church to have actually begun, I will now endeavour to enable you to take that closer view.

You, who have all your lifetime seen abundance of bishops and priests and deacons and doctors of divinity and other "reverend" gentlemen; and have seen them of no more consequence than so many carpenters or bricklayers with regard to the political institutions and powers of the country, can have but a faint notion of the power and influence of this body in this country, though you must know, if you were to give yourself the trouble of looking into all the laws connected with this establishment of ours, that there is not the most distant resemblance between the two things; yet your acquaintance with this ecclesiastical establishment must be so imperfect, as for it to be absolutely necessary to explain the matter to you, in order that you may be a judge of our present state.

We have bishops here, and so have you; but ours sit in right of their *see* in the Upper House of Parliament. The archbishops take precedence of all other peers, except those of the king's own family, and every

bishop takes precedence of a far greater part of the peers. But this is by no means the most material of their rights and their powers. Some of these bishops have means to the amount of fifty thousand pounds a year each; and I believe that their average revenues amount to not less than twenty thousand pounds a year each. Nor is the amount of their revenues the circumstance of the greatest importance: the nature of those revenues is of equal or still greater importance. Were it *so much money given to each*, it would be a different matter. Their revenues consist of palaces, parks, rents of land, quit-rents, fines, heriots, right of timber upon other men's estates; and all the many rights and powers belonging to *lords of manors*. I believe that the Bishop of WINCHESTER is the lord of forty manors in Hampshire and Surrey. He has a palace on a lofty hill, looking over the town of FARNHAM, in Surrey; and looking over a circuit of country, probably thirty or forty miles round. He is the lord over almost the whole of that. The lands are either copyhold or leasehold. There is here and there a little patch of freehold; he is lord of all the rest; and his stewards are the lords under him, to collect the renewals of leases, the fines on death or alienation, the heriots, the timber sales. You will observe that the *game* in this country is a great affair; and that this bishop is the owner of the game, generally speaking, in all these manors; and that he can appoint a game-keeper, with a deputation from himself, for every manor. His stewards hold manor-courts, at Michaelmas and Lady-day, in every year. In these courts deaths or alienations are recorded; and the title to the lands is a copy of the roll of these courts. Then, another part of his revenue is derived from fines even on freehold lands. He has the power, besides, of appointing vicars and rectors to many benefices in his diocese. NORTH, a late Bishop of WINCHESTER, gave to his own sons, and other relations, benefices yielding twenty thousand pounds a year.

This, sir, is an English bishop, who may truly be said to be, as far as relates to property, the real overseer of his diocese. There are *twenty-six* of these in England and Wales. JAMES the First used to say, "*No bishop, no king*"; and I believe you will be satisfied, that that dunder-headed old fellow was not far from being right.

Next come the "DEANS AND CHAPTERS." In every diocese there is a cathedral church; and to each of these churches is attached a body of men, called the "DEAN AND CHAPTER." The chapter consists of prebendaries, or canons; and they have underlings called *precentors*, and singing-boys, and God knows what besides. These things were of great use in Catholic times, drawing the country people together on market-days, on fair-days, on Sundays, to bend at the performance of mass in so grand and imposing a style, as to leave an impression on their minds for the remainder of their life. All this is now gone and forgotten; all is become a mere sinecure; but the property and the power remain. These Deans and Chapters are the lords of manors; the owners of estates: they have rents, fines, quit-rents, heriots, stewards, game-keepers, and every thing else as in the case of the bishop. They, too, are patrons of livings in the Church; and you will please to observe, that there are twenty-six of these bodies, each consisting of from twenty to forty in number, and, if you will look at the cities which give the names to the sees of bishops, and which have cathedrals, you will see how judiciously they have been spread over the country.

The UNIVERSITIES and COLLEGES come next. These were formed, as

you well know, a great while ago, and chiefly by Catholics. These alone can give degrees, such as doctor, master of arts, and the like; and before a degree can be taken, the party taking it must subscribe to the Articles of the Established Church; consequently, no man can be master of a college, a fellow of a college, or fill any post of honour or emolument in the college, unless he be of the Church. But it is the solid pudding in this case as well as the others; the pudding, and the power which the pudding gives. When a college was founded, it was *endowed*; and the endowment consisted of lands and tenements, of lordships and manors, of right of presenting to livings in the Church; and, in short, of every thing mentioned in the case of the bishops and the deans and chapters.

Next come the great schools of WESTMINSTER, of ETON, and of WINCHESTER. There are others, and very many others, but of inferior note to these. These are, in fact, colleges, and very largely endowed. The owners, in fact, of the property belonging to these, are the masters, the wardens, the fellows, or whatever else they may be called. These also are owners of lands and tenements; of manors innumerable; their stewards collect renewals, rents, fines, quit-rents, heriots, indulgencies; and these men again, who must all be of the church of England, appoint game-keepers on their manors; and exercise an influence and control round about the country, of which you cannot possibly form an adequate notion.

Lastly, come the PARSONS, divided into *rectors*, *vicars*, and *perpetual curates*; each of whom, when he has once got his living, has it as his freehold for life; and it is a real freehold, having in it all the attributes of freehold, giving him the right, generally speaking, to take a tenth part of the gross produce of all the lands in his parish; and to take these in kind, or commute them for money, just as he pleases. He has the tenth of every thing, from the wheat-field down to the hen's nest; the tenth lamb, calf, pig, egg, gallon of milk, apple, gooseberry, cabbage. In short, every thing arising out of the land, or arising in any way upon the land; and in towns, they have a tithe upon the houses, and in the country, a tithe upon the profit of mills. Now, sir, imagine a man thus clothed with power; clothed besides with the powers of magistrate, very frequently; clothed besides, with the power of putting his *veto* (*your Bank knows what a veto is!*) on a man's having a license to keep a public-house; on a man's having a license to be a travelling merchant, or pedlar; on a poor man's being able to put his child into a charity-school: see this man, *ex-officio*, the chairman of the vestry of his parish. Imagine a man thus armed with influence and power, having a parsonage-house and glebe-land, and having the church and churchyard under his absolute control; imagine him perfectly protected by the law, as well as by traditionary custom, while he mounts the pulpit one day in every week, and talks there about just what he pleases, no one daring even to whisper disapprobation of his preaching; imagine a man thus endowed with power, stationed for life in every four square miles, on an average, throughout England, not four miles square; imagine this, and add to this all-pervading influence and power, the mass of influence of the bishops, the deans, the chapters, the universities, colleges, and schools; then consider that all these livings and benefices and dignities of every description, flow from the king, the nobility, and the gentry; and that the parties in possession are all closely bound up in ties of relationship, or ties of immediate interest, with the nobility and gentry. Look at all this, sir, and you will exclaim, in speaking of this church, "The gates of hell cannot prevail

against it"! No; not the gates of hell; but, as you will soon learn, *the gates of paper-money can!*

This is, surely, the most curious and interesting spectacle ever yet witnessed by the world: that a parcel of *clerks*, as they call themselves, destitute of all learning, except what they find prepared for them in the "*Ready-reckoner*," and in "*King's Interest-tables*"; with no title, no eminence; totally unknown; having for their highest insignia, a pen stuck behind their ear; a parcel of creatures like this, whom forty-four years ago this church considered of no more consequence, than the jack-daws which build their nest in steeples; that this troop of clerks, and without knowing what they were doing, too, should, by the means of little bits of paper, intrinsically worth nothing, have brought this immense mass of power upon its knees, and made it play the hypocrite to the extent of feigning willingness to yield to those preliminary measures which have been begun, and which must go on, until this whole mass of power be totally annihilated; unless there be an instantaneous arresting of the progress, which is a thing that many men hope for, but which very few men expect.

How this deadly instrument, invented by a bishop,* at the instigation of the devil; this apparently contemptible instrument; *how* is it, that this hell-invented paper-money can have produced this effect; can have put in peril such a mass of power, which all but blind men must see is the main pillar of the English throne; *how* it has been able to do this, it will remain for me to show in a sequel to the History of the "*PROTESTANT REFORMATION*"; but that the fact is such you may be assured; and, is there any ground for wonder, that the same instrument should have put in peril the existence of your constitution, unsupported by any thing but the mere will of the people, and those people beset with a press bribed by the Bank, and labouring to spread about popular error and delusion in every direction?

From the very establishment of the Bank of the United States, I sent over my remonstrances on the subject; those remonstrances produced no effect; but now, when the monster has half-devoured the industry of the country, surely so sensible a people will listen. PAINÉ has observed, that a paper-money never yet was extinguished without destroying the Government, which had had the wickedness or the folly to suffer it to become the sole currency of the country. His argument was, that, in getting back to specie, the wrongs, the sufferings, the turmoil, were so great, that they naturally produced a *convulsive revolution*. America will escape this, because you have the millions on your side, and because you have taken care, that those millions shall understand the matter well; but if you had been a man to relax, to give way, though in the smallest degree, your famous constitution would have become the laughing-stock of the world.

It is making a bank the agent of the Government, and the keeper of the public money, that do the mischief. It then issues paper, and gets an interest for it upon the foundation of the people's own money; and, finally, it becomes the master of the Government itself, as it long has been of this Government, which can consent to nothing of which it expresses its disapprobation. Thus the nobles, the Ministers, and the House of Commons, are all kept in subjection. Those of them that have sense feel sore at this; but they dare not resist. I can see no reason why the

* BURNET, Bishop of Salisbury.—Ed.

Treasury itself should not receive the money arising from the taxes, and issue it, without the intervention of any bank at all.* Here it cannot be done; for the Government *is always in arrear to the Bank*; and if the Bank were to refuse to go on advancing in this way, the Government must come to a stand; and, therefore, it thus proceeds.

We have a strong instance of the monstrous effects of paper-money in the vote of twenty millions to the West Indians, in order to induce them to liberate their slaves. If we had been compelled to raise the twenty millions, and to pay it down, this monstrous act of folly could not have been committed; but here were paper-money mongers in abundance to lend us the twenty millions; and the paying of the interest is all that we have to provide for. However, here are eight hundred thousand pounds a year, and this is now put forward as an excuse for not taking off that much of taxes. I must beg your permission to stop here, while I make a few remarks on this "great measure of *justice and humanity*," as it is everlastingly called. Nothing was ever more unjust than to compel the suffering people of England to pay this eight hundred thousand pounds a year; and as to *humanity*, the miserable cant has disgusted all the sensible part of the nation. This measure has been ascribed to three different motives; *first*, a desire to please the petitioners who petitioned for the abolition of slavery; *second*, to take this covert method of saving the West India merchants and planters from general bankruptcy; *third*, to set, from *motives of pure philanthropy*, an example of *humanity*, to be followed by *other nations, and particularly by the UNITED STATES*. As to the *FIRST*, nobody that has witnessed the conduct of this Government can believe it: the petitions came from the swarms of fanatics that inhabit the crack-skull county of York; and from other bodies of the same description, scattered all over this canting kingdom. As a specimen of these petitions, there was one presented by Mr. FOWELL BUXTON, a London brewer of that famous drink called *porter*, of which I shall only say, that I pray God that you may never need any of it to drink. This petition, he represented as having been signed, quite voluntarily, by TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-EIGHT THOUSAND ENGLISHWOMEN! It formed a bundle about the bulk of two Winchester bushels; and that you may duly estimate the philanthropic disposition of the House, you should know, that there was a *general loud cheering* when the two doorkeepers brought forward the goodly lump. Now, please to observe, sir, that in England and Wales, there are twelve millions of people; and of course, six millions of females; and, probably, about three millions of adult females, going down even into the poor-houses and amongst the beggars in the streets, and the gipsies under the hedges, and including blind and bed-ridden old women, and probably, a good half-million of girls of the town. So that here was about an eighth part of all these adults with their names to this one petition. Women's names to the other petitions that had been presented, would make the whole amount to about a million. Judge you then, of FOWELL BUXTON, of this Ministry, and of this cheering House of Commons.

It is insincerity to affect to believe that the Ministers could have been influenced by such petitions. The petitions were laughed at by every sen-

* This advice was listened to by the American Government, and the struggle now (Oct. 1837) going on in America is in the attempt to put it into practice.—ED.

sible man; the petitioners were, in a political point of view, not of half the consequence of an equal number of musquitoes; a parcel of crack-brained dupes, cheated out of their pennies by a set of lazy vagabonds, who go about telling them, that it is good for their souls that they endure hunger and thirst in this world; good for their souls to work three times as hard, and not to live a tenth part so well, as the negroes.

The second motive has more of sense in it; and a great deal more of justice. The West India planters and merchants have been ruined by the measures of the Government in England. First, by the monstrous restrictions on their commerce; and, second, by the change in the value of money made in 1819. Therefore, to advance them the twenty millions was not so unjust; and if the motive had been openly avowed, I do not know that it was liable to any very serious objection. The third motive; and, to speak plain, the desire to create disturbances in the slave States of America, I myself do not ascribe to the Government; but I know it to have been a favourite idea with some other men. I did not like the passage in the King's speech, expressing a hope, that our example as to this matter, would be followed by OTHER COUNTRIES, who still held blacks in a state of slavery. I did not like this, I must confess; but I do not believe that the Ministers were actuated by this motive; though it is impossible not to see that their measure may do great injury to the United States. At any rate, if such were their motive, you have given them a *Roland* for their *Oliver*: they certainly had a right to abolish negro-slavery, without consulting you, and without regard to consequences affecting you; and you have as clear a right to abolish paper-money, without consulting them, and without regard to the consequences resulting to them and their affairs.

In the meanwhile, however, you should be informed, that there are miscreants going about from town to town, in England, preaching up the necessity of forming combinations and raising subscriptions for the purpose of compelling the United States of America to free their negroes. There is no law here that your ambassador can make to reach these miscreants: nor, if there were such a law, would it be worth while to resort to it. But the miscreants threaten to go over to the Southern States of America, and there preach up their doctrines; and as I believe they will go; and that there are people here to pay them, for the sole purpose of doing injury to the United States, I think it necessary to warn you of their probable approach. The hope was indulged by many persons here, that that which could not be accomplished by war, would be quietly accomplished by the means of the banks; and it would amuse you to perceive the disappointment which the cowardly monsters feel at your having now again blasted their hopes.

Along with this letter, I send you, sir, the Estimates of the ARMY, NAVY, and ORDNANCE, for this year; I send you also an analysis of the two former; and have only to add, that every penny of the money demanded by these estimates, was voted by the House of Commons, without the smallest hesitation; from which you will judge what benefit we have derived from our famous reform of the Parliament. I send several other official papers, at every page of which you will discover the effects of the infernal paper-money.

I request you to receive these, sir, as marks of my great respect, and as proofs indubitable, that you are acting the just and wise part. Of what sort the change is to be here, or to what extent it may go, no man living can tell: that it must be a great change every one clearly sees; and,

so sure as there is a moon or a sun, so sure there would have been a total revolution in America, if you had not interposed your authority with regard to the Bank.

I shall think it my duty to keep you regularly informed of our proceedings here, and

Sir, I have the honour to be,
 Your most humble
 And most obedient servant,
 WM. COBBETT.

TO THE

EARL OF RADNOR,

ON HIS REPORTED SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, ON THE
 21. JULY, ON THE POOR-LAW SCHEME.

(*Political Register, August, 1834.*)

Bolt-court, 6. August, 1834.

MY LORD,

The report of your lordship's speech on the MALTHUSIAN POOR-LAW SCHEME has surprised me more than any thing that I ever read, or ever heard, in the whole course of my life, not excepting your support of the DEAD-BODY BILL. On this reported speech I am now going to remark; but, before I proceed to the performance of this duty, it is right that I observe, that I do not *know* that you made the speech ascribed to you; and that my remarks, as far as they apply to your conduct in this case, are to be considered as *conditional*; that is to say, as having no application to you, if you did not make this speech; that it is on a *publication in a newspaper* that I am making observations, and that I address them to you because they are published under *your name*. I think it right further to observe, that your lordship has rendered great services to the cause of *justice* and of *freedom*. I might state, that, with regard to *myself*, I must be the most ungrateful of all mankind not to be forward on all occasions to acknowledge your goodness to me; goodness, generosity of conduct, in all manner of ways, but, particularly in your defence of me, in your place in Parliament when base reptiles there attacked me, at a time when the atrocious tyrants thought that I should never survive my imprisonment and the other horrible cruelties by which they thought I should be silenced for ever. In short, I beg the public to understand me as expressing towards you every sentiment of gratitude that man can entertain towards man. Then as to your private character. It is impossible for me to form an idea of any thing more perfectly good. Your goodness to the poor people in the several parishes in which you have property and power, would, if it could possibly have been imitated by

every other landowner in the kingdom, have rendered even the poor-law of Queen ELIZABETH almost unnecessary; and it is, upon this occasion, my bounden duty to declare, that I have always remarked in you the most kind, compassionate, and indulgent feeling towards the working people. Far above all these, however, do I estimate your excellent conduct in that season of horrible tyranny, when those who prayed for parliamentary reform were plunged into dungeons, or had gags put into their mouths. In short, there is nothing that I can say, that would not fall short of that which I think in praise of your lordship's character, and of your conduct too, with the exception of the Dead-Body Bill, and of this Scotch, Malthusian, revolutionary, poor-law project.

But, my lord, in that same degree, which, from my writings, my readers will naturally entertain respect for your lordship, and be disposed to think that right which you do, in that same degree I must necessarily deem your conduct dangerous, when you do that which I think injurious to the country. Such is the case now before me. Your lordship will acknowledge, that I have, as to many important national concerns, shown as sound a judgment, and have seen as far before me, as most other men. I believe that you will, without reluctance, acknowledge, that, at several stages of our progress, if the following of my advice, instead of hunting me like a beast of prey, had been the course adopted, there would have been, at this hour, none of these troubles with which we are continually harassed; none of these dangers which menace us from every quarter. If you be willing to acknowledge this, and that too, without any reluctance, it is not unreasonable in me to presume that my opinion ought to have great weight on a subject, with regard to which, as I have *always* taken a deeper interest in it than in any other, so I must naturally understand it better than I understand any other, having been placed too, all my life long, amidst circumstances giving incessant opportunities for the following of the bent of my mind, to make observations, and collect knowledge, as to this matter; and, my lord, all these things being considered; it being considered further, that it is utterly *impossible*, in the full sense of that word, that I can have, in this case, any motive other than that of the general good, I do hope that your lordship will not treat with contempt the opinion which I here express, with as much sincerity as if I knew that these were to be my last words; *that, if this Scotch Malthusian revolutionary project be pushed on to EXECUTION, the ultimate consequence will be, a total abrogation of the laws of property; and a total tearing to pieces of all the ancient institutions, and of the whole frame of society in England.*

When, in 1818, I predicted what would be the consequence of a bill like that of Sir ROBERT PEEL'S, if such bill were passed; when I predicted (after the bill was passed) that it never could be carried into full effect; when, in February, 1824, I predicted that Mr. ROBINSON'S banks would blow up; when, in 1826, I predicted the ruin to agriculture, and to industry of all sorts, unless the army and the debt were reduced: when, at the very hour when the Catholic Emancipation Bill was passing, I predicted that it would add to the troubles, the violences, the miseries of Ireland, unless the Parliament at once resolved to remove the Protestant hierarchy, and consequent Protestant domination from that country; when I put forth these predictions, I was, by nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand men in the country, considered as a dreamer, and, by those who lived on the taxes, considered as a sort of rebel; and

I was considered as a sort of wild jester, when I foretold that the Duke of WELLINGTON's picture would come down from the sign-posts, and that his name would be rubbed off from the corners of the streets. Yet, every one of these predictions has been fulfilled to the very letter. I predicted also upon three or four occasions, that, if the *epitome of Scotch quackery* ever got possession of any considerable degree of power in conducting the affairs of this country, his brain would hatch something or another that would lead to the giving of this sort of government in England its last blow: and, is there any one of my readers who does not now see evident symptoms of the approaching fulfilment of that prediction as well as the rest?

In approaching that which is to be the subject of this letter, I am compelled to observe, that there seems to be something at work, very much like that blindness, with which men and nations are afflicted, when it is the intention of the all-wise Disposer of events to make them instrumental in their own punishment. In this case the punishment will not finally fall upon those who labour; but upon those who do not, whatever the intention may be to the contrary. Were not this species of blindness at work, would this particular TIME have been chosen for the adoption of a project like this? Were there not already difficulties enough for us to contend with? Were not the questions relative to that great branch of this Government and Constitution, called the CHURCH; the question relative to that other great mass of public power called the CORPORATIONS; the question relative to the DEBT; the question relative to the MILITARY AND NAVAL ESTABLISHMENTS; the question relative to the FLOGGING of SOLDIERS, which would be quite enough of itself for any government on earth to deal with; the question relative to the future treatment of IRELAND, and the deciding whether, in future, a people were to starve in a land of plenty or not; the question relative to *Parliamentary Reform*, not by any means settled yet to the general contentment of the people: the question relative to the conditions on which trade should be carried on with foreign countries; the question of the currency, which must be decided, one way or another, at no very distant day? Were there not difficulties enough already in existence? Were we not in a storm of difficulties, the elements contending one against the other? Was not this sufficient, which stirred up the passions of all the higher and middle classes of society? Was not this enough, without a project, which troubles the very cottage, the very shed, of the poorest man in the kingdom? This class, these millions, who were quietly drudging along, while the eternal turmoil was rumbling everywhere above them. They were quiet, at any rate: they casually heard of strange changes which they did not understand very clearly; but, comes this Scotch quackery, stirs up them too, and mixes them up in the general storm, by threatening them with the destruction of their rights, which have been enjoyed by their forefathers from all generations.

Besides this, the evil complained of, the pretended evil, which this measure affects to be calculated to remove, was very fast removing itself; that is to say, the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, the natural magistracy of the country, roused to attention, and justly estimating the unjust sufferings of the people, had, generally speaking, set themselves earnestly to work to produce contentment throughout the country; and the decrease of the poor-rates, as well as the diminution of crime, in the counties which had been most troubled, were an infallible proof of the success

of these laudable endeavours. And, this is the moment chosen for introducing a revolution, a total revolution, in the management of these momentous concerns! Trouble, alarm, apprehension, are to come into every village; every group of men in the harvest-field are to be compelled to discuss the *great question of property*; they are to be compelled to be civilians, and to decide the point, too, *who has most right to the land*, those, without whose labour it is worth nothing; those who were born upon it, and to whom God and the law have given a right to a living out of it; or those who do nothing to it, or about it, but receive the rents of it. Never, in the whole course of my life did I, what is called, "*talk politics*" with a labouring man. I have always deemed it unfair to do so; because I knew that I had it in my power to make him adopt my opinions, right or wrong; I being as much the master of his mind, as he would be of my body; I possessing over him as much superiority in the work of persuasion, as he possessed over me in the work of hedging and ditching. I have, therefore, never done it, and have confined myself to the use of the press, which can be used by others in answer to me; but, situated as I am, moving in the sphere in which it is my pleasure to move, it is impossible that I should not know what is passing in the minds of the working people with regard to this measure. They have heard that there are to be great workhouses: they have heard all about the thing as to its main features as affecting them; and they are making up their minds accordingly, as, indeed, they naturally would make up their minds. The people in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire, have a sort of knowledge which is hereditary, and which is perfectly correct, of the food, the lodging, the clothing and the treatment, of the Scotch labourers and the Irish labourers; and be you assured, my lord, that dreadful will be the scenes which will arise from an endeavour to reduce them to the state of the Scotch and the Irish.

I will now insert the report of your lordship's speech as I find it in the newspapers; and I take it from the *Times* newspaper, because it is likely to be the most full and accurate, stating, as I did before, that I do not know that your lordship uttered these words, or anything to the same amount, and that my observations, as far as they apply to your conduct in this case, are to be received by my readers as *conditional*. But, I find this publication in a newspaper; I know it to be gone all over the kingdom; I know that, in proportion to your high and excellent character, it is calculated to do mischief, to urge on the Scotch project, and to produce either the most villainous slavery, or the most terrific convulsion; and, being perfectly satisfied as to these points, it is my bounden duty to answer this publication.

"The Earl of RADNOR concurred in the observations which had fallen from the noble Baron (Alvanley) with regard to a general system of centralization; but though the noble Lord had urged the continuance of a system of self-government, he must remind him that in many parishes this power became misgovernment; and hence it was that he supported the proposition for the establishment of a central board for at least a short period. He was surprised that the noble Baron (Alvanley) had not discovered that one part of his speech had answered another portion of his address. How came it, he (the Earl of Radnor) must inquire, that the measures which had been adopted under the system of self-government in particular places had not been adopted in the neighbouring parishes (hear, hear), and that they had not emulated the example (so much eulogized) set them by the parish of Bingham, and other places which had been

enumerated? (Hear, hear.) In order to obtain an effectual union, it was absolutely necessary that there should be a head able and qualified to carry the advantages of any system generally into effect, possessing the power to do so, and uniting such industry, perseverance, and courage, as would secure the success of the scheme. He admitted that if it could be shown that every parish in England contained a Mr. Lowe or a Mr. Litchfield, then the establishment of a board of commissioners was unnecessary and uncalled-for, but in the absence of such proof he must contend that the proposed plan was essential for the formation and preparation of rules and regulations that could not by any individual parish be deviated from. This proposition would not have the effect, as had been contended, of superseding the law, but would rather be calculated to give it full and complete effect; for though every noble lord who had spoken had implied, that though the law was good, yet the administration was bad, the noble and learned Earl opposite had complained that the commissioners would be mere theorists. All rule and government was based upon theory, and these commissioners would be enabled to unite their theory with practice. (Hear, hear.) He deprecated the anxiety expressed by some noble lords that this measure should be put off for another year, in order to afford them time to make inquiries in the country, because sufficient opportunities had already been granted, for it had been admitted that the grievances arising out of the present system had continued increasing for the last twenty years, and yet in the face of that increase nothing had been done. (Hear, hear.) He denied that the provisions of the present bill would reduce the people of this country to a state of slavery. Much was said, it was true, of the powers given to the commissioners; but it was forgotten that at present the most offensive powers were vested, not in the hands of men of education, experience, and learning, qualified in every respect to make rules and regulations, and to lay down just and equitable principles for the government of all parishes, but in the hands of overseers and guardians, whose mode of life (he spoke it not disrespectfully), whose occupations made them incapable of framing such regulations—in the hands of men open to all sorts and descriptions of bias and partiality. (Hear, hear.) All these evils the central board would be calculated to remove. The objection as to the powers of these commissioners to compel the raising money, which had been raised by the noble and learned Baron opposite (Lord Wynford), in his opinion failed, for the bill itself limited those powers to the raising only of 50*l.*, and that still further limited to the purposes of repairing the workhouses. (Hear.) On the whole, he conceived that it was essential the bill should be passed without unnecessary delay, not, however, without due deliberation, for he had witnessed the growing evils arising from the administration of the Poor-laws. He was mainly anxious for the passing of this bill, because he was convinced that those from whom the rates were raised required this measure of relief, which he trusted their lordships would not refuse to afford them. (Hear, hear.)”

Here is not much in this speech itself, as to the particular points that it touches on. It is your prominent and decided support of the whole bill; and that, too, after the speech of the Lord Chancellor; and of course upon the grounds and principles laid down in that speech. Nevertheless there are some particular points in your speech which it is necessary for me to notice. First, you allow that if all parishes were under a management like that of BINGHAM, then no change would be necessary. Let us then see what was the management in this parish of BINGHAM. It was this, as described by COWELL, one of the runners of the poor-law commissioners. A parson of the name of LOWE became incumbent of the parish in 1814. He was a magistrate, and resided on his living, and consequently a great payer of poor-rates. And the poor-law runner says that, “knowing that it was impossible to refuse relief according to the practice and custom of the country, he devised means for rendering relief itself so irksome and disagreeable that none would consent to receive it who could possibly do without it, while at the same time it should come in the shape of comfort and consolation to those whom every benevolent man would wish to succour—the old, infirm, idiots,

“and cripples. For this purpose he placed in the workhouse a steady, cool-tempered man, who was procured from a distance, and was not known in the parish, as master, refused all relief in kind or money, and sent every applicant and his family at once into the workhouse. The fare is meat three times a week, soup twice, pudding once, milk porridge five times.” Then he goes on to say: “*The man goes to one side of the house, the wife to the other, and the children into the school-room.* SEPARATION IS STEADILY ENFORCED. Their own clothes are taken off, and the uniform of the workhouse put on. No beer, tobacco, or snuff is allowed. Regular hours kept, or meals forfeited. Every one must appear in a state of personal cleanliness. NO ACCESS TO BED-ROOMS DURING THE DAY. No communication with friends out of doors. Breaking stones in the yard by the grate, as large a quantity required every day as an able-bodied labourer is enabled to break.” He tells us, that “the labourers SOON CONTRIVED TO GET WORK, at twelve shillings a week, winter and summer, and that the whole parish was well off.”

Now this, then, is the system which your lordship approves of; the workhouse dress, separation of husband and wife, separation of children and parents, and the separation steadily enforced; so that if a labourer cannot get work; if there be a *want of employment* in the parish, the workhouse dress and the separation come. If a man have a family of ten children, which is not unfrequently the case, and only three of them able to do any thing at all, even the smallest thing in the world, towards a maintenance, the man is to clothe and feed, and find fuel and find rent for himself, his wife, and seven children, on the twelve shillings a week; that is to say, nineteen pence a week for each for food, washing, clothing, house-rent, and fuel, which will reduce the food to two-pence a day each; and this is starvation; and to this starvation this family must submit, or be clothed like slaves, and submit to the brutal separation. But twelve shillings a week, do I say? Do your lordship's farmers in Wiltshire give more than eight shillings a week, summer and winter? In Surrey, Sussex, and Kent, the men get *twelve* shillings a week, and in Wiltshire *eight*, or at the most *nine*. However, this is only a part of this monstrous story of COWELL the runner. The labourers, it seems, immediately got work at twelve shillings a week. Why, then, there is *no want of employment in the country*; and the agricultural committee has told us a prodigious lie; for they tell us, that agriculture is in such a state of distress that there is “*great want of employment*,” in consequence of the inability of the farmers to have their lands cultivated in a proper manner; so that this parish of BINGHAM, which is said to be in Nottinghamshire, cannot possibly be in England. It is a falsehood to say that the poor-rates arise from the indisposition of men to have work. Their great amount arises from the want of ability in the occupiers of the land to give employment, and that want of ability arises from the weight of taxes, county-rates, church-rates, and other local burdens, exclusive of the poor-rates; and from the low price of produce compared with those charges upon the land; and these burdens, which have arisen from the conduct of the landowners, and not from anything done by the labourers, are now, it is vainly imagined, to be compensated for by privations and sufferings inflicted on the poor.

According to this account, work is plenty all over England, and farmers all stand ready to give twelve shillings a week to men who will work!

Is there a man in the whole kingdom, besides this COWELL, who will put his name to a lie like this? Your lordship proceeds, therefore, upon the grounds which are notoriously false; and there remains to be ascribed to you in this case, nothing but the disposition to render the getting of relief as irksome as possible; the disposition to send married men to workhouses, strip them of their clothes, put on them the workhouse dress, separate them from their wives, separate the children from the parents, cut them off from all communication with friends out of doors, or leave the skeleton of a husband with his wife and children to starve, let the children be as numerous as they may, and let their ages be what they may. This, then, is your disposition; for you say not a word about finding the man work at twelve shillings a week. Let the law include a provision for employing every man at twelve shillings a week, and then there is something like justice, there is something like humanity; but while the law makes no such provision, and while our own committees tell us that the employers are unable to give employment, to make it irksome to obtain relief, and to inflict the other degrading punishments, is barbarity indescribable.

So much for the exemplary parish of BINGHAM, which your lordship holds up to the admiration of the country. Your lordship next says, "that this bill will not *supersede* the law, but is calculated to give full and *complete effect* to it." What, then! surely your lordship cannot mean that this bill does not supersede the Act of Elizabeth; that it does not set aside the power of the overseer to give relief; that it does not put an end, in fact, to the local government of parishes; that it does not supersede the power that the law gives to the rate-payers to manage their own affairs; that it does not supersede the bastardy-laws; that it does not give to commissioners, appointed by the Government, and removeable at its pleasure, the power of building great workhouses, only two, three, or four in a county; your lordship cannot mean that this bill leaves one fragment of the law of ELIZABETH in full effect; you cannot mean, that it is not one great step towards that *centralizing*, which is the character of despotic government; you cannot mean any of these; but you can mean what immediately follows; and that is, that the present "*administration of the poor-laws is bad.*" I allow that, too, as far as those laws have been changed by *Sturges Bourne's Bills*, which have put the power into the hands of the rich, when it ought to have been confined, according to the Act of Elizabeth, to the hands of the middle class. But, here we must look at the great pretended ground for the passing of this bill, namely, that the *mal-administration* of the poor-laws has caused the amount of the rates to increase, and has produced a state of things, which, to use the expression of the Lord Chancellor, threatens to "*engulf the landed estates.*" There must be some great evil attending the *mal-administration of these laws*, otherwise there is no ground for this bill; and this "*great evil*" is, that the Poor-rates are so heavy, that they threaten to destroy the proprietors of the land; that it is they which make the farmer so poor that he cannot pay his rent. Now, in the first place, the last year's returns show that the Poor-rates have decreased $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in amount, on an average throughout the kingdom, which is an answer to that part of Lord MELBOURNE'S speech where he says, that the Poor-rates are a "*growing tax, increasing every year.*" In another part of his speech he says, that "*the Poor-rates are the heaviest of all the direct taxes, exceeding the assessed taxes and the land-tax put together.*" He did not mean to say what was not true; but he should have recollected

that less than one-half of the sums collected by the overseers, go to the relief of the poor; and that the other half they do not occasion any more than 1 occasion the execution of the game-laws. However, be the amount of the Poor-rates what it may, it is very shallow work to proceed upon the supposition that the Poor-rates have anything to do in begging the farmer, who takes them into account in arranging his rent with his landlord; and, besides, who does not know that the goods sold out of a shop cause the consumer to pay the tax upon the shop, and the Poor-rates upon the shop; who is there, possessing common sense, that does not know that the consumer of the corn must pay the Poor-rates; and that the administration of the Poor-laws can have nothing at all to do in the producing of distress to the farmer; or, in plain words, in making him poorer and worse off. It has long been attempted to be made out, that the Poor-rates were swallowing up the capital of the farmer; that it is the mal-administration of the Poor-laws; that is to say, giving too much relief, that is the cause of the frightful and daily increasing distress of the farmer, and of the insufficient cultivation of the land; and this is the great ground for the passing of this bill; but besides the reason of the case; besides that reason tells us that this is impossible; besides the grossness of the absurdity, which supposes that the farmer can be beggared by relief or assistance given to those who work for him, and who, by the means of these rates, are made to work for as little as any humane man would wish them to have to eat, drink, and wear; besides all this, we have the positive evidence, given by the noblemen, the clergymen, the magistrates, the overseers, all over England and Wales, to assure us that the administration of the Poor-laws has had *nothing at all to do with the impoverishing the farmer.*

The Poor-law Commissioners, whom your lordship is pleased to consider as high authority in this case, sent round circular questions. Amongst these questions, which were put to 1,717 persons, were these: "Is the amount of agricultural capital in your neighbourhood increasing, or diminishing? And do you attribute such increase or diminution to any cause connected with the administration of the Poor-laws?" To this question every answerer but one said, that agricultural capital *was diminishing*; but in answer to the second question, *four hundred and one* say, positively, that nothing connected with the administration of the Poor-laws has been the cause of the diminution of the farmers' capital. *Eleven hundred and fifty-seven* assign other causes of the diminution, or assign no cause at all. And only a *hundred and fifty-nine* ascribe the diminution to any thing connected with the administration of the Poor-laws; and of that hundred and fifty-nine, several are ashamed to put their names, and are given as anonymous. This is evidence collected from noblemen, gentlemen, magistrates, and farmers, of all the counties of England and Wales; and yet, in the face of this evidence, the witnesses being selected by the Poor-law Commissioners themselves, your lordship urges the passing of this monstrous bill, upon the ground, that it *will relieve the payers of the rates*, who require it, to protect them against the mal-administration of the Poor-laws! You prefer the evidence of a *hundred and fifty-nine* men, some of whom are ashamed to put their names to what they say, to the evidence of fifteen hundred other men, who are decidedly of a different opinion, and four hundred and one of whom positively assert, that the increasing poverty of the farmer is not owing to the administration of the Poor-laws. Your lordship will not question the vera-

city or the judgment of these fifteen hundred men, of whom you yourself were one, giving your answer in these words: "I believe diminishing; but NOT OWING TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE "POOR-LAWS"; and yet, my lord, you now support this bill, upon the ground that it is required to relieve the rate-payers, by putting an end to what you now say, is the *bad administration of the Poor-laws!*

The next thing I have to notice is, your lordship's assertion, "that sufficient opportunities have already been given for considering this subject." I venture to say, that not one member of either House of Parliament has read one-tenth part of the printed matter laid *before* them upon this subject. If you were now to read it, you would find, that it is the *opinions* of the Commissioners, and not the *evidence* which they have collected, upon which you are proceeding. Their opinions are in conformity with those of the Ministry; the whole body of the *evidence* in hostility to those *opinions*. There has, therefore, not been a sufficiency of time and of opportunity to consider and discuss this measure; and the measure ought to have been put off until the next session; and why it was not, no good reason can be assigned, seeing that the bill is not intended to go into effect until *next June*.

Your Lordship says, "that the power of giving relief is not now lodged "in the hands of men of *education, experience, and learning*, qualified "in every respect to make rules and regulations, and to lay down just "and equitable principles for the government of all parishes; but in the "hands of *overseers and guardians*, whose mode of life (he spoke it not "disrespectfully), whose occupations made them incapable of framing "such regulations; in the hands of men open to all sorts and descriptions of *bias and partiality*." Now, I should be glad to know what *book learning* is required for a man to know the wants of the poor, he living in the same parish with them, and being one of their employers? and whose *experience* is so likely to be perfect, as he who is constantly residing, and having daily means of observation upon the conduct of all who come before him for relief? According to the law as it now stands those who pay the rates are to have the management of them: according to this bill, the owners, and not the occupiers are to have the votes; and, as they are to vote by *proxy*, your lordship being at PARIS, or at ROME, may regulate the relief to the poor at COLESHILL, instead of its being regulated by farmers living on the spot. As to your own particular case, I should be very willing to leave it even to your proxy; because I know that *you* would take care that no poor person should suffer; but all men are not like you; and, besides, even you yourself must delegate your power; and, then it becomes the power of the agent. But, after all, this bill takes away your own power; and, in virtue of it, you give power to a set of Commissioners, who may, if they please, establish rules and regulations, such as you would shudder at the very thought of.

You say that overseers and guardians are liable to *bias and partiality*. It is right, and the Act of Elizabeth intended that those whose business it is to relieve the poor should not be in a situation of life which places them beyond the reach of all chance of want of relief for themselves. Men never act so justly as when they are compelled in some sort to make the case their own; and this was the motive, to be sure, which prevailed at the passing of the Act of Elizabeth. There will probably be some degree of partiality in the distribution of relief by overseers; but this never can be carried to an extent to cause it to amount to a national evil. The

motive is seen through in a moment, all the parties being so well known to one another; and all the parties being so deeply interested in the matter. A striking proof of this objection to the power of overseers being futile is this: that STURGES BOURNE'S Bills were intended to place the power in the hands of the rich, and to shut out the power of the magistrate, as well as that of the overseer. These Bills authorized the appointment of select vestries, and of hiring overseers; but it was left optional with the parishes whether they would adopt this mode of government or not; only a sixth part of the parishes have ever adopted this mode; and many of those parishes which had tried it, returned to the old mode. So that here is experience worth ten thousand theories, in favour of the ancient manner of managing this important matter; but, after all, it is not your lordship's particular arguments in support of this Bill.

But your general support of it as a whole; and it is not only fair to presume, but it is necessary to presume, that you support it upon the principles, and with the ultimate view, as these were frankly and boldly expressed by the Lord Chancellor, who moved the second reading of the Bill; and though I do from the bottom of my soul abhor those principles and those views, and though I anticipate from the execution of the project, if the execution should be attempted, mischiefs of the greatest magnitude and of the most terrific character, justice to him demands that I say that he has done that which has been done by nobody else; that is, he has frankly avowed the principles upon which he proceeds, and the ultimate object which he has in view. He has been censured by those who call themselves his friends, and particularly by the *Morning Chronicle* (of which it is said that one of the Poor-law Commissioners is a part-proprietor), for going *too far*; for saying that which it was "*not necessary to say*." He did not go too far; and it was necessary for him to say that which he said; or, at least, it was necessary for him to say it, or to disguise his real object; and, at the same time, to leave his Poor-law Commissioners to be mawled to death, little bit by little bit; for their opinions are in conformity with his, and directly at war with the professions of the supporters of the Bill. The Lord Chancellor has boldly avowed the real objects and future intentions of the Bill; and though your lordship did not do the same in your speech, you must necessarily see that ultimate object and those ultimate intentions; therefore, I am to presume that, in urging on with so much zeal, the passing of this Bill, you *approve* of that object and those intentions.

Let us see, then, what are these doctrines of the Lord Chancellor.

1. That *all legal provision* for the poor, in whatever shape, or under whatever name, is *injurious to the poor themselves*.
2. That the poor *have no right to relief*, other than what is given by *Act of Parliament*; and that, of course, that which the Parliament can give, *the Parliament can take away*.
3. That landlords will all become paupers themselves, unless something be done to put a stop to the increase of these all-devouring Poor-rates.

Upon this last proposition I shall observe first. Indeed I have observed upon it sufficiently already, having shown that the Poor-rates are upon the decrease, and that that which is collected by the overseers of the poor is not above one-half, if so much as one-half, expended upon the poor, or in consequence of the poor; and that, while the Lord Chancellor anticipates *becoming a pauper himself*, in consequence of the Poor-rates, he is

in much more danger of becoming a pauper from the other charges, which are lumped up under the name of Poor-rates, not to mention the fundholders, the dead-weight people, and the other swarms of idle devourers, who, if not stopped, will leave him his bare salary or pension, and that only for a certain length of time. What a sight is here to behold; two Houses of Parliament apparently frightened half to death at the engulfing effect of what is given to relieve the labouring poor, the amount of which is about four millions five hundred thousand pounds a year, while they are wringing from the pockets of the people, fifty-two millions a year, *full one-half of the whole of which is taken from the working people themselves*. Yes, the whole of the Poor-rates, bestowed upon the poor in the way of relief, do not amount to so much money as the yearly duty on the malt and hops, nine-tenths of which duty are paid by the working-people themselves! No anxiety at all is expressed in either House of Parliament, lest the fifty-two millions a year should "swallow up the estates." No fear does the Lord Chancellor express, lest he should be made a pauper by the fifty-two millions a year. It is the four millions and a half that alarm him, and drive him on his Malthusian theory for security. There are we, voting, to go to Hanover every year, to half-pay officers, their widows, and their children, a sum greater than the annual Poor-rates of the county of BEDFORD; there are we voting eight shillings a week to support a soldier's child in the Asylum at CHELSEA; there are we voting six millions a year to persons who are living in idleness, and who have no equitable claim whatever to one single farthing of the money; there are we voting nearly twenty-nine millions a year to fundholders, when they ought not to receive above twelve at the utmost; there are we voting eight hundred thousand pounds a year to better the lot of the negroes in the West Indies; and there are we passing a Bill which abrogates the most precious part of the constitution of England, in order to lop off the four millions and a half a year, which are given to our own labourers, when extreme poverty and necessity happen to overtake them.

The proposition of the Lord Chancellor; namely, that all legal provision for the poor, under whatever name, and in whatever shape, is injurious to the poor themselves, I will now examine; and I shall not treat it as a monstrous and savage idea, because I myself once, and for a considerable time, had the same notion in my head; and I reasoned in support of it just in the same way that the Lord Chancellor now does. I thought that it closed the hand of private charity; I thought that it made parents and children and brethren less anxious for the well-being of each other, and less careful to succour each other; I thought that they referred those to the legal provision, without feeling shame, who, without such provision, they would have been ashamed not to provide for themselves: and it is very certain that the legal provision has this effect to a very considerable extent. But on the other hand, the experience of the whole world, and of all ages, tells us that the charity created by a sense of Christian duty, and by the feelings connected with kindred, are not sufficient to prevent beggary generally, and sometimes starvation. The law, if it be just, will not leave the existence, and the happy existence, of the honest working-man to chance. There are the passions of men, as well as their natural disposition, to be considered. The Vagrant Act forbids, and very wisely forbids, people to beg out of their own parish. In their own parish they have enmities and spites and vindictive feelings

to contend against Christian compassion. Amongst relations there are quarrels and revenges and wrongs and retaliations; so that without supposing any in-born want of compassion, or any in-born want of natural affection, there is too great a risk of people perishing with hunger and with cold, unless the law come and say, that this shall not be; unless the law come and say, you who possess the land, possess it upon the condition of sharing with those who have no land, to the extent of their absolute wants in case of extreme necessity; unless the law come, as the law of England does, and say that no man shall perish from want, while the land whereon he was born produces a sufficiency for his relief.

It is urged, however, that a legal provision for the poor tends to *degrade* them; to make them careless in providing for old age or infirmities. I never hear this word *degradation* made use of, as applied to the labourers of England, without comparing their character with that of the Scotch or the Irish. I once heard your lordship say, and I was very much pleased to hear you say it, that the labourers in England were the most civil, kind, and best-behaved people in the world. I am sure you thought so; and I am sure you think so still; and it is the laws of the country, to be sure, the ancient and hereditary laws, which made the people what they are. And as to the degradation of applying for relief, how many thousands of most respectable tradesmen and farmers are compelled, in consequence of misfortunes, or have been compelled, to apply for relief from that fund towards which they themselves have been contributing all their lives! In the parish of CHADLINGTON, in Oxfordshire, it is related, in one of these immense poor-law books, that the hired overseer, "looking at the rate-book of thirty years back, finds that all the farmers of that date, except two, are become poor men"! Now, is it an act of *degradation* in these men to apply for relief, or would it be better for them to be begging about the country from door to door; would their attitude be more manly and independent in going about, as they do in Scotland, with a beggar's badge upon their shoulder, and a beggar's license in their pocket? In the reign of the savage cub of a savage sire, EDWARD the Sixth, beggary broke out in England which never had been seen in England before. Enraged that the people would not lie down and starve in compliance to the Protestant religion, the ferocious Government passed a law to burn beggars in the cheek; and for a second offence, to put iron collars round their necks, with chains descending to their ancles, and to make them work in this state as slaves to the rich. Even this savage law did not do: ELIZABETH tried martial law and the gibbet and the rack; but the people never gave up the struggle, till they obtained by the Act of ELIZABETH a compensation for what had been taken from them by the plunderers, under HENRY the Eighth and EDWARD the Sixth. The rights which they acquired then, or rather which they reconquered, they have enjoyed ever since, and will enjoy (with the exception of the abridgment of those rights by STURGES BOURNE's bills), until there shall be a want of wisdom sufficient to endeavour to carry this new bill into effect.

The Lord Chancellor tells us, that *frugality* is prevented by this legal provision for the poor; that this provision makes people be at their ease about future consequences, and prevents them from saving against old age and infirmities. In the first place, I do not believe the fact. But, in the next place, if the legal provision had these effects, I discover more good than harm in these effects. What can be more desirable than that a man, whose life is, and must be, a life of hard labour; what can be more desira-

ble than that such a man should be free from care with regard to old age and infirmities? Would you have him have the racking cares of the miser, and the toil of the labourer, too? It is quite enough to have the toils; and, in consequence of this assurance of support in old age, and in case of infirmities, he ventures upon greater toil, and upon greater risks, and he does more in the course of his life than he would do, if he had no such assurance. The curious thing is, that there is no grudging to make provision for worn-out and disabled soldiers and sailors, who are always well provided for, and ungrudgingly. They receive more pay than a labouring man, and yet it never came into the heads of any one to bid them save their money, or to reproach them with not having done it. We vote them millions a year without any grumbling; and vote it, too, out of the pockets of the men who labour at the loom or in the field.

Besides, has it never occurred to the Lord Chancellor, during his many years of philosophizing, that, if it were possible for all working men to save money, there would very soon be no work done. There always will be some few who will save a part of their earnings; but this never can be general. The order of the world requires, and the good of the world requires, that working men, generally speaking, should live up, in one way or another, to the full extent of their earnings; and that they should be at their ease with regard to old age and infirmities: this has always been the case in England, since the country has borne that name; and, until the Lord Chancellor, or your lordship, can find a better working people upon the face of the earth, let me hope you will cease your efforts to revolutionize this state of things.

The other proposition of the Lord Chancellor; namely, that the poor have no other right to relief than that which is granted by Act of Parliament; and that that which is given by Parliament, Parliament can take away; this proposition would, in order to give it its full and complete confutation, require more time and a much larger space than I have at my command. Nevertheless, I shall say enough I hope to satisfy every reasonable man upon the subject. It never will be contended, by any man in his senses, that it is not against reason and against nature herself to suppose that men could have entered into civil society, for the purpose of exposing the millions to suffer of hunger, thirst, and cold, at the pleasure of the few. This never can be believed by any man in his senses; and all our lawyers agree, that even an Act of Parliament made against natural justice is void in itself; for, as BLACKSTONE tells us, no legislature has the power to destroy or abridge those natural rights which have been given by God himself. "Whatever," says he, "is done by a man to save either life or member, is looked upon as done upon the highest necessity and compulsion; and the same is also a sufficient excuse for the commission of many misdemeanours." Chief Justice HALE, and after him BLACKSTONE, say, "that the Act of ELIZABETH has established charity as a system; and has interwoven this relief for the poor with the very constitution of our Government."

The Lord Chancellor knows all this a great deal better than I do; but he prefers the law of MALTHUS to that of BLACKSTONE and HALE, and his philosophy he prefers to that of BACON and of LOCKE; and this great and wise institution, which has formed a people of so excellent a character, which has given patience to industry and cheerfulness at the same time; which has given peace to the country, and which has really been the greatest glory of the country for so many ages, he would now demolish,

in order to "animate that *private charity*," which he finds so *dormant in this kingdom*; when it is notorious to every man who knows any thing of the world, that the hand of charity is nowhere so liberal, so ready, so generous, as it is in this England itself.

The true history of the poor-laws of England is this. Before the Protestant Reformation, the necessitous poor were relieved by the monasteries, and by the parochial clergy. The Lord Chancellor knows this very well; but he denies that they had any *right* so to be relieved. Will he deny that certain persons of any parish, or any place, have a *right* to the benefit of a school, or an hospital, put into the trust of a municipal corporation? No, he will not deny this. Will he deny, that, when the convents were founded, there was always a condition that they should relieve the poor and necessitous, the widow, and the stranger; and that, in many cases, they were compelled by their endowment to relieve the poor of certain parishes or districts? If he deny this, I cannot refer to the original of any particular endowment; but I can refer him to Bishop TANNER, who, very amply, states the facts. He will not deny, then, that the poor had a *right* to relief from those monasteries, according to the terms of the endowments. Neither will he deny that their right to relief from those monasteries would still remain perfect, were there not a legal provision for the poor, in another manner; nor will he pledge his reputation as a lawyer, that it is not now, *in law*, as perfect as ever; and only lies *dormant* in consequence of the existence of the Act of ELIZABETH.

It was the duty and the practice of the owners of the land to relieve the poor, before the monasteries existed. When they endowed the monasteries they charged them with the relief of the poor, nothing being so proper as that that relief should pass through the hands of persons devoted to the service of God. By acts of Parliament the monasteries were taken away from the monks and the nuns; but the relief to the poor, which it was the duty of those monasteries to administer, WAS NOT TAKEN AWAY by those acts of Parliament. On the contrary, IT WAS EXPRESSLY RESERVED by the acts of Parliament which gave the monasteries and their estates to secular persons; and it legally belongs to the poor of this day as completely as it did to their Catholic forefathers. And it is just (and hardly that) to withhold this right from them, only because they had a compensation in the 43. of ELIZABETH.

But the parochial clergy also were bound to relieve the necessitous out of the tithes. The Lord Chancellor denies the correctness of the canons of the church; he denies the fourfold distribution; and, though that distribution is as much a matter of incontestable history as almost any statement of history of more than fifty years old, I will not insist upon that. I will only insist upon what he cannot deny. He cannot deny that which we find in Acts of Parliament: and then, he cannot deny that the 15. of Richard the Second, which was enforced by an Act of the next reign, makes the whole matter of right to relief clear and indubitable. Many of the livings in England and Wales had been appropriated to the monasteries; and they taking away the great tithes, and leaving only the small tithes to a vicar, deprived him of a sufficiency for the relief of the poor. To put a stop to this injustice the Act of Richard was passed, compelling the monasteries to leave a sufficiency in the parishes appropriated to them for the relief of the poor in those parishes. Thus, then, Englishmen in all ages had a right to relief out of the land. In other Catholic

countries that relief was suffered to come according to the pleasure of the clergy; but in England, where the principles of justice prevailed more than in any other country, the common and statute law took care that the church should do its duty to the necessitous poor, and this was one great cause of the distinguished happiness, good living, good dresses, good character, absence of viciousness, of the working people of this country.

After the Reformation this holy law was violated: the new owners of the monasteries and Protestant possessors of the livings, neglected the relief of the poor; and there was a long fight between the working people and the landholders until the 43. of ELIZABETH, when the poor obtained the compensation stipulated in the Act of that year, which compensation will be taken away by the passing of this bill.

You or the Lord Chancellor, may possibly ask me, what is the *worth* of this *prescriptive* right, even if it be established? What is the *worth* of it, if the Parliament pass an act to take it away, and have the power to enforce that act? You may ask me this; and I am obliged to confess that the right is worth nothing; but then, I must say, that the whole *depends upon the power of enforcement*. The *right* is as clear as your lordship's right to your estate. You could not keep that against an act of Parliament with power to enforce the act. The King could not keep his crown against an act of Parliament to repeal the act of the 12. and 13. of William and Mary. His right to the crown rests upon an act of Parliament, without prescription: the people's right to relief out of the land has both act of Parliament and prescription whereon to rest, and whereon to be defended.

But it may still be said, how do the endowments and the long custom, and the practice, of which I have been speaking, *constitute a right*? Doubt this; express a doubt here, my lord; and then no man has a right to any piece of property in the kingdom. You fling all into the air, and down it comes to be scrambled for; and the ten thousand, or perhaps twenty thousand estates once held by the monasteries, are hunted up, and the owner called upon to produce his title! The owners of nearly one-half of all the lands in the kingdom, including the great tithes, have no title worth a straw to those estates and those tithes, if you treat as waste paper; if you treat as laws obsolete, the acts of the 27. and 31. of Henry the Eighth. Those acts expressly tell you that the rights of the poor are reserved. But when the mind is once set to work, and driven with great force in any direction, it never stops where it intends to stop when it begins to move. Set men to trace out these titles, and they will *trace out all others*. They will find that there is no estate which belongs in *absolute proprietorship to any man!* And the Lord Chancellor knows well that they will find BLACKSTONE to tell them so, he taking his law from HALE and from COKE, and they taking it from lawyers that had gone before them. The historians of Ireland will tell you that JAMES the First ousted all the proprietors of whole counties, upon a bare ejectionment, stating that the lands belonged to him in the quality of *head of the Commonwealth*, and challenging them to *show the contrary!*

In short, here is a question to agitate, to disturb, all men who are proprietors, and to trace all rights of possession to their origin. I verily believe, that the projectors of this scheme are animated solely by their fondness of a theory. Very pretty theory, and very amusing as long as it remained a mere theory; but when it is proposed to put it in practice, those who have the power of such putting in practice ought to be very

cautious how they move, especially when the practice must inevitably go to the quick of millions of the community ; and when a commotion of any extent near the grand seat of paper-money may, in an hour, blow the whole fabric to atoms.

I cannot conclude without a more particular notice of that part of your lordship's speech which relates to the rate-payers. You are reported to have said : " He was mainly anxious for the passing of this bill, because " he was convinced that those from whom the rates were raised *required " this measure of relief."* Now, my lord, these words mean, that the farmers, tradesmen, and people of the active and industrious classes of society, who pay the rates, want this bill to be passed. Reading the newspapers, and seeing the loads of petitions presented against this bill, and seeing who the petitioners are, and in what state of life, I hope I may pronounce it to be impossible that your lordship could have uttered these words. Whether, however, you uttered them or not, nothing of meaning more erroneous ever came from the lips of mortal man. Nine-tenths of the magistrates and the clergy disapprove of this bill, and expect it to produce something nearly approaching to rebellion. The farmers and the tradesmen, whether in London or elsewhere, detest it to a man. They think they see in it a project for drawing the poor-rates into the pockets of the landowners ; and what is worse, *to draw the wages of the poor into their pockets also.* Some of the answers which the poor-law commissioners have received contain remarks to this amount : That the poor-rates do not hurt the farmer ; that he pays his *rent* in two parts, " one part to the landlord, and one part to the poor." This was a tickler ; but nothing upon earth could be more true ; so that if you take away the poor landlord, you give to the rich landlord. But evident as this is it appears not more evident to the farmers and tradesmen, that is not all that is intended. They think that it is intended also *to reduce the rate of wages*, and to bring the saving into the pockets of the landlords ; and though it is impossible, from every circumstance, that the Lord Chancellor can wish to do this ; and though it is possible that your lordship might gain money by it, I sincerely believe that you would give up your estate rather than gain by such means ; but it is my bounden duty to tell you, that this is the general opinion amongst all persons in the middle class of life, who think, and who say, that this bill is a first step towards reducing the working people in England to the state of the working people in Ireland. And, my lord, have they nothing to induce them to hold this opinion ? They hear the Lord Chancellor undisguisedly assert, that all tax upon the land, in any degree whatsoever, for the relief of the poor, is a thing that ought not to be ; they hear the cry against the poor as swallows up of the land, while they hear the landowners make no complaint about the millions expended on soldiers, on pensioners, on sinecurists, on retired people, on half-pay people, and the like ; they see this bill putting almost the whole power of vestries into the hands of landowners voting by proxy ; they see TUPNELL, a *student-at-law*, promoted to be an Irish church commissioner, after having recommended in his report the total abolition of poor laws in Scotland at once, and the *gradual abolition of them in England* ; they know, that, if the whole of the sum given as relief to the poor could be put into the pockets of the landlords, it would be but a mere pittance, to gain which it would not be worth while to set the middle and working classes at defiance ; but they know that the WAGES amount to fifty or sixty millions a-year, and that if the wages of labour could be reduced to the Irish scale, two-thirds

of all these millions would go into the pockets of the landlords; and while all these things are well known to every intelligent man in the middle rank of life, they have all heard, and I vouch for the fact, that one of the poor-law runners complained that the labourers in Sussex were accustomed to *too high living*; and they have heard, and I vouch for the truth of this fact also, that the instructions to the barrister who drew the bill state, that **IT IS DESIRABLE TO ACCUSTOM THE WORKING PEOPLE TO A COARSER KIND OF FOOD!**

These are the facts, assembled together in the minds of the farmers, the traders, and all persons in the middle rank of life: upon these facts they found their reasoning; the conclusion is inevitable; and it is one and the same in every part of England and Wales. They reason all alike; and, indeed, it is impossible not to perceive that, whatever may be intended, the effect of this bill must be, to reduce wages to the Irish standard; to reduce the working people to the state of the Irish working people, and to put three-fourths of the present wages into the pockets of the landlords. The first effect in the country will be, to raise the rents of farms, upon the ground that the poor-rates were diminished, or abolished; and the augmentation would be so great, that the farmer would be compelled to lower the wages. Men would, at first, refuse to work for reduced wages; there would be the great workhouse for them, and the **COARSER SORT OF FOOD**. They must then submit, and come down to the potatoes and sea-weed, and the rags and nakedness. The farmer would not gain a straw, but would be poorer than he is now; for the landlord would demand high rent in proportion to the low wages.

It is one of the great misfortunes of men, situated as the Lord Chancellor is, surrounded with a race that write and flatter; all his walls covered with books, and other such-like sources of knowledge, to believe that tradesmen and farmers, and especially chopstick labourers, are wholly incapable of reasoning, and are destitute of all powers of penetrating into the designs of great men. This is a capital mistake; and in this present case, I would pledge my life, that the moment the contents of this bill become completely known to the people at large, as it will be, and must be, in the course of a very short time, they will all come instantly to one and the same conclusion, that it is a scheme for making the working people live upon potatoes, to let them have nothing but water to drink, to reduce their wages to next to nothing, and to make the farmer give to the landlords three-fourths of the money which they now get in wages.

What may be the consequences of their coming to this conclusion it is impossible that I can know, and not by any means necessary for me to guess at; but let what may come, I shall have done everything in my power to prevent the passing of the bill, and shall pray to God, that the Parliament and the Government will, when both have had time for reflection, not attempt to carry it into execution.

I am, with the greatest respect,

Your lordship's most humble

And most obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE EARL OF RADNOR,

ON HIS REPORTED SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, ON THE
21. JULY, ON THE POOR-LAW SCHEME.

(*Political Register, September, 1834.*)

LETTER III.*

Isle of Anglesea, 14. Sept., 1834.

MY LORD,

THIS is the third letter which I have addressed to you on the subject of your reported speech in the House of Lords, on the 21. of July, in this year, on the poor-law scheme. The two former letters have been republished in the pamphlet form, and I have given leave to the publishers of unstamped publications to republish all these letters, while I have myself done my utmost to cause them to be read in all the parishes of Wiltshire and Berkshire. There will be two more letters after this; and when the whole is finished they will form a volume, which I trust your lordship will live to see outlive this Poor-Law Bill. I have any feeling but that of pleasure in the doing of this; but, and you know it well, my lord, I have, ever since I took pen in hand, been expressing my abhorrence of the injustice, the cruelty, the ferocity, of those principles which have now been formally promulgated as good, and which have been urged as such in support of this bill; and therefore, were I now to neglect my duty in exposing this measure in every way that I possibly can, and in endeavouring to cause its repeal, I should indeed be that inconsistent wretch which corruption has, for so many years, been falsely representing me to be. Were I, from any personal consideration of any sort, to refrain from discharging this duty, understanding the subject so thoroughly, and seeing the poor lift up their hands to me for help, I should be the basest of all poltroons; I should deserve the contempt of even the contemptible creatures that have been assailing me so long; to say nothing of those judgments of God, of which I should justly incur the infliction on my head.

Thus thinking, I proceed in the performance of my duty; and I have first to remind your lordship, that in my Letter II. I have proved to you, that the very person whom you applauded for his system had excited the hatred of the whole parish, and at last had had his stacks burnt, as the openly-avowed consequence of his having adopted, and adhered to, the system which it is intended to make general by this law. In my first letter I asserted, *that the necessitous poor had as much right to relief as you had to your estate.* You have a perfect right to your estate; and all the notions of those who hold that men ought to be limited in their possessions I regard as the effect of great foolishness; for, besides

* Letter II. consists of an account from the newspapers of the burning of the Rev. Mr. Lowe's property, subsequently to Lord RADNOR's speech.—Ed.

the right, I know that it is expedient, that it is for the good of the whole of the community, that there should be some very large estates, and that their extent or magnitude should go on diminishing while their number went on increasing, from your estate down to the cottage of the labourer, and his garden of ten rod of ground. Therefore it is not that I question your right to your estate; but it is that I insist upon the labourer having *a right to relief out of that estate*, when he is in a state of want, which want he cannot himself, either for want of strength, want of sanity, or want of employment, relieve; and I insist, that not only has he this right by *reason* and by *nature*, but that he has it by the law of the land; and that if this prescriptive right be taken from him by act of Parliament, there is an end to the constitution of Government so long established in this kingdom; and that an act of Parliament can *as justly* be passed to take from you your estate.

Now, my lord, *what is it* that constitutes your right to the possession of your estate? You bought the estate, or your predecessors did, or it descended to you from a long line of ancestors. Now observe, no purchase, no ancestry, can give you any right *not originating in a grant*; the law being that all the land belonged to all the community, till a *head of the community was appointed*, and then he, in the name and in the behalf of the community, *granted it to individuals*, but never in *absolute* proprietorship; it was *always* held on certain *conditions*; it was *always* charged with *certain services* to the state; it was *always* a species of *tenancy*; the King *always* reserved a claim to something out of it in one way or another; and though these claims were abolished, for the most part, by act of Parliament, the landowners imposing most unjustly *a tax on the labour of the people in their stead*, still it was not, even by acts of Parliament, made an *absolute* proprietorship.

Very good proprietorship; a thing not to be disturbed if it can possibly be avoided; but a thing that may be disturbed, and with much clearer law than that on which this Poor-Law Bill has been founded; and a thing which I believe will be disturbed, unless this Poor-Law Bill be speedily repealed. To hear the talk about property, which we have been compelled to listen to ever since MALTHUS broached his infamous principles, one would think that every owner of land deemed himself a sort of CREATOR; or at least a possessor immediately appointed by Almighty God. This is a monstrous blunder, but naturally enough the offspring of the insolence of wealth; a most monstrous blunder, as your lordship will see at once, if you look into BARON GILBERT'S book on the Common Pleas. You will there see the origin and foundation of your proprietorship; you will see that you are not an *absolute* proprietor; you will see that there is no landed estate, not held by a grant of the chief of the commonwealth; and you will learn that, though the immediate and particular claims of the commonwealth on each estate, have been almost wholly abolished by acts of the Parliament; that they have been abolished by acts of the Parliament only; and that of course they *can all be revised by acts of a Parliament*: you will find from BARON GILBERT that you are not a Creator, and that you hold your estate not immediately from God, but from grants of the commonwealth, and that the people have just as much right, and a great deal more reason, to call for a resumption of your estate for their benefit, as you have, or than you have, to do any act which shall have a tendency to take away their right to relief out of that estate. The book to which I have taken the

liberty to refer your lordship, is a book of undoubted authority with all the lawyers of this kingdom. BLACKSTONE, indeed, has said the same; the same has been said in substance, by all the lawyers, upon the nature and rights of property; but no one, as far as my knowledge goes, has treated the matter so fully and so clearly; I take this, therefore, to be undoubtedly the law of the land; and here then is your right to your estate, divested only of a part of the rights of the commonwealth; and so divested only by acts of the Parliament; and those acts, be it remembered, of far younger date; passed but yesterday, in comparison with acts of the Parliament even, recognising the rights of the poor. Fifty years younger, even than the act of ELIZABETH; so that I distinctly assert that, by the law of the land, the poor have as good a right at the least to relief out of the estate, as you have to the possession of the estate.

And now for the title which the poor have to relief. Need I tell so sensible a man as your lordship, that there always were necessitous poor, and always must be; need I remind your lordship, that the Scripture, in perhaps a thousand places, enjoins, as the most sacred of all duties, that of the rich to take care and to cherish the poor; need I remind your lordship, that God forbids the muzzling of the ox, "as he treadeth out the corn," and that he blasts, with the most terrible of his curses, those who shall withhold from the labourer his hire; need I remind your lordship, that in the division of the land God gave none to the Levites, but gave them a tenth of the produce of all the land, and charged them to distribute that produce in a manner to prevent the poor from wanting; need I remind you, that among the first acts of the apostles, when they got converts and congregations about them, was the appointment of the order of DEACONS, whose sole business it was to attend to the disposal of the oblations of the faithful, and so to dispose of them that the poor might be duly relieved? No: I need remind you of none of these things; you know them all as well as I do; the conduct of your life shows that you have constantly had them in recollection; what then must be my grief to see you at the head of the supporters of a set of Scotch quacks, who blasphemously revile that charity which was always the prominent feature in the precepts of Jesus Christ himself. They deny that there ought to be any institution for the relief, the comfort, or care, of the necessitous poor. Talk of *blasphemy* indeed, these are the most infamous blasphemers that the world ever saw; but monstrous as their blasphemy is, it is all overlooked, because made use of for the purpose of sanctioning a project, the tendency of which is supposed to be to make the working people live upon *coarser food*, and to put a large share of what they now eat and drink into the pockets of the landlords, pretending all the while that it is for the good of those who are thus to be reduced to *coarser food*.

So much for the law of God; so much for the lien which, by his express word, the poor are to have upon all the land; so much for the example and the precept of CHRIST and his apostles.

Come we now to the origin of civil society: and here I shall be obliged to repeat in substance what I have many times said in other places; but while it is not plagiarism for a man to borrow from his own writings, it is necessary that I say here what I have said before, because it is for *young men* that I write: those who have not before read, in all probability, and those on whom the helpless part of the community must rely for protection against, or for deliverance from, oppression.

There was a time in England, as well as elsewhere, when there was no civil society; when there were no laws, except the *law of nature*; that is to say, the law of the *strongest* or most cunning. God had given all the land to all the people; there were no nobility, and no parsons, and no landowners. In process of time the people agreed to establish laws to which all men should submit; and then arose what is called property. Industry, labour, and ingenuity soon obtained lands for the exclusive possession of some men, while others, less laborious, or less ingenious, naturally became the working people of those more enterprising individuals. A man became possessed of land because he, or his parents, or relations, had bestowed labour upon it; he became possessed of house because he had built it; he became possessed of animals because he had bred them, and had worked to get the food for them; he became possessed of goods because he had made them, or had given the fruit of his labour to have them made. Thus all property *had its foundation in labour*; and this is a remark which I respectfully beg your lordship to keep in mind.

The law of nature now ceased; it was supplanted by the law of civil society, which, in time, gave all the land to a comparatively few individuals; forbade others to take it from them, or the fruit of it from them; and it destines those others to labour for the proprietors of the land. But, my lord, is it possible that this new state of things, created for the purpose of bettering the lot of the whole, would ever have been adopted, or agreed to, by the whole, if it had been made a condition, that those who possessed the land should keep the fruits of it to themselves in such a way, as to cause those who laboured upon it to starve, or to exist on food fit only for brutes? No; this is not possible: and accordingly we see that when MOSES distributed the land, and made proprietorship in land; when, he, under the immediate command of God, created and established a civil society, he retained a tenth part of all the produce of the land, commanding that, out of that tenth part, the necessitous poor should always be provided for; that they should know no suffering from want; and he denounced curses on the heads of those who should attempt to withhold their share from the poor. Indeed, my lord, what is so audacious, what is so brazenly impudent as the assertion, that a people have not a right to be upon, and secure a living out of, the land upon which they were born, and on which they have either laboured or do labour, or are ready and willing to labour? I could, with an iron bar, smite across the mouth of a hardened Scotch quack ruffian, who would utter a denial like this. Our catechism tells us, "to be content in that state of life, into which it has pleased God to call us": and that is right; but the atrociously impudent Parson MALTHUS tells us, and other wretches, equally atrocious, tell us, that we have no right to be at all, unless by the consent of those who are called the owners of the land.

Thus it was, then, according to the law of God, and thus it must have been, according to the original law of civil society; and, accordingly, BLACKSTONE, the great teacher and expositor of our laws, tells us, that a permanent and legal provision for the poor, by compulsory assessments, is "founded in the principles of civil society." Let us now come, then, to the laws of our own country, relative to this matter of right to relief by the poor.

The bawling, jawing, half-frantic, plotting, intriguing, restless, presumptuous, empty-skulled, crack-skulled, villainous-looking, false, double-dealing advocates for reducing the poor to "*coarser food*," and for bringing down the working people of England to the state of the working

people of Ireland; these blasphemers and monsters deny that the poor have any right at all to relief; while I assert, that they have as good a right, and a clearer right, than you have to the possession of your estate; and now I am going to prove this, beyond the contradiction of the half-drunk, and half-mad, the unprincipled, the profligate, the audacious wretches, who deny this right.

Before the introduction of Christianity into England, in the time of St. AUGUSTINE, there were none of those divisions called *parishes*, which word means priestship, which now exist in the country. Before that time, however, the people were all a sort of *servants* of the great landowners; they were their dependents, in one way or another; they were held to the soil, and of necessity they were all maintained out of the soil: every baron, or other holder of estate, took care of his people, and there was no need of any collections for the poor; the inhabitants of each estate formed a *family*, who, of necessity, had their living out of the produce of that estate; and who, like servants in husbandry, were kept in sickness and in health.

When Christianity came to be generally established in the country, and the division of it into parishes took place, the regulations adopted by the Christians in the west of Europe found their way to England; and this regulation was, that the parson of the parish should have the tenth of all the produce of the parish, of every description; that a third part of the produce should go, if so much was wanted, to the relief of the necessitous poor; that another third should go to the building, rebuilding, and furnishing, repairing, and ornamenting the church; and that the other third part should be considered as the property of the parson himself. This was the law of the church; and this law continued in force for nine hundred long years, during which time arose the great reputation of England, as being the happiest and finest in the world. Besides this positive regulation, however, the parsons were enjoined, in case of necessity, to apply the whole of the revenues of the living to the relief of the poor except that part of them which might be wanted to sustain life in their own persons.

I know that the jawing, bawling vagabonds, and that the nasty old rigs of women, whom to touch with a pair of tongs would be quite disgusting enough; I know that these, though some of them call themselves *lawyers*, have the impudence and ignorance to deny that this *threefold distribution* ever existed in England. It was fourfold in a diocese where the bishop was not otherwise provided for, he having a fourth; but they deny, that threefold or fourfold ever practically existed in England; and the fact is a fact of importance in this present discussion.

In my first letter, I laid this foundation of right out of the question, and confined myself to the foundation afforded by the statute law only. But, I will now refer to a law book; to the book that I referred your lordship to before: to Baron GILBERT'S Law of the Common Pleas, who has these words: "The revenues of the church, consisting of various descriptions of tithes, were divided thus: one third part was taken by the priest, as his own; another third was applied to the relief of the poor; and the other third part to the building and repairing of the church." Now, my lord, is there any one who has ever been worthy of the name of *lawyer*, and who is not either drunk or mad, who will deny that this book which I have quoted is a book of unquestionable authority with all lawyers and all judges? There is no lawyer but a half-drunk and half-mad one, who will deny this; and I, therefore, assert, and have thus proved, that such was the law of the church, and the common law of the land.

But, the statute law comes to confirm this; comes incidentally; but comes with force irresistible. After the monasteries grew up and had so much power in England, innumerable patrons of livings gave the advowsons to the monasteries, instead of keeping them in their own hands, or leaving them to their heirs. The monasteries, become owners of the advowsons, did not, in many cases, give the livings to parish priests; but sent some one of their own order into each of the livings to perform the duty, leaving him the small tithes, and taking the great tithes to themselves. The priest thus sent by the monasteries, was called a *vicar*, from the Latin word *vicarius*, which means a person deputed, or delegated to act in the place of another: and from this came the vicarages in England. Your lordship knows that I know that you know all this as well as I do; but you will not ask me why I state it, because you know very well that the cracked-skulled *jawing* feelosofers have made it right and fitting and necessary, that every chopstick in the kingdom should understand the whole of this matter well, in order that the working people may proceed rationally to secure justice for themselves.

In consequence of the above-described application of the tithes, it frequently happened that the monasteries took away the great tithes, and did not leave the vicar enough for his own sustenance, the repairing of the church, and the relieving of the poor. In consequence of this, an act was passed, in the 15. of Richard II., to compel the monasteries to leave a sufficiency for the relief of the poor, "in aid of their living and sustenance for ever." I will quote the whole act, which is quite complete, though not so long as those of the "good old king" and his sons; and here it is.

"ITEM, Because divers damages and hinderances often times have happened, and dailly do happen, to the parishioners of divers places, it is agreed and assented, That in every licence from henceforth to be made in the Chancery, of the appropriation of any parish church, it shall be expressly contained and comprised, that the diocesan of the place, upon the appropriation of such churches, shall ordain, according to the value of such churches, a convenient sum of money to be paid and distributed yearly, of the fruits and profits of the same churches, by those that shall have the said churches in proper use, and by their successors, TO THE POOR PARISHIONERS OF THE SAID CHURCHES, IN AID OF THEIR LIVING AND SUSTENANCE FOR EVER; and also that the vicar be well and sufficiently endowed."

Now, my lord, this proves beyond all contradiction, that the poor were relieved out of the tithes. Another act, passed in the 4. year of HENRY the Fourth, enforces this act, and thus it continued, until the event called the REFORMATION. And was the right *enfeebled* by that event? The acts of the 27. and 31. of HENRY the Eighth, took away the great tithes from the monasteries, and abolished the monasteries themselves; but those acts expressly reserve the rights of the poor; along with all other rights arising out of the endowments of the monasteries.

Let us come back, however, to the parochial relief. The great tithes were taken from the monasteries and given to lay-persons, and to clerical corporations, by these two acts of HENRY the Eighth; but these acts do not in any way repeal, or weaken, the acts of RICHARD the Second, and of HENRY the Fourth; nor were they intended to do this; and though the monasteries were suppressed, the parochial relief to the poor remained just what it had been before, for so many ages. But, next came the Protestant work. The Protestant church was made by the act of the 2. year of EDWARD the Sixth. That act, 2 and 3 EDWARD the VI., chapter 1, made this Protestant church; turned out the Catholic priests, and put in the Protestant parsons. Shifted the revenues from the Catholic priests to

the Protestant parsons; but said not a word about taking the tithes from the poor; said not a word about repealing the act of RICHARD the Second; and no act of Parliament ever passed from that day to this, has ever repealed, directly or indirectly; has ever weakened, in the smallest degree, even by implication; and I venture to assert, in the face of all the jawing, bawling, ugly-looking, wretches, with heads covered with mares' tails, that this act is law unto this day; and if I live to go into my place in Parliament again, I will move a resolution for the enforcement of this act, which asserts the rights of the poor, and the rights of the middle class of persons, too, who are now taxed for the relief of the poor, because the aristocracy keep the whole of the tithes to themselves.

This is a subject, my lord, which you have chosen to stir up; it has not been of my seeking; it has been forced upon me; and I am resolved, in going through my task, to avail myself of every fact which my mind can suggest, or my information can furnish. We never judge so justly as when we *make the case our own*; and, we will presently see how this act of RICHARD II. *applies to the affairs of your Lordship*! It would be curious enough to see your lordship and the poor in the same boat together; but we shall see that in about two minutes and a half. But, first, about this act of RICHARD the Second; about its being in force to this hour. What would you say if I prove it, not only to *be* the law of the land; but to be *acted* upon as the law of the land, and decided upon as the law of the land, every term in all the courts, whether of law or of equity!

Your lordship is aware, that in divers cases, the tithe-payers plead a "*modus*" as a bar to the claim of tithes by the parsons. These *moduses* arose from arrangements made by the monasteries with persons who owned, or occupied the parishes, of which they had the appropriation. In short, the monasteries had robbed their livings by selling away, or renting away, the revenues of them, and they had thus pinched the vicar and the poor. The act that I have just cited put an end to this species of pious robbery, though it did not expressly annul *moduses* before entered into. Scarcely a term has passed, since my recollection, without some parish or other being engaged in a law-suit with their parson; the parish pleading a *modus*, and the parson challenging them to *prove* that the *modus* existed before the passing of this act of RICHARD the Second, *which act they plead in bar to the modus*; and the judges have long since laid it down *as law*, that no *modus* is good for anything that cannot be proved to have existed before the passing of this act, and the burden of proof of existence shall lie with the parishioners! So that here are the parsons; that is to say, the *aristocracy*, every day pleading this act to enforce their own claims on the people, while they suffer this act to be a dead letter with regard to a provision for the poor. If ever there were anything more shameful than this; a more daring invasion of the rights of the people on the part of the great; if ever there were anything more brazenly impudent than this, while the poor are accused of swallowing up your estates, it has, at any rate, never come to my knowledge.

Very well, then, my lord, this not only was the law, but it is the law; and if I live to the next meeting of Parliament, we will know why it is all alive for the aristocracy, and all *vigour*, like my Lord GREY and STURGES BOURNE, and the Bishop of LONDON; why it is all alive for you and your brother, the rector of PEWSEY, and prebendary of SALISBURY; and why it is dead as a door-nail for the poor and the people of PEWSEY; why it is all alive for Lords GUILDFORD and WALSINGHAM, and why it is

as dead as RICHARD the Second himself, for the miserable incumbents of the parishes of ALDERSHOT, BENTLEY, FARNHAM, TONGHAM, SEAL, ELSTREAD, FRENSHAM, all clustered together within a few miles of the spot where I was last Tuesday, while the miserable incumbents have not, on an average, an income equal to that of a journeyman carpenter, while the act of RICHARD, which the aristocracy and the big parsons plead every day for their own advantage, says, that "the vicar shall be well and sufficiently endowed," notwithstanding any appropriation of the benefice. Here are seven appropriations, all in a lump, by which the big pluralist clerical appropriators, take away thousands a year, while the seven vicars are left to starve! And this is "*law*," is it? And now the aristocracy are going to take a dip at the labourers' wages, and the Scotch vagabonds are going to accustom them to "*coarser food*," are they?

But, let us come back to PEWSEY, of which you are the patron, and of which your brother is the rector, having there a good parsonage-house, garden, and glebe, and tithes, I should suppose, to the amount of a thousand a year, or more: it is a large parish, and must be a parish of great produce, the meadows, fields, and downs, all being very fine. Bear in mind, may it please you, my lord, that the act of RICHARD the Second, is *in full force*; and then, let me ask you, what right you have to give all the tithes of PEWSEY to your brother; and what right he has to take them even if given by you? A third part of them belong to the poor. There is no law which has given it to your brother. There are laws to make the people of PEWSEY keep the church in repair. This injustice is inflicted by law; but there is no law, nor the semblance of law, for authorizing your brother to eat the portion of the poor of PEWSEY. Whose portion he eats as prebendary of SALISBURY, I know not: he takes a snack, perhaps, of what ought to go to the endowment of vicarages, agreeably to the act of RICHARD the Second; but certain it is that he eats the portion of the poor of PEWSEY.

Better, my lord, not to have levelled parson LOWE's example against the working people of England and Wales. There were troubles enough without it. The aristocracy had quite enough to do without making this uncalled for stir. It was a sleeping lion; better not have roused him. The English have always been famous for long and silent suffering, and equally for obstinate perseverance in pursuit of their rights, when once they have been aroused to action. For my part, I am determined to fight this question inch by inch; and I will not so libel my country as to suppose that my efforts will not succeed in the end. It is impossible for me to be patient or good-tempered with the great workhouses, the *coarser food*, the workhouse dresses, the separation of man from wife, and of parents from children; it is impossible for me to be good-tempered with these before my eyes; it is impossible for me to be good-tempered while I hear the Scotch crew eulogizing the system that produces bare legs and bare feet, and beggars with badges on their shoulders, and licenses to beg in their pocket. Six months ago I would have said, that the man was a liar, who should have asserted me to be capable of addressing any words to your lordship, not breathing the profoundest and most sincere respect; but, when I hear the Lord Chancellor move the second reading of a bill, and accompanying that motion with a declaration that there ought to be no legal compulsory provision for the poor; declare unblushingly, in the face of all the laws of the land, that the poor have no legal right to relief; stigmatize the unfortunate labourers as sturdy vagabonds; and deny every

principle inculcated by MOSES, by the apostles, and by our Saviour himself, as far as these principles relate to provisions for the poor; when I see you the forwardest in supporting this bill, and, by fair implication, upon these grounds, I must be excused, if I seem wanting in that feeling of respect towards your lordship, to entertain which was one of the great pleasures of my life.

Let me now come to the law as it stood before this Scotch scheme was adopted; I mean to the celebrated act of the 43rd year of the reign of ELIZABETH, which had become absolutely necessary, in order to preserve the peace of the kingdom. We have seen that, though the monasteries were suppressed by Henry the Eighth, and the remainder of the plunder consummated by Edward the Sixth; and though Protestant parsons had succeeded Catholic priests, all the rights of the poor still remained in law; the aristocracy, however, who had got the plunder of the church into their hands, very soon began to disregard all the rights of the poor. Old BESS was something like the GREY ministry: she was always upon a *ticklish tenure*. Had her title been good and unquestionable; had there been no Pope for her to fight, she would pretty soon have scourged the holders of abbey-lands, and of livings, into a performance of their duty towards the poor; but as the *vigour* of Lord GREY showed itself only with regard to the chopsticks of Hampshire, of Wiltshire, of Berkshire, and the labourers of Dorsetshire, so old BESS's *vigour* showed itself only in her gallant imprisoning, fining, tormenting, and racking, the beaten-down Catholics. She did not dare to attempt to compel the plundering aristocracy to fulfil the conditions of their grants, and to provide for the maintenance of the poor. She made several attempts to get provision for the poor by legislative measures inculcating alms-giving, and providing for the collection of alms; resorting to hanging and martial law now-and-then all the while. But, bad as hanging and martial-law were, the people preferred, as I trust in God they always will, death to starvation inch by inch; and at last, in the 43rd year of her reign, she came to a compromise with the inexorable plunderers, and wisely passed the act of that year, which is now to be virtually demolished.

This act was not just towards the people in general by any means. By this act all the people of any substance were made to contribute towards the relief of the poor, when the relief ought to have been furnished solely by the possessors of the abbey-lands and the livings. However, as the act made effectual legal and certain provision for the poor, it gave the poor a *compensation* for what they had lost by the suppression of the monasteries, and by the transfer of the livings into Protestant hands. And all was well, all became pretty well settled, the bloody deeds of BESS were forgotten after her death, and the English nation became again happy; the people being, as their forefathers had been, well fed and well clad, and secure from want in old age, or in sickness, or in want of employment. A system of taxation and of funding, beginning with WILLIAM the Third, and just now brought to perfection, has demolished nine-tenths of the ancient families of the kingdom, and now threatens to swallow up the rest. The owners of that rest not daring to look at the fundholders or the dead weight, and unable to dispense with an army of a hundred thousand men, have been advised by a band of Scotch quacks, who appear to be half-drunk and half-mad at the same time, to make the working people of England live upon *coarser food*; to make the farmers lower their wages, and to give the saving to the landlords; to this end

they advise an abrogation of the act of ELIZABETH; they advise a rescinding of the compensation made by that act; they leave the people to sink down into beggarly slaves; or to revive, to assert, to demand, to insist upon, their right to relief from the abbey-lands, and the tithes.

Thus, my lord, I close this letter, satisfied that I have left no doubt in the mind of any man that shall read it, that, though your right to your estate is good and undoubted, the title of the necessitous poor to relief out of the proceeds of that estate is still, if possible, more unquestionable than your title to the estate itself. I do not desire to be compelled to agitate such a subject, but if Mother MARTINEAU push on, and with such a crowd of supporters at her back; if the big workhouses arise, and the workhouse dresses be in the hands of the tailor; if the "*burgoo*" and the "*sowens*," and the potatoes and sea-weed; if I see these in a state of preparation for the mouths of my laborious neighbours, agitate the subject I will; and not the least in despair of triumphing in the end, especially with the assistance of Mr. President JACKSON and the one-pound notes and legal tender. "Poh! for your vigour!" I used to say to Lord GREY. Show your *vigour* towards the fundholders, and then I will applaud you. Better pay your debt in gold of full tale, and of full weight and fineness; better do that, than talk of your *vigour*, in Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire. So I say now, my lord: pay the debt in full tale, and in gold, and then build your workhouses.

In my next Letter I mean to discuss the propositions of your Scotch Mentor, relative to referring the people to the law of nature; and relative to that law dictating to parents and relations to maintain their own kindred without sending them to the poor-book: you have stirred the matter up, and we will ransack every part of it before we have done.

I am,

Your lordship's most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO LORD RADNOR,

ON HIS REPORTED SPEECH, IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, ON THE
21. JULY, ON THE NEW POOR-LAW SCHEME.

(*Political Register*, October, 1834.)

LETTER IV.

Evergreen Lodge, Cork, 12th October, 1834.

MY LORD,

I AM now to speak to you on the subject of that "LAW OF NATURE," to which your grave and sober and sensible Scotch Mentor *appealed* (in justification of this project) *from the law of the land* and the revealed law of God. The "LAW OF NATURE" is, in fact, no law at all. It means a

state of things, in which every man has a right to take and use that which he can get into his possession, if he have need of that thing. Nature ; man's nature, teaches him (unless his nature be perverted and vicious) not to kill other people ; not to cut them, or bite them, or be in any way cruel to them ; it forbids him to eat that which others have earned, unless he cannot sustain life without it ; but, it supposes no restraint at all on any man, other than those restraints which are imposed by the dictates of nature herself. It is a very curious affair, that this "*law of nature*" is cooked up for the purpose of denying the right of relief to the poor ; is cooked up by the barbarous and nasty MAL-THUS, and by his disciples ; is pleaded in bar of the express law of God, and the express law of the land, for this savage purpose ; but is held in abhorrence ; is held to be even legally seditious, when pleaded by poor men, in bar of the rights of property. Poor SPENCE was imprisoned two years ; and EVANS was tried for high treason, for no other offence than that of asserting, *that all the lands belonged to all the people at large, and that the people ought not to take them into their possession* ; and, whether your Lordship recollects the fact or not, it is the fact, that one of the express grounds for passing the gagging and the dungeoning bill of 1817, was, that the "*PRETENDED REFORMERS*" (which was a lie, however) ; that the "*pretended reformers asserted, that the land was the people's farm*" ; and this is to be seen in the report of the committee of the Lords, who proposed the passing of the power of imprisonment, the gagging, and the dungeoning bills ; the bills that enabled SIDMOUTH and CASTLEREAGH to cram the dungeons with men that had committed no crime ; the bills that drove me across the Atlantic, whence, with my long arm, I so belaboured the greedy and savage boroughmongers.

Yet suppose the charge against the reformers to have been true, instead of being a scoundrelly lie ; suppose the allegation to have been true, what more did it amount to than that we pleaded the *LAW OF NATURE* against the law of the land ; that we pleaded, "that the land was the people's farm" ; that we denied proprietorship in the land to all men : supposing this to have been true, instead of being, as it was, a scoundrelly lie ; what did we do more than your steady, sober-minded, and humane Scotch guide now does ? He pleads the "*law of nature*" (and we shall presently see with what object he pleads it) against the law of the land ; and, what, I say, did we do more, even if the lying allegation against us had been true ?

The charge was, that we said, in so many words, "*that the land was the people's farm*" ; and, my Lord, is your park, or are your farms, yours, any more than they are ours ? Did *NATURE* give them to you ? Is your *BODY* part and parcel of them ? Have the *ELEMENTS* combined to say, that no one shall share in them but yourself ? Oh, no ! Your estate is no more yours than it is that of the poorest man that toils upon it ; by *NATURE* it is no more yours than it is his ; there is no express law of God to give it you ; and you have not a shadow of right to the possession of it, if you appeal to the *LAW OF NATURE* against the law of the land.

You have no strength to secure the exclusive possession of it ; *nature* has given you no means of compelling any one to give you a farthing for any part of it : you live at your ease, and without toil ; you fare sumptuously, in consequence of being able to draw from the estate that which is earned upon it by others : you do not make a single ear of wheat to come, nor a blade of grass : were there no law of the land ;

were there no constable, justice of the peace, jailer, judge, and hangman, you would have no more out of the produce of that estate, than that which came out of it by your bodily labour; and that is all that you would be entitled to. It is very right; and, if it were necessary, I could show, that it is very useful and beneficial to a people at large, that there should be a certain portion of the kingdom parcelled out in large estates; and that there should be constables, jailers, judges, and hangmen, to keep the owners of estates in quiet possession of them: but, then, they must cast aside appeals to the "*law of nature*," and take away the argument of your Scotch guide; his *best* argument for [the passing of this bill.

His assertion was this; that all legal relief to the necessitous was wrong, was an evil; and that even all that which was called *charity*; benevolence, as it was called; that even these were evils; because they either tended to make the parties receiving relief, idle, negligent, improvident; or, in case of the parties being really objects of deep compassion, they prevented the *parents and kindred of the poor and indigent from obeying THE LAW OF NATURE, and giving the relief that was wanted.* He is reported to have said, that "when he came to the "third species of charity, that which went to support the aged and infirm, "he would say, *that it was against all sound principles.*" CHADWICK, *who is to be the Secretary to this Board, and whom you applaud to the skies*, by implication at least, speaks thus of a proper officer, to manage the poor; he says, that this proper officer must be "a man of remarkable intelligence, remarkable activity, *remarkable firmness*, and of "remarkable disinterestedness, ready to sacrifice himself to the performance of his duty; a man of great penetration, of great firmness, that "will refuse to *relieve the real indigent*, regardless of popularity; ready "in the performance of a thankless duty to incur the curses of the profligate, the censures of the sentimental, and the enmity of the powerful, he must be a man not of *narrow sympathies*, governed by the "appearances of *misery* before him, whether those appearances *be real "or assumed.*"

Now, this is the doctrine upon which your Lordship has supported this bill, according to the report given of your speech. It would be insincerity of which you are not capable; and it would be the excess of foolishness besides, to pretend that you supported the bill upon principles *other than these.* You supported the bill after the hatcher and mover of it had laid down these principles as having guided him in the framing of the bill. You are incapable of attempting to shuffle; but the most shuffling and tricky fellow that ever sponged a living out of the taxes would not get out of this conclusion. Well, then, these principles you make *your own*: the words were spoken by BROUGHAM, and written by CHADWICK, the penny-a-line reporter; but they become *your words*, if the report of your speech be correct; and you are for *an appeal to the law of nature*, and for putting the poor under the hard-hearted wretch described by CHADWICK.

It is NATURE'S law that parents and children, and brethren and kindred, should take care of one another, and relieve one another's distresses; share with one another the last farthing and the last bit of bread. This is NATURE'S law, and GOD'S law too; and your Lordship remembers well what the apostle says, that "he that neglects his own kindred is worse than a heathen." In accordance with this law of nature and law of God

has been the law of the land, until the day on which you passed this Poor-law Bill. The law of ELIZABETH, in making a legal and certain provision for the destitute, took care to provide that the fathers, the mothers, the grandfathers, and the grandmothers, should relieve the necessities of the children and the grandchildren, if *able to do it*; and that the children and grandchildren, if able to do it, should relieve the necessities of their fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. But do you not know? Yes, you know it well; whatever plea of ignorance the Scotch projectors may have, you have no plea of ignorance on this score, my Lord: you know well that it every day occurs that persons are found in a state of the utmost destitution, having neither parent nor child, nor any relation in the whole world, able to afford them the smallest degree of relief; and you know besides, that the working people, aye, and many tradesmen and farmers too, have been brought into this state, not by any offences, or negligences, or bad conduct of their own; but by having their earnings taken from them by taxes laid on by the two Houses of Parliament; and which taxes, as far as they operate upon the working people, were kept on to the last penny, at the time when you were passing this bill.

But, my Lord, is shame completely banished from this world? Is there no such thing left appertaining to human nature? My Lord, I have no pleasure in ripping up these things. I have no desire to stir up the boiling rage of the working people; but hearing you; I would not have minded what was said by BROUGHAM or GREY, nor by any such people; but when I hear you support and praise a project, founded upon an assertion that the industrious classes of this country disregard the precepts of nature and the commands of God, by leaving their kindred to starve; when I hear you doing this; when I see a reported speech of yours sanctioning this horrible libel on this good and kind and just working people, I cannot refrain from asking your Lordship to look at the conduct of those; to look at the conduct of *the aristocracy*, and see how *they* act as to this matter; to look at the millions; I deliberately say millions, which they swallow up every year, in pensions, in sinecures, in allowances, in grants; to look at the fifteen hundred thousand pounds given to the poorer clergy during the Regency of George the Fourth; given to *relieve the poor clergy*, while the rich clergy took away the endowments which the poor clergy ought to have had. And do the *relations of your Lordship* receive nothing in this way? Yet you are of ability to relieve them. The "*law of nature*," and the command of God bid you relieve them. How many peers are there, and how many members of the other House, who, by themselves or by their relations, do not receive *relief* of some sort or other, out of the taxes paid, and in great part paid by the labouring people? What becomes of BROUGHAM'S LAW OF NATURE here? The "*law of nature*" bids me provide, if I be able, for my own kindred; but the "*law of nature*" does not bid me provide for the *relations of the nobility*; and as to the commands of God, they forbid me to keep silence, while I see the relations of the rich pampered up and kept in luxury out of the fruit of the labour of the poor.

I never yet heard anything worthy of the name of an apology for taxing the food and the drink of the working people, for the purpose of collecting the means of feeding and clothing, and keeping in the style of gentlefolks, the brothers and sisters, and uncles and aunts, and cousins, of lords, or other men of great estate. I never heard anything

worthy of the name of an apology for this ; and I should be glad to hear some one attempt it ; at any rate apologized for, and justified too, it speedily must be ; or we must hear the open declaration, that you will continue to do it **BECAUSE YOU HAVE THE POWER!** And indeed we are little short of hearing this declaration now ; but we must have it out, plain and entire : this Poor-law Bill gives the people *the challenge*, and stirs up all rights and all claims to their very foundation.

You charge the industrious classes with an abandonment of the Christian duty ; the duty imposed by the law of nature also. Stop here while I think of it. Did the "*law of nature*" give to the nasty and greedy parson **MALTHUS** his **PENSION?** He told us, that a law ought to be passed to refuse relief to all poor persons whatsoever who should marry after a certain day, to them and their children. He told us that for such persons "*there was no seat at nature's board.*" Monster ! Did nature bid him, then, have a pension of a hundred pounds a year for doing nothing ; and that pension, too, wrung from the sweat of the labouring people ? God is just, but if there were not punishment to fall upon the heads of those who have the blasphemy to hold principles like these, or to support principles like these, God would not be just ; but he is just, and justice he will inflict upon these persons ; these audacious contemners of his law, these profligate blasphemers. The nasty **MALTHUS** says, that a man who shall marry and be in want, after notice given him, "*has no claim upon society for the smallest portion of relief.*" Impudent parson ! What claim had he ? And what claim have the swarms who are upon the pension list, upon the sinecure list, and upon the dead-weight list ; and all the lists that swallow up the earnings of the working people ? And is impudence to prevail for ever ? Is it *always* to be thus ? Are we *always* to be told that Englishmen were born to be slaves ; and that their food is not **COARSE** enough yet ? No ; it is not *always* to be thus ; a day of justice must come, and will come ; a day of judgment it will be, to those who plead the law of nature for giving pensions to the rich, and for not giving relief to the poor.

When I stopped at the beginning of the last paragraph I was about to notice the audacity of charging the industrious classes of this country with an abandonment of the duty of relieving their own kindred, as imposed by the law of nature and the law of God. And this is a foul charge, a base charge, an audaciously lying charge. It frequently happens amongst the industrious classes, that parents and grandparents have children and grandchildren in a state of great indigence requiring relief : it as frequently happens, that children and grandchildren possess the means of relieving parents and grandparents who are in a state of indigence. The law of **ELIZABETH** requires that these persons of substance shall perform these duties, and that the indigent persons shall not be thrown upon the parish. There is not, perhaps, one single parish in the whole kingdom which does not contain certain persons who must either die or be relieved by the parish, if they were not relieved by their kindred ; and yet how few, my God ! how few are the instances in which it is found necessary for parish officers to resort to the law on this score ! It is a thing that we hardly ever hear of amongst all the thousands of the parishes, and all the millions of the industrious classes ; and mind, it is a thing which the parish officers *never neglect* ; and which they never neglect, nor the magistrates either, to perform in *the strictest pos-*

sible manner. Indeed they sometimes perform it in a manner so strict as to stand in no need of the example of Parson LOWE, or the precepts of CHADWICK, as I now shall show by an instance which I shall lay before your Lordship.

At TICHURST, in Sussex, an old man, upwards of eighty, I believe, who had had a son, who died and left behind him three children, two boys and a girl. The mother was dead, too, I believe; but the children stood in need of employment, or of parish relief. The boys, and I think the girl too, were constantly employed by the farmers of the parish, but not earning a sufficiency, or rather, not receiving a sufficiency in the *shape of wages* to maintain them, they were got into the *poor-book*; and after a good while, the parish officers brought in a bill to the grandfather of all the disbursements that they had given out of the *poor-book* to the children; and he, refusing to pay, was summoned before the magistrates, who decided that he should pay. This poor man, who had nothing but his labour to depend upon all his life, and who had been so industrious, so sober, and so frugal, as to have brought up ten children without going to the parish for assistance in any way whatever, when he told the magistrates that all he possessed in the world were two miserable tenements, worth fifteen pounds a year, was told that he might *sell those tenements!* and thus be left, between eighty and ninety, to come to the workhouse at last. Things were in this state when the man made his complaint to me. How it ended I do not know, but the case, as far as I have knowledge of it, is enough: and, my Lord, when a lord, or a squire, or a dignified parson, comes to cram his relations into the pension-list, why is he not summoned before magistrates, to show cause why he should not maintain them out of his substance, by sale of his estate if he be otherwise destitute of means? And, again I say, shall we *never* see a day of justice; and while men of great estate are thus swallowing up the earnings of the poor in order to give relief to their relations, shall the poor be thus compelled to maintain their own relations out of the fruit of their own earnings? It is useless to talk about the matter any more; this Poor-law Bill has laid all bare; has ripped up every thing, and has given us but this one choice: JUSTICE to the industrious classes by one means or another.

The law of primogeniture has long been detested by a large part of the people of this country. My constituents proposed to make it a point with me that I should endeavour to cause the abolition of that law, to which proposition I did not assent; because while an abolition of that law would set at nought the succession to the crown, I could see, as I told my constituents, no harm that this law could DO THEM, *if the House of Commons did its duty.* Their opinion was, that it was this law, giving all the estate to one child, and leaving the rest with nothing, which threw that rest, with hungry jaws and naked backs, to be fed and clad out of the labour of the people; that it tended to create unnecessary offices; military and naval academies; that it gave us two hundred and fifty admirals, and four hundred and fifty generals, when a dozen of each would be more than enough; that it ruined the colonies by heaping on them the sons and the dependents of the great; that it heaped livings in the church on the nobility and their relations, while it left the working clergy to starve, as in the case of your Lordship's brother, that I mentioned before in my last letter, who has a great living and a prebend, while there are thousands of parsons, even incumbents, who have not each a hundred pounds a year, and while taxes are sweated out of the

people to be given to these poor incumbents. And, in short, that the country was devoured in consequence of the nobility, gentry, and higher clergy, causing their endless litters to be kept in food and raiment, purchased by the earnings of the people.

This was all very true; and my answer was, that if the law of primogeniture could not exist unaccompanied with these things, I would call in the devil to assist me to destroy it, if I could not destroy it without his assistance; but that this was not the fact: the law of primogeniture could exist, and has existed for centuries, without these monstrous encroachments and swallowings existing at the same time. An instance or two in proof will be sufficient. We have now to pay 212,100*l.* a year, as pensions to the widows of officers and their families; but in the year 1792, after the tremendous and bloody American war, when we had to fight with France, Spain, and Holland, at the same time, we had to pay only 9,381*l.* a year. Monstrous difference! Yet the law of primogeniture existed in 1792, as well as it does now. Oh, no! It is not the ancient law of primogeniture that does us the harm; but it is the want of a House of Commons with a resolution that the people shall not have the money taken from them to be given to the aristocracy and their relations; and there must come such a House of Commons, or there *must come something that I will not attempt to describe!*

Thus, my lord, the Scotch *feelosofical* poor-law project sets us to work to rake up every thing; it makes us sift and analyse every claim, every acknowledged right, every title, and as Mr. OASTLER says, in a pithy little pamphlet, which he has just published, entitled, "*A Letter to the Editor of the Argus and Demagogue, on the validity of Sir John Ramsden's title to the sums of money he claims for Canal Dues; now, that the game is begun we must inquire into the validity of all property.*" I wish your lordship would read this little pamphlet of Mr. OASTLER. I would insert it here, for it should be read by every man in the kingdom; and while I acknowledge myself not bold enough to do this, I beg Mr. OASTLER to accept of my best thanks for his most meritorious little pamphlet: he has laid the matter bare; he has shown that it is our right and our duty *now* to inquire into the *nature and origin of property: now* to discuss the right to *rent*, as well as the right to *rates*. After expressing his hope, that *correct lists* will be published of those who supported, and those who reprobated the Poor-law Bill, he exclaims, "What a glorious sight it would have been for England, if, when the Commons sent up to them the Poor-law Bill, the Lords had risen *en masse*, and said, 'WE WILL THAT THE LAW OF ENGLAND BE NOT 'CHANGED'; then would the people have hailed them as their fathers and protectors: but, alas"! and then he goes on to say, that which I do not choose to repeat, but that which I believe to be true. I myself looked upon it almost as a matter of course, that the Lords would do this; and, therefore, I, seeing the bill had passed the Commons, exclaimed, "THANK GOD THAT WE HAVE A 'HOUSE OF LORDS'!" I never could believe that the Lords would give their sanction to this bill. There was every reason in the world against the belief, and no one for it. What! There were the GRAY newspapers suggesting the justice and necessity of *reforming the House of Lords*. Unequivocally asserting, that an hereditary assembly ought to be suffered no longer to exist. There were others in abundance calling for the ousting of the Bishops from Parliament: there were publications

coming forth every day, putting forth what proved to every man of sense, that your order was closely besieged by the money-monster, and that it must rely for protection, if protection it finally had, upon the millions of industrious and unambitious people; and this is the moment you choose, not only for agreeing to this bill in eager haste, but for improving it in point of harshness.

Very much, indeed, are you deceived, my lord, if you imagine, that none but mere labourers; none but what is "*the poor*," feel any interest in this matter. Faith! all men who are not landowners, perceive that they, if they be farmers, tradesmen, mechanics, they all perceive that the bill is not intended to do *them* good. They all know what the bill is intended to do; they all know that they are within the reach of possible poverty and possible want. In vain does your lordship talk about sparing the purses of *those who pay the rates*. Those who pay the rates pay the *rents*; and there are none of them such asses as not to perceive, that if the rates were abolished, you would exact the amount from them *in rents*. Very kind of you, to be sure, to take the expending of the rates out of the hands of those who pay them *into your own hands*, or into the hands of *commissioners appointed by you*, and removeable at your pleasure; those commissioners having CHADWICK for their secretary too; CHADWICK, who was a runner under the Bishop of London and STURGES BOURNE, and who is now manifestly intended to be the soul of the commissioners. Very kind of you, too, TO GIVE YOURSELVES THE VOTES AT THE VESTRIES, and in case of your absence, enabling you to vote by PROXY! My lord, and do you really imagine, that the farmers and the tradesmen, and all the industrious part of the people, who, in reality, pay all the taxes; do you believe that none but landowners and titled persons can see to the bottom of a scheme like this? If you do believe it, you are the most deceived of all mankind.

I suppose that BROUGHAM will call this bill the "*LAW OF NATURE*"; and I should not wonder if some half-mad, half-drunken, devil, were to step forward and assert, that, the "*law of nature*" gave you the right to the votes in the vestry, and the voting by proxy. If this be so, I trust in God we shall repeal the "*law of nature*," as soon as we meet. Such NATURE as this we have never heard any thing of before.

All this while, it is the poor that are to be *bettered*, by the workhouse dresses, by the big workhouse, fifty miles off, by being left to starve, or submit to degradation, heretofore unheard of. They are to be *bettered* by the system of Parson LOWE! GILBERT and FEARN, whose acts are recorded in my second letter to your lordship, did not think that they were *bettered* by it. This is the most shameful pretence of all: the most unblushing of all the instances of impudence on the part of the supporters of this bill: impudent enough to pretend that the *tenants* will be *benefited* by the landlords having the *votes* in the vestries, and voting by *proxy*! Impudent enough in affecting to believe that it will be a benefit to morals, and tend to promote chastity, to let loose the policemen, the soldiers, the squires' and lords' sons, the whiskered bands of the sister-services, the swarms of footmen, grooms, and coachmen, fed out of the taxes; impudent and profligate enough to pretend that the taking of all these from the prostitutes, and turning them loose with the security of impunity, upon the yet unprostituted part of the young women; quite impudent enough to pretend that this would have a tendency to promote chastity and to correct dissolute morals; but the impudence of all impudence is,

to support this bill under the pretence that it would make the lives of the working people *more happy*, when there lie the instructions to the barrister who drew the bill, stating, "THAT IT IS DESIRABLE TO BRING THE WORKING PEOPLE OF ENGLAND, BY DEGREES, TO LIVE UPON COARSER FOOD THAN THEY NOW LIVE UPON." Of all the impudence that the world ever witnessed, the impudence of supporting this bill upon the ground that it will make the working people *better off*, is the greatest.

Perhaps I do the supporters of this bill a wrong, after all. It may be, that they are actuated by motives of *piety*. They know that holy men have asserted, and have proved, that to keep the flesh in a tame state, is necessary sometimes to preserve the purity of the soul, and to ensure its salvation. Hence the fasts and the vigils so sternly exacted by priests of extraordinary piety; and these supporters may possibly think that taking away the bacon and the bread, and by supplying their place by potatoes and sea-weed, will have a tendency to ensure the salvation of the souls; and this motive may possibly have been powerful with the Bishop of London, and with his brothers, the bull-frog farmers of Norfolk, one of whom I saw at New York, preparing, as I understood, to be *citizenized*, being in search of "*profitable employment for capital*," emigration here being strictly associated with accumulation.

Ah, my lord! Nobody is deceived *now*! The bill was hurried along: there was too much of it for men to understand in so short a space of time: the House of Commons is less to blame than people generally think: the members had no time to read the reports, and no time at all to reflect on them. Not one member out of ten saw the drift of the scheme. Now, every one sees it; and every one sees that, unless it bring down *living* and *wages* to something like the Irish standard, it will fail in producing the effect intended by its projectors, and by a great part of its supporters. What have you to say, my lord, in answer to my positive assertion about the "COARSER FOOD"? You must either say, that you believe me to tell a lie; and a wilful lie; and that I told this lie to the face of Lord ALTHORP, who could have contradicted me, and who did not do it: you must believe that this is a lie; you must believe that the instructions to the barrister contained no such words; or you must believe that it is the intention of the Government to make their commissioners adopt regulations to force this COARSER FOOD upon the people. You must believe one of these two; the former you *cannot* believe; or, at least, if you can, no man living will *believe that you can*: you must, therefore, believe the latter; that is to say, you must believe, that it is the intention of the Government to make the commissioners adopt regulations which shall induce the people of England to live on a COARSER food; it being, of course, agreeable to the "*LAW OF NATURE*," that those whose labour causes the victuals, the clothing, the houses, and the drink, to come, should live upon potatoes and sea-weed, while the lazy part of the community have the meat and the drink, and all the good things of this world. You must believe this; and yet you profess that you support the bill because you believe that it will make the working people *BETTER OFF*!

And, now, I have two things to ask of your lordship: first, *in what way are the people to be induced to live upon COARSER FOOD* than they live upon at present? and, second, *why it should be desired to make them live upon coarser food, than they live upon at present?* And now,

my lord, these are two *little pithy and most interesting questions*: they take us right away into the very heart of the scheme: they show us that the big workhouses, the ugly workhouse dresses, that the separating of man from wife, and both from children; that the vestry *votes* of the *proxies* of the landlords are by no means mere idle fancies; by no means whims and caprices, not at all theoretical illusions; but that they have *real practical, substantial* objects in view, bottomed upon the most solid of all foundations; namely, that of *pounds, shillings, and pence*; and of this I am now about to leave no doubt in the mind of any sane man living.

My first question is, in *what way* are the people to be induced to live upon *courser food*? Be pleased to mind, my lord, that you must believe this to be intended by the bill; because I state to you, that this intention was expressed in the instructions to the barrister who drew the bill; because, I assert this; because, you can see the instructions whenever you please; because, you can contradict me, if you will; because, it was tacitly acknowledged to be true by the Minister in the House of Commons; and because, neither PIS-ALLER PARKES, nor any of the rest of them, have dared to contradict it, even in that worn-out battered old jade, the old *Morning Chronny*.

Very well, then, you believe it, and now, *how is it to be done*? By *preaching*, my lord? Will your brother quit his venison, hanging up and mortifying ready for his lips in the Close at SALISBURY; and, full of good meat and drink, tell the people at PEWSEY, that, if they have a mind not to go to hell, potatoes and sea-weed are the protection? This will never answer. The people at PEWSEY know all about his eatings and drinkings as well as he does; and they will say, that, if potatoes and sea-weed be so effectual with regard to their souls, he must be a madman to stuff in turkeys and wine and venison himself; or he must be a reprobate, having no sort of regard for his own soul. In short, they will ask, as poor ROBERT MASON did the parson of BULLINGTON, "What God sent the corn and the meat for"; or why they should live upon potatoes and sea-weed, while he took away all the wheat and the meat of PEWSEY? They will ask, whether the "*law of nature*" formed his mouth for the wheat and the meat, and theirs for the potatoes and sea-weed; and, perhaps, the rubric would have compelled him to read to them just before, a lesson from the Bible, promising to the good and the virtuous, plenty and fatness. He might have read to them how ISAAC blessed his son, not by promising him potatoes and sea-weed; but in these words: "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine." If he happened to read the 28. of PROVERBS to them, he would have told them that God has promised, that, "he that tilleth the land shall have plenty of bread." Any of the hundred chapters would answer the same end. He might have read to them that maxim of the apostle, "That he that will not work, neither shall he eat." Any of these would do; and what must they, after hearing their priest say, that good living was to be the reward of virtue; what must they think after this, at hearing their priest inculcate the necessity of potatoes and salt, in order to make them favourites with God!

Then this will not do. The Bishop of London might try his hand, and there would be an answer very soon for him. In short, it is so directly against nature, so monstrous a thing, to persuade people that it is for their good to live badly; that it is not to be accomplished except by *compulsion*. The terrors of hell and the hopes of heaven, may produce

temporary, volunteer, poor living; but even these terrors and these hopes must fail, if practised, or attempted to be practised, for any length of time: that hunger, which will "break through stone walls," is not to be silenced by arguments. It must be *force*, then, of some sort or another; and there is but one species of force that could succeed; and that is, *the keeping of the food away from the people*; the making of it impossible for them to get their good food into their possession. And *how* is this to be done? What are the means to be made use of to keep the good food out of their possession? *Bayonets*? No! *Treadmills*? No! It would require too many *muzzles* put upon their mouths, which the villainous Jews were forbidden to put upon the ox as he trod out the corn? No: for to muzzle one million would require four millions of unmuzzled ones at the least. It would be devilish work, indeed, before the lazy-bone dogs could muzzle the workers. Well, it must not be *direct bodily force*; it must be, not by withholding the food, but by WITHHOLDING THE MONEY WITH WHICH THE FOOD IS PURCHASED. Ah! how the light darts out when we just touch this point! How we begin to see all at once to the bottom of the whole thing! And what a strong hand it requires to hold us back from getting at the second question!

The second question is, WHY; WHY is it desirable to induce the labourers to live on coarser food? Your lordship says it is to make them *better off*. Lord ALTHORP said it was *to relieve the farmer*. Your Scotch Mentor had, however, the discretion to tell you, *that it was to save your estates*. However, here we have it out from one and the other. Their *coarser food* is to come from the *lowering of their wages*; and that this is the intention, the main object, the grand purpose, the man that pretends not to believe, is at once the most stupid of creatures, and the lowest and *most cowardly of hypocrites*. Your Scotch Mentor is plain, he avows his object; the bill, he says, is *to save your estates*; and he says, that he himself may become a pauper if this bill do not succeed. Not questioning his steady and sober judgment, I take leave to dissent from his opinion, and to express my firm belief, so help me God! that THE BILL is much more likely TO MAKE HIM A PAUPER, BEFORE IT BE OVER, than the want of the bill was likely to make him a pauper. My *wishes* upon the subject are nothing; but my *belief* is, that both your lordship and your Mentor are, beyond all measure, *more likely to become paupers WITH the bill than WITHOUT the bill*; and so much for that.

My lord, Lord ALTHORP told us, that this bill would *relieve the farmer*. It seems strange to us if he could relieve the farmer by the bill; that is to say, to cause him to *pay less* in poor-rates, and yet *better the lot of the poor*! But he doubtless had in view *the wages*; and the wages are something. It is the wages which the advocates of coarser food have all along had in view; envying the happy state of the *landlords of Ireland* and the *heritors of Scotland*. Here we come to the *ticklish part* of the thing. *Rents*, undeducted from by rates, and very little deducted from by wages. "RENTS," "RENTS," "RENTS," as Lord BYRON exclaims, when justly lashing the landlords of England. Higher rents! Sweeping away the poor rates, if they could be all swept away at once, would do nothing in this way. Tithes, which would go in an hour, only they *belong to the aristocracy*, for the far greater part, and indeed wholly; so that, having gone the complete round with the rest of the community in abolishing the tithes, they would only be bilking them-

selves ; but even they are nothing compared with the wages throughout the far greater part of England.

Let us look at this matter a little in detail. Suppose a farm of a hundred acres, at a rent of one pound an acre.

Annual rent	£100	0	0	
Poor-rates	27	0	0	
Tithes at 5s. an acre	25	0	0	
Wages. { Wheelwright ..	10	0	0	} 217 0 0
Blacksmith	14	0	0	
Collar-maker ..	7	0	0	
Carpenter	3	0	0	
Bricklayer	3	0	0	
Labourers	180	0	0	
				£369 0 0

There, my lord, that's about it ; and you will please to observe, that the tradesmen are to be included amongst those receiving wages ; and that their wages must inevitably come down along with the wages of the labourers. I have not included the county-rates, and the greater part of which are expended in prosecutions for the preservation of the game of the aristocracy ; but you see what a trifling concern all the rest is compared with the amount of the wages ; and so it ought to be, for it is the millions that have to be maintained by the wages, without the labour of whom the land would be worth nothing more than so much moonshine spread over the face of the country ; and those who work upon your estate have as good a right to a living out of it as you have to a living out of it ; and if I do not *prove* it to be *better*, it is not, by any means, because I cannot produce such proof whenever I like.

Now, then, we see how it is, that the farmer cares so little about rates and tithes, and how much he cares about *rent* ; because he knows that if you take off these twenty-seven pounds, and these twenty-five pounds, the landlord would make him pay *fifty-two pounds a year more in rent* : therefore the farmers are all against this bill ; and ALTHORP does not make them understand how it will relieve them. They ask too (cunning rogues!), why the landlords *should want to have the votes in their vestries*, and to vote by *proxy*, too, when they cannot be present. They ask, with a stare of surprise, why the great gentlemen and all the lords, should want to have *votes in vestries* all at once, and to vote there by proxy !

FARMER (*who rents the above farm*). Why should the gentlemen not let us have the *trouble*, as we always have had it ?

COBBETT. It is not the trouble that they want, farmer, but the *money*.

FARMER. What money ? Why we pay the money to the poor ; and it is *our own money*.

COBBETT. Yes, just now it is ; but they mean to have it by the means of this bill.

FARMER. How are they to have it ? They won't become paupers, will they ?

COBBETT. Not in *name*, farmer, though many of their families are so in fact. What they mean is, that you should give them the amount of the rates, instead of giving them to the poor.

FARMER. But I shan't though : if I don't give it to the poor, my landlord shan't have it.

COBBETT. He will have it, farmer; for he knows that you now pay twenty-seven pounds a year in poor-rates, and he will clap that sum upon your present rent, or else he will turn you out of your farm.

FARMER. Oh, God d——!

COBBETT. Don't swear: at least, not yet, till you have heard what they propose about the *coarser food* for the labourers.

FARMER (*in Surrey*). Coarser! what do they want anything coarser than bacon and bread?

COBBETT. Yes, farmer: what think you of *potatoes* and *sea-weed*?

FARMER. Why that's *Irish* work.

COBBETT. Precisely so; and that is what the Scotch *feelosofical* vagabonds mean. They mean that you should give your labourers sixpence a day instead of two shillings.

FARMER. Why the labourers would

COBBETT. Hush! we shall all get into jail if you talk so loud.

FARMER. But what *good* would that do to my landlord now? The men wouldn't work: we couldn't live in our houses: we must all run away out of the country; but if we could bring them to this pass, why we farmers should get the money, and it wouldn't be any good to the landlord.

● COBBETT. Sad mistake! Your landlord would soon find that you paid sixpence a day instead of two shillings, and that you paid your tradesmen just about in the same proportion; that, in short, you saved a hundred and fifty pounds a year in this way, and he would make you pay *him rent three hundred and fifty-four pounds a year*, instead of one hundred pounds a year. You would be a great deal poorer than you are now; your wretched labourers would be without shoes or stockings; their beds would be straw, and nothing but straw; you would be a set of wretched beggarly slaves altogether; and your landlord would drive a coach and six, instead of going in a gig.

I beg leave to assure your lordship, *that the whole scheme is thus seen through all over the kingdom*; and that now, none but natural fools are deceived with regard to it. Lord ALTHORP told us that the scheme was to *relieve the farmer effectually*. It is possible that the above may be an exaggeration of the degree; but clear as daylight it is, that whatever is squeezed out of the belly or bones of the labourer, whether in rates, or in wages, must go into the pocket of the landlord, and not one single farthing of it into the pocket of the farmer. I am sure that it is impossible that your lordship should not now see this. I should be sorry to believe, that you saw it from the beginning; and yet how you miss seeing it, at the time when you made your reported speech, you having then heard all about the "*coarser food*"; you having then heard all the opinions of parson LOWE and COWELL and CHADWICK and the rest of the gang; and you having heard the Lord Chancellor say, that the object of the bill was, *to save your estates*. I am loath to say that I believe that your lordship knew the tendency and object of this bill; yet, as I know you to be a man of sound understanding and clear perception, how am I to come to the conclusion, that you did not perceive its objects and tendency?

But, as to the *execution* of this project; as to compelling the labourers of England to live upon potatoes and salt, or sea-weed; as to compelling them to go bare-footed and bare-legged, and to wear dirty shirts, and to go with unwashed hands and faces from month's end to month's end, my Lord ALTHORP, with all his anxious desire to reduce the *south* to the man-

ners and living of the *north*, will no more succeed in it than he would in moving the sun from the south to the north; and rather than see him succeed in it; rather than see him succeed in taking one single step in such a progress, I would see a great deal more take place than I shall take the trouble now to describe. He never will succeed in getting on one single step towards that object; and all that will have been accomplished at this *long-meditated blow at the rights of the poor*, will only have taught the least thinking part of the nation to *look into rights of all sorts*, and to *call in question the claims of property of every description*.

In the midst of all this agitation upon this point, comes the ticklish question of the *currency*. There must come a discussion, and a general discussion of the *rights of the fundholders*, compared with the rights of the *landowners*; and the Poor-law Bill will have given an appropriate shake to these latter rights, just as these latter are entering upon a contest with the former. For my part, I was always ready to take part with the land against the money-people. *I am no longer so*: I am for whatever I shall deem most likely to restore the working people to the enjoyment of their rights. Here has now been a *great change made in the constitution of our country*. The law of ELIZABETH, which HALE describes as interwoven with the very constitution of our Government, has now been abrogated in effect. The local Governments of the country have been supplanted by one general all-absorbing board, sitting in London, composed of three men, removeable at the pleasure of the Government. This is, then, no longer the Government under which I was born: it is a new thing; and my duty now is, to endeavour, by all the legal means in my power, to cause the former Government to be restored. To uphold the money-people may possibly be the only means of effecting an object so desirable. At any rate the rights of the poor were as sacred as those of the *land*; and if they can be thus dealt with, I see no reason why I am to give a preference to the rights of the land before the claims of the money-people.

One-pound notes and legal tender will co-operate most harmoniously with the Poor-law Commissioners. Paper-money flourishes exceedingly in a state of things, such as this Poor-law Bill will produce! If the thing had been contrived on purpose, if a set of the cleverest men that ever were born had sitten in council for a whole year, to devise the means of making the difficulties of this Government so great, as not to leave it a chance of escape, they could not have contrived anything to surpass this poor-law project, which in its very nature, *unfixes the minds of all men with regard to the rights of property*; which rouses all the indignant, all the angry feelings of the millions of the community; and directs those feelings against those *orders which depend wholly on extraneous support*; which possess a showy power, but which have at bottom no power at all, if once it be disputed by the millions.

I am of opinion that commotions without end will inevitably be produced by this bill. I will not doubt there is wisdom enough left in the two Houses of Parliament to repeal it as soon as possible. I am thoroughly convinced that that is the only safe course. "Try it," as your lordship said, "for a *short period*." Short period! I know not what is meant by a *short period*, and about *trial*. How is it to be *tried*, until the big workhouses shall be built? In short, how is it to be *tried*, till it has done all the mischief? Repealed, I am sure, it will be; or, if it be not, I am sure, that that will happen, which, as I said before, I shall not attempt to describe.

I have one more letter to address to your lordship on this subject. In that letter I shall inquire of you, upon what is founded the right of the state to compel men to come out to serve in *the militia*; and shall ask BROUGHAM and Mother MARTINEAU, whether the "LAW OF NATURE" imposes this duty upon them for the protection of a land in which they are now asserted to have *no share*. And, in conclusion, I shall endeavour to give a little sketch of the history of the progress of the aristocracy in their *encroachments on the rights of the industrious classes*, and in their measures for changing the fundamental laws of the country; and I do hope, that while I thus zealously and laboriously discharge MY duty, those who possess a friendship for the cause of the people, and for the principles which I am here maintaining, will do their utmost to *cause these letters to be circulated in every part of the kingdom*. Your lordship has acted your part. I look upon you as at the head of those who have caused this bill to be passed. I am sorry to have to say this; but I should be ashamed, not to say it, and not to declare my belief of the fact, and my determination to oppose you by all the lawful means in my power.

I am

Your lordship's most obedient

And most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE EARL OF RADNOR,

ON HIS REPORTED SPEECH, IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, ON THE
21. JULY, ON THE NEW POOR-LAW SCHEME.

(*Political Register*, October, 1834.)

LETTER V.

MY LORD,

It is a pretty curious thing that while all *rights* are denied to the poorer classes there is no want of a disposition on the part of the aristocracy to exact *duties* from them. Amongst other *duties* is that of *military service*, and a submission to military law, and a liability to be *flogged* for disobedience of that law, and so liable in virtue of judgments pronounced, *not by a jury and judge*, but by persons set over them by the King, and by his sole authority, and dependent, even for their food, on his *royal breath*.

And now, my lord, according to what principle of our constitution, or of any constitution, is this a *duty* which the people owe to the State, or Government? On what ground is it that you call upon a working man, to whom you deny any claim of any sort upon the land; on what ground is it that you call on him, he being able-bodied; on what *ground* is it that you call upon this able-bodied man to come forth and defend your estate, and your mansion, and all that you have belonging to you? Upon

what *ground* is it that you call upon him to quit his home, unless you perchance deny that he have any *home*? Upon what *ground* is it that you call upon him to quit his house; his aged, and perhaps helpless, parents; and perhaps his wife and a troop of little helpless children?

The reasonable and legal *ground* is, that his services are absolutely necessary to the upholding of the laws against rebels in arms, or ready to take arms; or absolutely necessary to the defence of the country against foreign foes. And why should he thus be called upon to assume the ridiculous and hated military garb; to wield the bayonet instead of the spade or the reap-hook? Why should he be called upon thus, to be compelled to withdraw himself from the protection of the ordinary laws of his country, and to subject himself to the punishment of imprisonment, flogging, or to that of death itself, without trial by jury? On what *ground* is it that you thus call upon him? I wish to God that I could have your answer; that, however, I never shall have, either from your lordship or any other man of your order. You cannot answer without passing sentence on the principles of all those who have advocated this Poor-law Bill; or without asserting boldly at once, that the rest of the community were made by God *for the mere use of the aristocracy*. This is what you will not assert, though it would be the shortest and most satisfactory answer. Therefore, seeing that you will not answer at all I will make an answer for you.

Upon the supposition, for argument's sake, which I admit only for the purpose of the argument, that men should be treated as they are now treated, when they are called out to serve in the militia; supposing this, merely for the sake of the argument, I allow that the law is just, which compels every able-bodied man to come forth in arms, if it be necessary, to aid and assist in upholding the laws against rebellious attacks; and in doing the same, to defend the country against foreign foes. I agree that this is right. And why is it right? Why should the working man, who owns neither house nor land, and who has nothing to eat, drink, or wear, but that which comes out of his labour, why should he, except in his quality of slave of the aristocracy, be compelled to quit his home, leave his parents, wife, and children; assume the military garb; take an oath which binds him to submit to be imprisoned, flogged, or put to death, without trial by jury; why should this be; why should he be compelled to do this, seeing that no rebellion, no invasion, no change of rulers, could possibly take from him that capacity to labour, which he possesses in his own body? The answer to this is, or rather *was*, that though he possessed neither house nor land, he in reality *possesses a share in both*. Before those spoliations by which the aristocracy took away his share in the tithes, his portion was like that that the working Israelite had in participating with the Levite; since that spoliation took place, his share has been awarded to him by the 43. of ELIZABETH, which appoints not only the proportion of the share, but the manner in which he is to receive it, and the persons from whom he is to receive it: in short it provides for him a security for a subsistence, in case he cannot obtain that subsistence by his own strength. He has a share, then, in the houses and the land, compulsory contributions from which are to give him this security: he has an interest, and a deep interest, in upholding the laws, this provision for him being interwoven, as Judge HALE says, with our very constitution: he has an interest in upholding these laws and this government, against rebels, because those rebels might abolish this law, and take from

him this security, take from him this his share of the houses and the land, which the law gives him. He has an interest in repelling an invader, in keeping out a conqueror, because a conquest of the country might make him worse off, seeing that the conqueror might abolish the law, which makes the land furnish him with protection against want. For these reasons his interest, his safety, the safety of his parents, his family and his kindred, impel him to come forth and to serve in the militia. That being the mode of performing his duty, which the law has pointed out.

But, if the law of ELIZABETH be abrogated, in fact, though not in name; if MALTHUS tell him, that he has no claim upon society (that is to say, upon the houses and the land) for the smallest portion of relief, even in the time of his utmost need; if MALTHUS tell him this; if the Lord Chancellor tell him, that all the laws which provide for his security in case of want, are *bad laws*, and ought to be abolished; if a law be actually passed, framed upon instructions which say, "that it is desirable that he should be induced to *live upon coarser food* than he now lives upon"; if your lordship support this bill upon these principles, and with these views, proclaiming your approbation of a system, which is to *make the obtaining of relief as irksome as possible*; which is to drag him, in case of his hard necessities arising, to a big distant workhouse, there to have a workhouse dress put upon him; to be separated from his wife, and their children from both, and kept in that state of separation; to be kept at hard labour; to have his little goods taken from him; to be forbidden, even in case of sickness and death, to see parents, friends, or relations: if these be the terms on which you are to give him relief, it is clear that you deny that he has any right at all to relief in any degree; and, indeed, this denial was flatly made by the Scotchman whose motion in favour of the bill you supported; and this being the case, what becomes of the grounds on which you call him out to serve in the militia to defend your estate? Does the "*law of nature*" furnish you with these grounds? Ah, my lord! first burn the Bible, then assert that they have no share whatsoever in the ownership or fruits of the land; then assert that you have a right to cause your estate to lie uncultivated and unpastured; then assert that you have a right to cause all the people of COLESHILL to die with hunger, or to perish with cold; then assert that God has given you a right; that it is agreeable to his laws, that you should, when you want them, compel them to come out, and leave their fathers and mothers and families, and to submit to be punished, in the most horrible manner, without trial by jury, and finally, to risk their lives in defence of your land at COLESHILL: assert all this, and then find, if you can, that any thing so impudent and so insolent, and at the same time so consummately stupid, ever before proceeded from the lips of any human being quite drunk and quite mad, instead of half-drunk and half-mad!

Do I impute this impudence, insolence, and stupidity to you? By no means: none of these terms belong to conduct deliberately emanating from your own mind; but I do impute them to those by whom that mind has been misled: I do impute them to those on whose opinions and assertions, you have unfortunately been led to give your support to this measure. I am very sure, that your lordship has been grossly deceived: I am very sure that your view into the matter has only been skin deep: I am very sure of this, because the very first "*law of nature*," SELF-PRESERVATION, would have prevented you from stirring up the question of *your rights as a land-owner*. Do you perceive, my lord, the monstrous

extent to which your denial of the rights of the poor would carry you, with regard to your own unquestioned professions? If your principles be sound, the land-owners, a mere handful of men; a mere handful of men who never do any work, have a right TO CAUSE TO STARVE ALL THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY. Let us take yourself, for instance. Have you a right to cause the whole parish of COLESHILL; I believe the whole belongs to yourself; and I know what a blessing it is to the poor people of that parish that you are the possessor: have you a right, I say, to cause all the land in the parish of COLESHILL to lie uncultivated and unpastured, and to turn all the people out of the houses, and to knock the houses down? Let no one tell me, that it is not possible that you should not shudder at the thought of doing such a thing. I know that very well, but that has nothing to do with my question: my question is, have you a RIGHT to commit this abominable and tyrannical act? Using the word RIGHT in the sense in which BROUGHAM made use of it, and in which you adopted its use, you have a *right* to do it; for the law suffers you to do what you please with your houses and your land. But the same law says, or did say two months ago, that you shall not play this odious and savage tyrant to the starvation and the perishing of the people of COLESHILL, for the law compelled you, and justly compelled you, to furnish the people of COLESHILL with house-room, food, raiment, and fuel, fitting for them in their own native parish.

Take away this law (and it is now nearly taken away), and then you have a right to starve, or cause to perish, the people of the parish of COLESHILL! Nonsense to tell me that you *would not* do it? for I know that you would not if you could, and that you could not if you would: what I say is, that the principles upon which you supported this bill are tantamount to the claim of right, on your part, to cause to starve and to perish the people of the parish of COLESHILL: and of course, those same principles give the same right to every other landowner in the kingdom; and thus this vaunted constitution is at last come to this point, that a handful of men called *landowners*, have a right, if they shall be so minded, to cause all the millions of the community to die with hunger, or to perish with cold!

Monstrous principles! Worthy of the hungry Scotch place-hunters; worthy of prostituted writers and reporters; worthy of clerical hypocrites, who, while they utter these abominations, wheeze as if with the asthma, from the fat with which their carcasses are filled by the toil of those, to cause whom to starve, or to perish with cold, they insist upon the landowner's right. Monstrous principles, if advocated by any man: ten thousand times more monstrous when advocated by a man like you!

"I do not advocate such principles," your Lordship will say. And I have just told you that you have been deceived, and that you have not seen the extent to which your principles would go. You do advocate these principles, in your support of this bill, after the speech of BROUGHAM, boldly proclaiming (he knew the company he was in), that the poor had *no right to relief*: that they had no right whatever to a share in the produce of the land; and that the laws were bad, and ought to be done away with, that provided relief even for the *aged and infirm*!

The principles which I have just illustrated in the supposed case of COLESHILL, form the basis of this bill. You must assert that you have a right to do with COLESHILL that which I have described: you must maintain, and boldly maintain, your right to starve and cause to perish, the

people of COLESHILL; or you must allow, that your right to your property is *limited*; that it is not *absolute*: that you have not created it: that you do not hold it in a grant directly from God: you must allow further that, if the right be not absolute; and if you be not the sole and absolute owner, *some other party shares in the ownership*. This upsets the whole of your principles: it is not *yours* that the poor claim: it is *theirs*, and, they claim it in virtue of laws; in virtue of rights existing, ten centuries before the first of your recorded ancestors was born. To persons who held the principles, or whom he thought likely to act upon the principles on which you have advocated this bill, ST. AMBROSE (as quoted by PUFFENDORFF) says, "It is *the bread of the hungry* which you *detain*: it is the raiment of the naked which you lock up": it is not *yours*, my Lord, it is *theirs*; and our greatest lawyers tell us, that if you withhold it, they have a right to take it.

Nothing is so common as to hear, amongst the brutal bull-frogs; amongst the greedy fellows, who do not consider how much of their own safety they owe to the poor-law of ELIZABETH; nothing is so common, as to hear from such men, observations of this sort: "Why am I to give my money to support people who do nothing for me? why am I to be taxed to keep other people's children from starving? what right have other people that call themselves poor, to take a part of my property from me?" And I heard these very remarks one day, and not very long ago, and in a place that I will not name at present, from a purse-proud fellow bursting with fat, who owes every penny that he possesses in the world; he owes the means of showing his head in the place where I saw him, wholly and solely to the *toil of hard-working men*, from whose sweat, from whose unrequited labour, he has drawn together all that he possesses, even to the shirt upon his fat back, and to the handkerchief that encircles his bull-like neck. What, my lord, is such a reptile, when he has bought out some lord, by money accumulated in this way, who has thus successfully practised the system of *accumulation, concentration, and centralization*; is such a wretch to look upon himself in the light of a *Creator* of the earth; or as a grantee from God, if he believes that there is any God? These notions are all false: the property that the poor take is *theirs*; it is *their share*; and there is less reason, and far less reason, to deny them their share, than to deny the rent-charger, or the mortgagee, his share; a great deal better claim have the poor, than either he who has a rent-charge or a mortgage; their right being prescriptive, and making a part of the constitution of the land; his right being founded on mere modern individual convention. Yet, nothing so common as the notions which I have just described; notions that have gained ground only because they were supposed to be too monstrous to be produced as a foundation of legislative action. But, having now been pushed into practice; having now, by this bill, and especially by your having advocated it, been forced upon us as a subject for discussion; we give them a serious encounter: we show their monstrousness: we retaliate upon those who made them, and we shall make it happy for the landowners, if we induce them to *retract*, while yet there be time; to retrace their steps, before it be too late; to seek peace while it yet may be found; to repeal this Poor-law Bill; we shall make it happy for them, if we succeed in this, and put a stop to the inquiry, on the part of the millions, *who it is that has the best right to the land*, who are the parties to whom God and the law of the

land have allotted the fruits of it, and what is the share which those sacred laws have allotted to each party? Alas! my Lord, how often has it happened in this world; how often does it now every day happen, that greedy men, by endeavouring to withhold unjustly a small part of their possessions from others, are repaid for their greediness by losing the whole; and how almost invariably has it happened, and does it happen, that when, by acts of injustice, long repeated and persevered in, the millions are goaded on to the righting of themselves, they *terminate their work by repaying injustice in kind!* It is useless to say, that one should deplore this; and that it is frightful to think of it: we may as well say that winter is deplorable, or that thunder and lightning are frightful: they are things over which we have no control; our *wishes* on such a subject are as vain as would be those of the dwarf who should wish to be six feet high.

It is surprising that your Lordship, as well as all the other advocates of the bill, should have placed implicit reliance on the opinions of the poor-law fellows; the brace of bishops, STURGES BOURNE, SENIOR, and the rest of the newspaper *reporters*; very strange that you should have relied upon their opinions, and pay no attention at all to the evidence which they collected; that evidence containing the opinions of gentlemen, noblemen, magistrates, clergy, experienced farmers, and parish officers, which opinions, taken as a mass, are directly in the teeth of the opinions and recommendations of the poor-law fellows. You yourself prefer the opinions of these hired fellows even to *your own opinions, as stated in your evidence!* That a man of such understanding and integrity should be thus *quack-ridden* by bawling hair-brained creatures; that a man of princely estate, and of interest so great, depending on the peace of the country, and the good-will of the working people, always so ready to be grateful and so cheerfully obedient to their superiors in wealth and rank; that such a man should be *quack-ridden* to this extent, and by such creatures, too, would be absolutely incredible were the fact not, unhappily, put beyond the possibility of doubt. What! not think your own opinions better than those of these notoriously hired people; notorious adventurers, too, from the very top to the very bottom! Not prefer even your own opinion to theirs, when, too, you see your opinion backed by that of all the noblemen, gentlemen, magistrates, and sensible persons, to whom this impudent crew applied for information!

If your Lordship had paid attention to the *evidence*, you would have found, that all those who had to pay the poor-rates, with very few exceptions, deemed them indispensable to *the safety of their property*. One of the witnesses, a great farmer, being asked by one of the poor-law runners, whether the poor, if the law were not altered, would not *swallow up the whole of his property*; whether he would not be ruined by the rates? "Ruined by the rates," said he, "the rates take away all my property! *The rates are the security of my property*; for the poor people must have a living; and if they did not have it given to them, *they must and they would take it!*" A parson magistrate of Bedfordshire, the Rev. HENRY BROOK MOUNTAIN, rector of BLUNHAM, being asked whether the poor-rates had made the farmers poorer, answered: "The farmers are aware that the burden of the poor-rates does not at all affect them: IT IS A RENT PAID to the parish instead of to the landlord." The Rev. T. C. FELL of SHEEPY MAGNA, in Leicestershire,

says, "The poor-laws affect the *rent*, and not the *farmer's capital*." Sir THOMAS PHILLIPS, Bart., STEPHEN SAVAGE, overseer, and two other gentlemen, at BROADWAY, in Worcestershire, tell the brace of bishops and their comrades this: "Agricultural capital is diminishing; but *not on account of the poor-laws, which rather tend to KEEP CAPITAL in the parish*; but because the great landowners spend less in their parish," by carrying the great bulk of their income annually to London, where it accumulates in the hands of *usurers and stock-jobbers*, and consequently does not return to the parish with the same rapidity, nor in the same proportion as it is drawn out of it."

Your Lordship said, in answer to those lords who wanted delay, in order to have time to consider this question, that "there had been *plenty of time for consideration*." Have you read this evidence? I would stake my life upon the question, that you have not. If you had, on what ground did you assert, that the payers of the rates were anxious to get the bill passed?

However, here we see that the whole scheme is clearly seen to the bottom. Lord ALTHORP's object with regard to the bill was, to *relieve the distresses of the farmers*; to lessen the burdens of *those who paid the rates*; "to relieve the *industrious farmer and tradesman*" from the burden of maintaining the idle and profligate poor. Before the thing came to you, BROUGHAM had boldly declared that the object was to *save the estates of the lords*. So that, after all the pretences of Lord ALTHORP, here were you urging forward this terrible bill, under the pretence of the necessity of saving your estate from the jaws of the poor!

All men are now satisfied that the object is, to lower rates, and, more particularly, to lower *wages*; and to *put the difference into the pockets of the landlords*. There is not a man in his senses who does not believe that the main object is this, and, of course, to bring the English labourers down to live upon the base food, and to be clad in the miserable rags, which are the lot of the wretched people of Ireland, where a good and honest labourer, as good and as true as any in the world, works for sixpence a day, and sometimes for twopence. This is the object; if not of you yourself, it must be the object of the inventors of the scheme, or they must have been both drunk and mad at the same time, and both in an excessive degree. What! and do the *House of Lords* pass this bill? Yes, they do; and the majority of that House, thinking of BROUGHAM as they think, and talking of him as they talk, and treating *all his other new projects as they treat them*, embrace him here! Reject with disdain, all his other "*improvements*" suggested by the "*march of intellect*"; but when he proposes to give them, instead of their tenants, the votes at the vestries; and to give them a voting at those vestries by proxy; when he proposes the big workhouses, the workhouse dresses, and says that the poor have no right to relief, and ought to be no charge at all upon the land; and when he tells them, that his bill *will save their estates*; then they cheer him; then you cheer even this HENRY BROUGHAM; then you pass his project almost by acclamation!

Well, but there is this much of good in this transaction, that we have now, at last, their unequivocal declaration of designs with regard to us. We now know, even the dullest of us, what relationship we stand in with regard to them. Until this bill was passed by them, men were divided in their opinions with regard to the aristocratical institutions: WE ARE ALL OF ONE MIND NOW: we now all know our duty with regard to that aristocracy; and may every curse that God has in store for the

base fall on me, and stick to me for the remainder of my life, if I neglect any part of this my sacred duty. You have done all that you can do; and I will now do all that I can do; and I have to thank God, who has given me health to make that all not a very little. It has given me great mortification to know it to be my duty to select you as the object of this angry address; but it was your pleasure to become the great patron and protector of this bill; and, as you deserve, so you will, I dare say, be rewarded for that patronage and that protection.

In conclusion of this series of letters, I wish your Lordship joy of the feelings inspired by reflecting on the part which you have acted on this memorable occasion; and

I am,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE

EDITOR OF THE STANDARD.*

(Political Register, January, 1835.)

Wolseley Hall, Dec. 30, 1834.

SIR,

It was my intention to address, this week, a second letter to Sir ROBERT PEEL, containing some remarks on his speech at the Mansion-house; but in an article which I find in your paper of yesterday, you speak out so much more plainly, and so much more ably, that I prefer the addressing of myself to you; and I shall, with great respect for your talents, and with giving you full credit for the goodness of your motives, at once proceed to offer you the observations which occur to me, as necessary for me to make and to publish on that article; taking care, when I have so done, to insert the article itself.

The article was, it appears, drawn from your able pen by my having expressed my wonder, that you, who had spoken of the Whigs as a faction *down, never to rise again*, should have begun to be *frightened*, and to think *their return to power a possible thing*; and, further, by my asking, what would be *worse* than that which we have now to endure could befall us, even if the Whigs were to return to power. The contents of your article may be shortly expressed in the following propositions, which, when I have stated them, I will observe on, one by one.

* The Whigs having been turned out of office just before this time, Sir ROBERT PEEL became Prime Minister, and on dissolving the Parliament, he issued an address to his Constituents at Tamworth, which, as it was the Ministerial manifesto, Mr. COBBETT answered. We prefer giving this letter to the Editor of the *Standard* newspaper, however, as the better document.—ED.

1. That, twelve days ago, you were frightened; and that you still feel some, though not so much, alarm, at a possible restoration of the Whigs; but that in both cases the alarm has risen less from the *imminency* of the danger, than from its tremendous magnitude.
2. That the Radicals have talent, energy, and singleness of purpose; and are bold, peremptory, and fanatically bent on revolution.
3. That the Whigs must, if they return to power, carry into full effect the wishes of the Radicals, and make all the dreadful changes which they propose.
4. That one item of these changes is the cancelling of the public debt.
5. That to cancel the public debt (which might be either cause or effect of the triumph of the Radicals) must produce indiscriminate confusion, and mutual slaughter.
6. That a failure of a *speculation in pepper* was the *most feasible* cause of the panic of 1825.
7. That such an event would inflict as great sufferings upon the poor as upon the rich, or greater; because industry is protected by the security of property; and every poor man ought to know, that he would lose even the fruit of his labour, if the property of the rich and the great were destroyed.
8. That though absolute chaos did not then come, many thousands of families would sink into almost a want of bread and cheese and of food coarse enough to suit the regimen prescribed by the MARTINEAU school of politicians.

I should observe, that the article which called forth my remarks, was published *just after the arrival* of Sir ROBERT PEEL, and *before the issuing of his manifesto*; for if I had seen the manifesto before I wrote the letter to you, I should not have written that letter at all. I now proceed with the propositions.

1. That, twelve days ago, you were frightened; and that you still feel some, though not so much, alarm, at a possible restoration of the Whigs; but, that, in both cases the alarm has arisen less from the *imminency* of the danger, than from its tremendous magnitude.

Oh no! sir; it is *the imminency* that frightens you; and here is the cause of it. You had sense enough to see, that *the people* had not changed at all: that there had been none of that "*re-action*," with which the Tories flattered themselves. You had sense enough to see, that the Whigs were down, because the people had abandoned them; and not because the people had fallen in love with the Tories. You saw that execrations on the Whigs kept hand in hand with suspicions of the Tories. The address from the town of MANCHESTER, which thanked the King for having turned out the Whigs, on those prominent accusations, the *Poor-law Bill*, and the refusal to repeal the *Malt-tax*, and which had, by way of rider, an *unanimous vote of censure on the Duke of WELLINGTON*, for having supported the *Poor-law Bill*, and the *Red-coat-court-of-justice Bill* for Ireland: this address and resolution would have been a sure guide for *you*. You would have said, "We must repeal the *Poor-law Bill* and the *Malt-tax*, and adopt a mild course of government, or else our fate will be that of the relapsed in the Scripture, whose last end was worse than his first." It was when you entertained the rational expectation, that the Tories would *act thus*, that you were bold and confident; but when you found, after the arrival of Sir ROBERT PEEL, that the Whig system was to be persevered in: when you saw that the Radicals would be compelled, if not

to make common cause with the Whigs, yet not to do anything to weaken their power of combating the Tories; when you found that the line of policy of Sir ROBERT PEEL was going to be such as would decide against the Tories all those who were balancing before; then, and not till then, you began to be alarmed; and I saw clearly the ground of your alarm, at the time when I addressed my letter to you.

2. That the Radicals have talent, energy, and singleness of purpose; and are bold, peremptory, and fanatically bent on revolution.

Now, sir, though I hate the name, I am what you call a RADICAL; and it will be allowed, I am sure, that I am as formidable to our foes as any one of the whole host. I assert, that, if you mean by *revolution* an overthrow of this ancient and excellent (though horribly *abused*) form of government; if you mean by revolution an overthrow of the several orders in the State, or any of those orders; if you mean a subversion of the ancient and fundamental laws of the country, under which laws, before they were so greatly perverted, and many of them totally subverted, England was so really free for so many ages; if you mean that I wish for a state of things to arise, when property shall not be held sacred, next after the property in life, limb, and labour; if these, or any of these be what you mean by "*revolution*"; then your accusation against me, and against all who think with me, is most calumniously unjust; and for proof of the injustice, we have only to appeal to our well-known and well-recorded acts.

From the years 1816 to 1820, ours was a life of persecutions the most savage. *Imprisonment* was the mildest visitation that we had to endure; the dungeons groaned with the effect of our sufferings. Exile and pecuniary ruin, or death in a dungeon, was my own lot. The imprisonment, and the ferocious indignities of that inoffensive, brave, and public-spirited gentleman, in whose mansion I now am, are never to be thought of without inexpressible indignation. The mockery at the groans of OGDEN; the death of RILEY, in his dungeon; the massacre of MANCHESTER; the swarms of execrable spies, employed to entrap unthinking men: all these are not to be forgotten; nor are we to forget that Parson HAY of Manchester, who gave the word of command on that terrible day, received the living of ROCHDALE, worth two thousand pounds a year, immediately after that massacre, he having a great living before. And what was all this FOR? And WHY were the dungeon-bill, and power-of-imprisonment bill passed? Because a million and a half of us petitioned the Parliament for a *Reform of the Commons House*; and because we stated that our objects, in wanting this reform, were, that all pensioners, and other persons living out of the taxes, should cease to live out of them, except in consideration of well-known public services; that the interest of the debt should be so reduced as that we might have to pay only according to the amount of the sums borrowed; that the salaries and allowances of all men in public employ should be reduced on the same principle; that the standing army, in time of peace, should be greatly reduced; and, finally, that our burdens should be lightened, particularly by A REPEAL OF THE TAX UPON MALT.

Was there any *crime* in thus petitioning, sir? Yet we were hunted like wild beasts; our situation was little other than that of the wolves, in the reign of that king who put an end to their race. To injure us, to swear falsely against us, formed the straight road of success in life; and, as in the case of the wolves, to destroy or injure us, formed an expi-

ation for crimes, and a white-washing for character. A man, confined on a charge of *burglary*, was taken out of jail, the charge being *withdrawn*, only a fortnight before he was brought to give evidence against Sir CHARLES WOLSELEY; and his evidence was believed in preference to that of two reporters of *even ministerial newspapers*, who produced in court the reports that they had taken on the spot!

Our situation was precisely that of the wolves; and if we had shown, or were now to show, a little vindictive ferocity, the wonder would not be so very great. However, we did not show it; and we never have shown it; and, for my own part, I defy any man to bring forward, from any one of my hundred of volumes, any sentiment hostile to the *ancient laws* and *prescriptive rights* of any order in this community. Therefore, you have no ground for apprehension on this score. We are no *innovators*; but, on the contrary, our war is, and always has been, against *innovations*.

3. That the Whigs must, if they return to power, carry into effect the wishes of the Radicals, and make all the dreadful changes which they propose.

Leaving out the word "dreadful," I believe this is quite right; for if the Whigs come in again, they must repeal the Poor-law Bill, and the Malt-tax; they must remove altogether the hierarchy in Ireland; they must reform the church here in good truth; and I, for my part, will never rest, while there shall remain a Bourbon-police, and while there shall remain one single jot of those *innovations*, in the introducing of which, Sir ROBERT PEELE has had the principal hand; and, above all things, they must come to an equitable adjustment of that debt, which is the great cause of all the turmoil; and which cannot much longer co-exist with those orders of the State, to destroy which, I have never known in my whole life, a man (that I call my friend) to express the desire. But, sir, it is a hackneyed affair, to charge people with wishing to overturn the Government, the moment they complain of oppression. Want the Malt-tax to be taken off: you are instantly "*a revolutionist* and a rebel." Want Lord WALSINGHAM not to have three church-livings in Hampshire, and to swallow up the revenues of half-a-dozen other livings in Surrey and Hampshire, leaving the miserable incumbents forty or fifty pounds a year each, and to have their pittance augmented by *taxes raised on the working people*; express a wish to see this, and hundreds of things like this, put to rights; and you are instantly guilty of "*blasphemy* and *sedition*." This insolence we have been compelled to submit to during the greater part of my life; and to this insolence we are resolved no longer to submit.

4. That one item of these changes is the *cancelling* of the public debt.

Sir, who has ever called for a *cancelling* of the public debt? Nobody; and this misrepresentation is unworthy of a man like you; and it is, above all things, impolitic; especially if you do really believe that the Radicals have so much power as you say they have. We have never called for a *cancelling* of the debt, and we have never called it the *public* debt. What we have called for is this: that, in the first place, the interest of the debt should be reduced upon principles of undeniable equity; and, as my colleague has most amply proved, the fundholders have been overpaid, principal as well as interest, long ago. I here come to a proper place to advert to a passage in the speech of Sir ROBERT PEELE at the Mansion-house; namely, that passage where he speaks of "*respect for property*"; and of people of "*intelligence*" and property being *tired* of

the pressure from without. Alas, sir! it is he, above all men living, that has caused the pressure from without, and the pressure from within too. But of this I will speak under another head.

5. That, to cancel the public debt (which might be either cause or effect of the triumph of the Radicals), must produce indiscriminate confusion, and mutual slaughter.
6. That a failure of speculation in pepper was the most feasible cause of the panic of 1825.

Let us stop here to observe, in the first place, as, indeed, I already have observed, that we do not propose a *cancelling* of the debt. But, if it were cancelled all at once, would the confusion and slaughter be *greater* now than it would have been if it had been cancelled in 1826? You know that then the Ministers themselves told us, in the House of Commons, that we had, at one time, been *within eight-and-forty hours of barter*. That you know, sir, is a cancelling of the debt at once. And, sir, do you think a man an enemy of the country, who wishes to *get rid*, by some means or other, of a thing so dangerous as this? The present most pressing troubles of the Ministry notoriously arise out of measures adopted by President JACKSON. What! and could you endure the thought of upholding a system which exposes this, the greatest of all the kingdoms upon earth, to be thrown into such a state of distress, embarrassment and uproar, by the mere domestic regulations of a foreign prince or chief magistrate? And yet this must be the case as long as this monster continues to exist in anything approaching to its present magnitude. Oh, no, sir! when I shall be Prime Minister of England (pray don't laugh), I will "*take order*," that no internal regulations of General JACKSON shall disturb all the mighty pecuniary affairs of this kingdom; shall add a third to the real amount of the interest paid to the fundholder; shall really violate all contracts for time between man and man; shall make bonds, jointures, settlements, legacies, quite other things than those which they were intended to be; shall make the mortgager pay to the mortgagee a third more than he has contracted to pay: I will take care that these things shall not be after I become Prime Minister; and if Sir ROBERT PEEL does not take care of the same sort, and to the same extent, my opinion is that he will not only soon cease to be Prime Minister, but that he will be the *last Prime Minister* that we shall have under this form of things. I was surprised to hear you talk about the "*speculation in pepper*," being the "*most feasible*" cause of the panic of 1825-6! *Pepper*, sir! I could hardly believe my eyes; but really, if you do believe this, and if the Tories believe the same, the bottomless pit is open before them. One night, in the House of Commons, Sir ROBERT PEEL, waving his hand across the table, and looking at the Treasury bench, said: "*Between me and office I see a great gulf.*" It was impossible, of course, not to think of DIVES and LAZARUS, and to substitute the bosom of Lord ALTHORP for that of father ABRAHAM; and, sir, confining ourselves to this side of the grave, better to him would have been the lot of DIVES than to be in his present situation, and entertain the monstrously absurd opinion, that "*a failure of a speculation in pepper*" was the most feasible cause of the panic of 1825-6!

Why, sir, I *myself* caused that panic to come some months sooner than it would have come; and is it not criminal in a minister not to have known this; and, knowing it, ought he not to be punished in the most severe manner for attempting to uphold a system that lays a whole king-

dom like this open to the danger of being troubled for one single half minute by a private individual, who is worth little more, perhaps, than the clothes upon his back, and the bed that he lies upon? You, sir, have always discovered a virtuous dislike of this system; at least, you have, as far as my observation has gone; but it is clear from the "speculation in pepper," that you do not know its history, and therefore, I will give you the history of the concern since *I took it in hand*.

In 1804, when Mr. PITT was Minister and the debt *four hundred millions* and a little more perhaps, I, in a letter to Mr. PITT, first proved that the paper-money was depreciated; then proved that his sinking fund was a bubble; then besought him to raise the supplies out of a tax on the interest of the debt; then told him that even *complete triumph in war, would not save the higher orders in England, unless this debt were put an end to in time*. Look into the *Register*, sir, much about thirty years ago, and there you will find this letter; and divers letters to the gaping Richmond-park ADDINGTON, to somewhat the same amount; and you will also find that the profligate SHERIDAN said, in the House of Commons, that the Government ought to *prosecute* me for promulgating those opinions.*

In 1806 and 1807, under the title of FATE OF THE FUNDS, I was still more elaborately urgent upon this important matter.

In 1814 and 1815, during the agitation of the question of the Corn Bill, *I protested against the Corn Bill*, as a thing of *no use* to the land, and a source of *discontent to the manufacturing part* of the nation; and again showed that the real remedy, and only remedy, and only means of safety to the orders of the State, was a reduction of the interest of the debt.

In 1818, Mr. TIERNEY had urged, in the House of Commons, the passing of a bill like that which was afterwards passed under the name of PEEL'S BILL; I, then in exile to avoid the dungeons of CASTLEREAGH and SIDMOUTH, addressed a letter to Mr. TIERNEY, proving to him, that, if *such a bill were passed*, and persevered in, without tax-reducing measures, England must be *convulsed*, and that the end must be a change, destructive, in all probability, of all the orders of the State.

In 1819 (*my opinion* having been *quite sufficient* to make them pass just such a bill as I had said would produce these consequences) PEEL'S BILL was passed by an unanimous and joyous vote of both Houses, followed by an interchange of *congratulations* on the subject by the Speaker and Regent; and, upon my receiving the news of it, I instantly declared, that, if ever that bill were carried into *full effect*, I would suffer myself to be broiled on one of CASTLEREAGH'S broadest gridirons, while SIDMOUTH stirred the coals, and while CANNING stood by making a jest of my groans.

In 1822 came out the one-pound notes again, and away went the bill.

In 1823 came the NORFOLK PETITION, praying for an equitable adjustment, in order that the affair might be justly settled, and that the constitution might be saved from destruction.

In 1823, the one-pound notes having produced *prodigious "prosperity"*; that prosperity having been ascribed by the then Mr. ROBINSON (now Lord RIBON) to the *wisdom* and *energy* of an *unreformed* Parliament; and he having described me, amongst others, as a "*wild*

* Vol. I. p. 295, Vol. II. p. 17, 20, 29.—ED.

dreamer" for wanting to *reform so wise and efficient* a House: thus provoked, I said, in the *Register* (February 1824): "Now, mind, ignorant and insolent man, I tell you that, *before this day two years*, your banks will blow up, and your prosperity will be blown to the devil." The banks blew up *in a year and eight months from that day*; but not, Mr. Standard, by the combustible force of a "speculation in pepper"! The gold began to leave the country early in 1825. Its departure became very rapid by the month of May. In June, the train of blowing-up had been laid by Prosperity ROBINSON very completely. It wanted only the match, and that match was furnished by Mr. JONES, a zealous Radical of BRISTOL, who went to a banker's to demand gold for forty pounds in the banker's notes. The banker refused payment in gold, and offered him payment in Bank of England notes. Mr. JONES wrote to me. I darted off to BRISTOL; brought back Mr. JONES's petition to the House of Commons, complaining of the matter; sent down a writ at the same time, to arrest the banker for the debt. The petition was presented, though after a great difficulty: out came all the story; and the whole country now learnt, for the first time, that they *had a right to demand gold*, and to refuse Bank of England notes; on came the PANIC, and away went the banks; the "speculation" never having been heard of from the first to the last.

In 1826, when the law under which we are now staggering along, was passed, I petitioned the House of Commons, expressing my thanks to them for having determined to abolish the one-pound notes in England; but beseeching them, at the same time, *to reduce the amount of the taxes*; concluding my petition in somewhat these words; "for, your humble petitioner knows, as well as he knows that fire burns, that, if the present law be carried into effect, with the present amount of taxation, this kingdom will have to undergo such trouble and such suffering, as were never before experienced by any country in the world."

I, sir, whose petition upon this occasion, and whose representations and supplications upon all former occasions, had been received by the aristocracy, and especially by the clergy, with affected contempt, and with real deadly hatred, of their author; I, sir, might *laugh* in the midst of these troubles and these sufferings which are now come upon the country; and I will not, especially after the hootings and howlings and triumphings of the 16. of May, 1833, say that I see them with sorrow; for I really do not; and, I shall now watch to see whether the aristocracy and clergy, when at their wit's end, will still treat me with opprobrium, instead of listening to my advice; but, for you, sir, who have not these causes of resentment, and this source of satisfaction, it is as well for you to see the thing in the true light; and if you do see it in the true light, you will see that neither Whig nor Tory can proceed much further in an attempt to raise fifty millions of taxes a year, with wheat at five shillings a bushel, without plunging the country into that state of confusion, which you appear so much to dread.

7. That such an event would inflict as great sufferings upon the poor as upon the rich, or greater; because industry is *protected by the security of property*; and every poor man ought to know, that he would *lose even the fruit of his labour*, if the property of the rich and the great were destroyed.
8. That though absolute chaos did not come, in 1825, many thousands of families sunk into almost a want of bread and cheese, and of

food coarse enough to suit the regimen prescribed by the Martineau school of politicians.

MR. STANDARD, how came you to name Mother MARTINEAU! Unless, indeed, you could have told us, at the same time, that the Duke of WELLINGTON and Sir ROBERT PEEL, without whose cordial support, the Mother-Martineau bill never could have passed, had had the good sense and the resolution to confess that they were misled into a support of that bill, and that they intended to repeal it? Mother MARTINEAU is a poor gossiping creature, vain of talking nonsense, because it appears to her to be something new, and because it gets her something in the way of pelf at the same time. Her consultations with the *homme de lettres et avocat** were things to laugh at, until moulded into a real downright revolutionary measure, supported by the hero of STRATHFIELD-SAY, and the millionaire of TAMWORTH. Then they became serious things; then they became a line of demarcation: then they cried "war to the cottage": then, at any rate, they decided me, never again, with tongue, or pen, to utter one word more than law compelled me to utter, in support of the aristocracy, or the church. Ah, sir! Here it was, that the Lords and the Tories *missed* it. The people had seen the Whigs pass the bill, in spite of all our strenuous exertions against it: they knew how the people hated it: they knew that they should make sure of the people by rejecting the bill: and yet they supported it: and passed it; and that, too, with the declaration of Lord ALTHORP, that, "he must be a bold man that would bring that bill in again" † When I, seeing that the bill would pass the Commons, exclaimed, "Thank God, we have yet a House of Lords, and just such a House of Lords as we now stand in need of"! I cannot say, that I had any thing amounting to a hope, that they would take the hint. At any rate, they despised my warning: and *be the consequence theirs!* If you, sir, could have seen Mr. CHERWYND, last night, dined with the indignant reproaches of the electors of STAFFORD, they having accused him of having voted for the Poor-law Bill, and having called upon me (who was present) as a witness to the fact; if Sir ROBERT PEEL could have seen that gentleman, at that moment, never would he expect the "pressure from without" to cease, as long as that bill should remain in existence. It was your most able writings *against that bill*, which first excited my admiration of your talents; aye, and it was your having discovered that the present Ministers meant to enforce it, and to keep on penny-a-line CHADWICK in the business; it was this sad discovery, and another or two of the same cast, that made you *begin to fear that the Whigs would return to power*; aye, and return they will, and they will repeal the bill, I'll warrant them.

You tell us, sir, that the cancelling of the debt would produce dreadful ruin; and that even the PANIC reduced thousands of families to the utmost want, though by no means squandering, gambling, or improvident persons. Could it do more in this way than PEEL's Bill has done? Hundreds of thousands of the most virtuous and frugal families have been brought from competence, and some from opulence, down to the poor-house, by that bill, and by other measures growing out of it, in which measures also, Sir ROBERT PEEL was a partaker. More than a

* Lord BROUGHAM.—ED.

† See Commons Debate, 11th Aug. 1834.—ED.

hundred thousand farmers and their families have been brought down to sheer poverty and servitude, by that bill. The work of confiscation is still silently going on, against farmers, traders, gentlemen; and this is now to be pushed along by the very man who was the first author of it! He will not push it on far, be you well assured, sir. Is nobody to be thought of but the usurers? Is the labourer to be pinched, to keep the usurers up with double pay? Are millions to suffer for years, because *one man will not unsay his blunders*? Oh, no! the people will try the Whigs again: nothing worse can come than a man resolved to push on this system of injustice; this system, too, which constantly keeps the whole frame of the Government in such a state, that it may be totally destroyed in one single half hour. Talk of the "*sacredness of property*," indeed! In a state like that which we are in, there is no such thing as property of any sort, *without money*, an universally acknowledged measure of value. There is no property at all; for as to *barter*, what has the working man to barter but the fruit of his fists, or of his cudgel? Now, then, do you, who are so much in dread of a cancelling of the public debt, know that it can be cancelled at any moment, by the mere motion, the mere assembling together of fifty thousand men in Kent, in Essex, in Surrey, or in Sussex? Do you not perceive the effect that that would have in London; the effect that it would have upon *the Bank*? And, sir, would not this be a great deal worse than even the *cancelling* of the debt by Act of Parliament? And is it not the very first duty of every Minister, and of every Member of Parliament too, to endeavour to render so terrific an effect *impossible*? And *impossible* it never can be rendered, as long as the debt shall exist to any thing like its present amount.

What! sir; if the King were told, "Here is a thing, may it please your Majesty, existing in your dominions, in consequence of the existence of which, it is *possible*, that your Majesty's throne may be overturned in an hour"; would he not say, "*Put an end, somehow or other, to the existence of that thing, as quickly as possible*"? Well, then, that thing does exist; and it exists, too, remember, in company with the POOR-LAW BILL! Sir Robert Peel talks, and you talk, about the "*intelligence of the country, and of a reliance*" upon *that*. Let him rely upon it: let him continue to insinuate that the working people are a senseless rabble, and want to destroy all property; let him rely upon the "*intelligence*." The "*intelligence*" will give him his reward I'll warrant it. He never heard the petitioners for parliamentary reform propose to *bundle out the bishops*, or to *reform the Peers*:* that was reserved for the "*intelligence*." While the Tories were struggling for a higher qualification to vote, I, in a letter addressed to the House of Lords, told them, that they had no real friends on earth; no reliance for support, except upon the unambitious working people, who, as naturally as the sparks fly upwards, would look upon them as their protectors, and who would protect them against their foes; but that they, in their wisdom, having decided otherwise, must take their chance and keep their coronets and estates as long as they could. Nothing in this world would be more easy than to settle all quietly, and make all safe; but the die now seems to be cast the other way: the Poor-law Bill seems to have

* This was a project emanating from the school of so-called *political economists*, of which Mr. HUME was the leader.—ED.

been the last throw, and to have been destined to decide the game, and that, too, without the possibility of carrying its own provisions into effect! You take great pains, sir, to represent to us the horrors of a civil war; and you tell us, that the poor man must suffer as much, or more, than the rich. What, then, do you think that he will come *lower* than to potatoes and salt? Can anything *worse* befall him than *coarser food*; than Parson Lowe's workhouse; than the workhouse dress; than the separation of husband from wife, and children from both; than the being cut off from all communication with friends and relations; than seeing his dead wife or child "*disposed of*" by the hired overseer for dissection? Can any state of things arise to make his situation *worse* than this? The church, you are afraid, is in danger! The church, sir, why then the church-service too; and do you know that the Bishop of London, who was also one of the *Poor-law Commissioners*, was one of the supporters of the DEAD-BODY BILL? Do you know, that the "*BURIAL OF THE DEAD*," is one of the principal services of the church? You know, I suppose, that a body that is hacked to pieces by a parcel of surgeons has not Christian burial; and, if Christian burial be of "*NO USE*," why is there a burial service? And why do the parsons *receive fees for burying the dead*? Why, then, sir, be alarmed about the church? If it be of "*no use*" in this respect, why not the same in other respects?

I admire the sublimity of the *horrors*, which you set before us as the *infallible* consequences of a blowing up of the funds and paper-money. First, as a matter of course, there must, you tell us, be a "*CIVIL WAR*." For what? *Why* must there? For *what reason*? Do you believe that the fundholders would sally out armed? And *against whom*; and on *what ground*? Did they do this in *France*? Did they do it in *America*? In each of which countries the paper-money was annihilated in *one day*. Oh, no! There would be great confusion in and about London; but, in every other part of the kingdom, parochial arrangements would instantly be made, for keeping all the people at work, and on good wages; real and moveable property would make voluntary sacrifices most liberally; and, in a month, all would be quiet and right again. The *Poor-law Bill* (if it be pushed on) will have done a great deal to *sour* the working people: but still nothing will make Englishmen *cut each other's throats*; and, of that, be you well assured.

What, sir! Do you think that the weaver and the ploughman will become ferocious upon finding that they can have *beer* at $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ a pot instead of $6d.$; that they will cut rich men's throats, and plunder their mansions, because the hop, soap, sugar, tea, and tobacco taxes are no longer demanded of them; that they will become tigers, because there is no longer any law to put a workhouse dress upon them, and to separate husband from wife, and both from children; that they will, in short, become savages, because there is no longer any hired overseer to "*dispose of their bodies for dissection*"?

No, no; you do not think this: you had soared into the regions of poetry, and you will, I am sure, thank me for letting you down again. But, though I am certain that there would be none of the *horrors* of which you speak, I am by no means insensible to the *ulterior* consequences to the *landholders*; for it is impossible that the ruined fundholders should not obtain *some compensation*; and it would also be *impossible again to tax the labour of the people* to raise the means of making that compensation!

However, let us hope that things will never come to this extremity. Let us hope that the easy and effectual means of prevention will be adopted. If I am not much deceived, you, sir, wish for those means to be adopted as sincerely as I do ; and, at any rate, I remain, without affectation,

Your friend
And most obedient servant,
WM. COBBETT.

MR. COBBETT'S SPEECH,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON HIS MOTION FOR AN ABOLITION
OF THE MALT-TAX.

(*Political Register, December, 1834.*)

My readers are aware that I have, for many years, contended that this tax was the most mischievous thing existing in the country ; and, being in Parliament, they would naturally expect that I should do my utmost to get it repealed and abolished. I did my utmost during the last session of Parliament ; and I am now about to lay before my readers in general, and my constituents in particular, an account of what has been done, as to this matter, during the present session of Parliament, and particularly the part which I have taken in the discussions relative to it.

On the 27. Feb. Sir William Ingilby made a motion for the House to go into a committee of the whole House, to consider whether there ought to be a repeal, partial and entire, of this mischief-doing tax. I spoke upon that occasion, against the further continuance of the tax ; but I did not vote, because the motion was not direct, and because it was not positive as to a repeal of the whole of the tax. There was, upon that occasion, a division, when there were 170 for the motion, and 271 against it.

Things standing thus, and I, seeing the ground all forestalled until the 27. of May, gave notice that I would make a motion on that day, for a repeal of the whole of that tax ; but, upon further consideration, I withdrew that notice, and fixed the notice for a similar motion on the 17. of March, to be made upon the motion for the House to go into a committee of supply. My motion was, "*Resolved, That it is expedient, that from and after the 5. October next, all the duties on malt shall cease and determine.*" This motion I made on the 17. of March ; and this motion was decided in the manner hereafter to be described. It would be irksome to myself, as well as to my readers, for me to be in the habit of reporting my own speeches in the *Register* ; but, this is a subject of such vast importance, that I gave as correct a report as I could of the speech made upon this occasion. I here insert my speech, giving it as much accuracy as my memory will enable me to do it, with the assistance of the reports in the newspapers.

Mr. COBBETT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to submit a motion to the House, for the total repeal of the Malt-tax, which motion is in the following words: "Resolved, That it is expedient that from and after the 5. of " October next, all the duties on malt shall cease and determine."

Certainly, sir, such a motion ought not to be submitted to the House, without reasons given for the measure of which it proposes the adoption; and yet, to give those reasons will require the consumption of a much larger portion of the time of the House, than I shall like to call upon it to bestow; but when duty bids me to proceed, and reluctance to occupy the time of the House would draw me back, I feel myself under the necessity of obeying the former.

Before I proceed to the reasons which I deem more than sufficient for the total repeal of this tax, it is my duty to endeavour to remove two very gross and mischievous errors, which from what we have heard recently in this House, appear to me to be generally prevalent throughout the country; or, at least, amongst almost the whole of those who are prominent in discussing political affairs.

The first of these errors is, that the landlords, the farmers, and all the persons immediately concerned in the cultivation of the land, would be exclusively benefitted by the repeal of these duties; and that the inhabitants of towns are very little interested in the matter; that they have an interest in the repeal of the house and window-tax, but that they have scarcely any interest at all in the repeal of this tax; that the tax being taken off, the honourable Member for Bridport recently told us, would only be so much money put into the pockets of the landlords, who would be the sole persons that would gain by the change.

An error so monstrous as this, has scarcely ever found its way into the human mind. What, sir! do not the people in towns, and, particularly the hard-working people in towns, drink beer? And, is not their beer made of malt, as well as the beer of the country-people? The fact is, that the repeal of the Malt-tax would be greatly more beneficial to the tradesmen and workmen in towns, than the repeal of the house and window-tax, both put together. Seldom do working people pay any part of the house-tax or window-tax; but the Malt-tax lies heavily on them all, causing their beer, which is absolutely necessary to them, to cost more than twice as much as it would cost if there were no tax upon malt. Further, nineteen-twentieths of the tradesmen, though they may pay from three pounds to twelve pounds a year, on account of house and window-tax, pay, on an average, a great deal more on account of the Malt-tax.

This gross error is, then, backed up by another, if possible still more gross; namely, that the persons owning, occupying, labouring upon, and deriving their subsistence out of, the land, are a mere nothing in number, compared with those who are employed in manufactures, trade, and commerce, and, especially, in manufactures. The right honourable Member for Manchester has called upon us to thank God, that England was the great manufacturing shop of the world; the noble Lord, who is one of the representatives of the West-riding of Yorkshire, calls those who are hostile to the corn-laws, the body of the people; the honourable Member for Middlesex has told us, that this is now a manufacturing nation, and that England was poor before it was a manufacturing nation. I wish, sir, that the honourable Member for Middlesex had drawn a little upon his store-house of knowledge, and had named the time when Eng-

land was poor, and when she was not a manufacturing nation. I state, sir, without fear of contradiction from that honourable Member or any other, that England was always the richest, and always the most manufacturing nation in the world.

The ground-work of this great error with regard to the number engaged in the different pursuits, are and have been for many years, the population returns, laid before this House, which, by reckoning all persons as manufacturers, traders, &c., except the mere occupiers and workers upon the land; that is to say, except the mere husbandmen, the ploughmen, the reapers, the mowers, the thrashers, and woodmen; by considering all these as not belonging to agriculture, have led to the conclusion that the husbandmen and all belonging to the land, are a mere handful, compared with the rest of the community. I can give an instance with regard to the village of BOTLEY, a village in Hampshire, with which I am well acquainted. The return states, that there are fifty-five families belonging to agriculture, forty-four to manufactures, trade, &c., and thirty-five of all other sorts. Now I take upon me to assert, that there is not a soul in that parish, who is not either husbandman, miller, or tanner; the miller to grind the corn; the tanner to dress the hides; or parson or doctor: the parson collects the great and small tithes of the parish, and he lives upon them; the doctor bleeds and sets the bones of the husbandmen; and as to other sorts of persons, there are none, who are not employed in purchasing the produce of the land, or in selling clothing or other necessaries, to those who raise that produce.

To the parishes of THURSLEY and WHITLEY, in Surrey, are ascribed eighty-three families, engaged in trade, manufactures, commerce, &c. If the hon. Member for West Surrey were in his place, who lives in one of those parishes, which are united by law, I would ask him, what sort of manufacture these eighty-three families carry on; from what foreign country they receive the raw material upon which they work; to what foreign country they export the produce of their looms or their other ingenious contrivances? Sir, these returns make up a mass of fallacies such as never were before heard of in the world: in these two parishes, there is not a single soul (except, perchance, there may be a fundholder or two) who is not either husbandman, wheelwright, blacksmith, carpenter, butcher, or who does not follow some pursuit or other, immediately connected with the land; not a soul who could live upon the spot for a week, if there were no produce arising out of the produce of the land of those two parishes.

But, sir, there is one instance which is quite conclusive as to this point; and the matter can be settled at once, by only three words from an hon. Member whom I see sitting on the opposite benches. There is a parish in Surrey called Wanborough, and the return tells us that it contains twenty families chiefly employed in agriculture, and one family chiefly employed in commerce, manufactures, &c. Now, sir, there sits the hon. Member for Guildford, in Surrey; he is the sole proprietor of all the houses and all the land in this parish of Wanborough; and I call upon him to have the goodness to tell us whether this family of manufacturers have any connexion with foreign parts, or whether their manufacture consists in making or new laying of ploughshares for his farms, and of shoes for the horses which work upon those farms! Short-sighted, indeed, must that man be, who cannot see far enough to know, that these manufacturers are husbandmen in fact, just as much as those who

plough and reap and mow and thrash out the corn. Yet these ridiculous fallacies have led to the mischievous conclusions which we have heard in this House; they have led the right hon. Member for Manchester to tell us that there are nine hundred thousand families only, belonging to the land, while there are fourteen hundred thousand families belonging to manufactures and trade.

The hon. Member for Marybonne has frequently asserted the great populousness of the borough which he has the honour to represent; and, when speaking of what he has been pleased to call the oppression of the corn-laws, he has invariably represented his numerous constituents as having an interest distinct and independent, relative to the part of the community, immediately and obviously concerned in the land. The returns tell us, that there are, in the borough of MARYBONNE, a hundred and forty-three persons, chiefly employed in agriculture; that is to say, in the gardens and the hay-fields, which lie on the outskirts of the borough or parish; but is this all? I very believe, that I speak very far within compass, when I say that there are a thousand families; and I think I might say, thousands of families, all the males of which are employed, and solely employed, in making and selling ploughs, harrows, drags, drills, chaff-cutters, butter-churns, cheese-presses, spades, prongs, rakes, sieves, locks, and other implements, tools and necessaries for husbandry. Were there no husbandry, these people would not be in the borough of Marybonne; and were the land to produce nothing to send up rents into the fine streets and the squares, what would become of the tradesmen of Marybonne? And look, sir, over the whole of this metropolis: look at the seedsmen, the salesmen of meat, the lightermen that bring up the corn, the multitudes whose centre is at Mark-lane; the hop-merchants and their people; look at all these, and imagine, if you can, the extent of the madness, or, rather, the blindness and absurdity of those who would attempt to designate any part of the people as not having an interest in agriculture.

But, if these gentlemen will insist upon the separation, I will face them, even with the admission of their own absurdity to be sense; and I will take the statement contained in the summary of even these fallacious returns. What says this summary? why this: that the male occupiers and labourers in agriculture, twenty years of age and upwards, are *one million and seventy-five thousand*; and that male persons of the same age engaged in manufactures, &c., are *three hundred and twenty thousand*.

Thus, then, if I were to adopt that erroneous view of the matter, according to which the Malt-tax is considered as a burden to nobody but persons belonging to agriculture, I should say that there were three for one, at any rate, and that therefore they were worthy of our particular consideration. I, however, scout this idea as unworthy of the mind of a man of sense: I say that all are equally interested; and as such I must speak of them as likely to be benefited by the adoption of the measure which I have had the honour to propose to the House. In stating the reasons which I have to offer for the adoption of that measure, I must first observe, that I do not object to the tax on account of any partiality of pressure which it has; because I am fully aware, that every tax, lay it where you will, finds its way, first or last, to every person in the community. I must further observe, that I do not object to the tax on account of its money weight; because, if the tax be wanted to

carry on the affairs of the Government; and if it be collected at something near the ordinary expense of collection, and being unproductive of any mischiefs beyond those arising out of its mere burden, money burden, it would be improper to propose its repeal. But, sir, if a tax be, as I contend this tax is, peculiar as to its expenses of collection; and if it be productive of great moral evils, then it ought not to remain, even if a property-tax or a poll-tax were necessary, to be imposed in its stead; and I think myself capable of proving to the House, that this tax is of this description, and that therefore it ought to be repealed. I beg it to be observed, that I urge not the repeal as peculiarly beneficial to the landlord or the farmer. As consumers of malt, they would share in the benefit with the rest of the community; as great sufferers from the immoralities produced by this tax, they would certainly derive an extraordinary degree of benefit; but in this benefit the rest of the community must necessarily share, though their share might not be so obvious. It is impossible for the morals of millions of working people to be mended without the effect being felt in every part and by every person of the community.

The **FIRST** objection to this tax is, the extraordinary expense of collecting and managing it. I hold in my hand a statement, which I received last year from a gentleman at Nottingham, many years in the Excise; and he proves, to my satisfaction, that five-sixths of the expenses of the whole of the Excise establishment may be fairly ascribed to the Malt-tax. Now, I have no means immediately at hand for ascertaining how much the whole of the expenses of the Excise establishment is annually. At a guess I should say it amounted to a million of money or more; so that, to begin with, here is a million to be paid out of five millions and a half, before the money comes into the Exchequer. I believe this to be the fact; but the noble Lord can correct me here, if I be in error. At any rate, we know that the expense is very great; much greater than the collection of any other tax or taxes, to three times the gross amount; and, therefore, this is a good objection to the tax. In the case of the stamps, for instance, all that the people pay goes into the Exchequer, except a mere trifle, comparatively speaking. The six millions cost only 168,000*l.* in the collection and management, while here are five millions and a half cost, as I believe, pretty nearly or quite a million in the collection and management. The **SECOND** and still greater objection is, the monopoly which the tax necessarily gives rise to. Upon the same authority, which I have just mentioned, I state to the House these astounding facts; that, taking barley at twenty-eight shillings a quarter, and suppose four millions of quarters, which is about the quantity, the amount of such barley would be five millions six hundred thousand pounds; that eight quarters of barley make nine quarters of malt, and that this increase pays all the expenses of malting. So that the four millions of quarters of barley made into malt, would, were it not for the tax, cost the people five millions six hundred thousand pounds in the year: that the duty, added to this, would make the cost nine millions seven hundred thousand pounds a year; but that, in consequence of the monopoly created by the tax, the malt, before the result of it reaches the lips of the people, either by private brewing, or public brewing, does cost the people fourteen millions four hundred thousand pounds a year, instead of costing them five millions six hundred thousand pounds a year. When, a few evenings ago, I stated the price of malt at 8*s.* a bushel, an hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets

produced a Mark-lane account, showing, that large quantities of it had been sold that week at about six and sixpence a bushel; but I spoke of the price of malt as I could get it for my use. The tax enables men with large capital to get the malt at a price at which men for private brewing cannot get it. And here I beg leave to refer to a part of the evidence taken before the beer-shop committee of last year. Mr. GOODLAKE, a magistrate of Berkshire, stated to the committee, that there was a beer-shop set up by a very respectable man in his own parish; that this man bought his beer of a brewer, until the beer which he brewed himself should have attained a proper age; and that then he sold his own beer:—"But the brewer thought it so good a thing that he set up another beer-shop in the parish; and he can brew it so much cheaper than the publican who has to go to a dealer in malt and buy it at 9s. 6d. a bushel, when the brewer can make it at about 6s. 3d., that the publican cannot compete with him; and the second beer-house being set up, the man that set up the other was obliged to give it up after the first twelve-month, and to leave the brewer's beer-house in the parish."

Mr. EDWARD GREEN, who is a maltster, but also a farmer, of WARGRAVE, in Berkshire, gave the committee this information: "If there is so much advantage attending brewing, how is it that the *ale-houses sell brewers' beer*? There are very few of them that have capital enough to buy their malt at the first hand; I could now furnish malt at 6s. 3d. a bushel; and our poor people, if they go to buy malt retail of a maltster, are charged 8s. 6d."

Mr. STOCK, a brewer of Essex, gave the following information: "What is the cost of your malt to you?—*Fifty-two shillings a quarter, covering every expense.*—What have you given for your barley?—The highest price of our barley has been 30s. to 35s., and the lowest is 24s."

But, after all, no one stated any of the grounds for believing that this monopoly arose directly out of the tax. One of its effects, however, I will state to the House. The malt duty is paid in every six weeks. A man possessed of apparent great means can obtain bondsmen, to a certain amount, for the payment of the duty; and in this case, the collector permits the maltster to be three collections in arrear, while the maltster with small means is compelled to pay up. The man who has the benefit of the first, is enabled to enter largely into business, and the greater his duty the more he injures society in the end. In numerous instances, these large maltsters have been known to crush the little ones entirely; and thus it is that the malt-houses, formerly so numerous, are now become comparatively very few in number. I remember that at *Stow-on-the-Wold* I learned, that formerly there were fourteen malt-houses, and that now there is only one. In the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, there used to be a malt-house in almost every village. The monopoly created by this tax, has demolished, perhaps, nineteen out of every twenty. Large brewers are also maltsters. The monopolists, in fact, carry on their trade with *public money*; they have always two collections in their hands to carry on their trade with: so that the people are placed at their mercy, and so placed, too, by the use of the people's own money, which they have paid for the services of the State, and which is allowed to be kept in the hands of these monopolists. It is not, then, the tax itself, but the evils that arise out of the tax at every step that it takes; and here, on account of this monopoly alone, the people pay, as I have, I think, very clearly shown, four millions seven hundred thousand pounds a year; which is an

evil, an injustice, an oppression, arising entirely out of the tax. If I be asked, what is to become of all the capital now employed by these monopolists in this way, I answer, in the first place, that it is the people's capital in great part, as I have just shown; and, in the next place, if the monopolists have any capital, which is really their own, there is the land, there is lawful commerce; there are plenty of honest means for the profitable employment of this capital.

The third objection to this tax is, that it prevents people, and particularly the poorer part of the people, from brewing beer in their own houses, and thereby drives them to beer-shops, and other places of resort, for the purpose of getting beer, a drink which they ought to have, which they always have had, and which, let gentlemen think or say or do what they may, they always will have. I know it has been contended, that the poorer sort of people have been so long out of the habit of brewing, at their own houses, that they would not take to it again, even if this tax were taken off, and if they could get the malt for a mere trifle, as they then would. It is a great mistake to suppose that this is one of the cases in which habit becomes second nature. In morals and in manners, there is great submission to the power of habit. Early rising, late rising, sobriety, drunkenness, love of ease, love of activity; in these and numerous other instances, habit has a great deal to do in determining the conduct of men; but when you come to eating and drinking, when you come to the means of providing a bellyful, the case is wholly different. When you are withheld from any natural enjoyment by force, you return to it the moment the force is removed. From having constantly a plenty to eat, you may, by compulsion, be confined to a quarter of a meal, for years together; but when the full meal returns, you instantly take it, without consideration had of the small quantity of food upon which you have recently lived. For a long time the labourers have been compelled to do without the bits of bacon in their pot; but, does any man imagine, that, if they had the bits of bacon again, they would not boil them and eat them? But, it is said that they want the utensils for brewing; said, indeed, only by those who cannot know anything at all about the matter. It was asked, by the committee of last year; whether the utensils could not be had for a few shillings? There are no utensils wanting, but those which they have. A gallon of malt can be brewed in a porridge-pot which will hold five gallons of water; and twelve quarts of good beer I have seen made out of a gallon of malt in that very way. It is a great mistake to suppose that there require large quantities of malt to be brewed together, in order to get the greatest proportion of strength. Malt is, in this respect, like tea, : whether you put little or much of the latter into the pot, you will get all the strength out of it in one case as well as in the other, and it is strong or weak in proportion to the quantity of water as compared with the quantity of tea. As to the expense, in the case of the labourer, it is absolutely nothing at all. The old maxim was, "if you would have good beer, you must go to bed with your brewer." The wife is the brewer; like the very cheerful undertaker of this part of the duty of the family: she likes the beer herself better than water; and she has the other most powerful motive, that of keeping her husband at home. In support of these, my opinions, the House will permit me to read the evidence given by several persons before the Beer-Bill Committee of last year. At the head of these stands Mr. SIMON, a magistrate for Oxfordshire and Berkshire, who, in order to be able to lay accurate opinions upon the subject before the

committee, sent a circular to the overseers and ministers of fifteen parishes; and the answer of all, except one, was, that the cure for the evils of beer-shops, and the greatest possible advantage to the country, would be, to enable the poor people to make their malt, and to brew at home. The evidence of these gentlemen, every word of which is worthy of the best attention of the House, was in the following words:—

Mr. SIMON, a magistrate for Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The last question is, “*Would great advantages result from enabling the poor people to make their malt and brew at home, both as regards their comfort and morality?*”—That is the most important question of all. The answers are, *fourteen parties say it would be highly desirable; one fears it might lead the labourers to steal barley.*

“*Are those answers indiscriminately the answers of the overseers and ministers of the different parishes, or is there any difference of opinion between the ministers and the overseers?*—I should say that, generally, they all agree in their accounts. I believe that the answers are indiscriminately the same from the ministers and from the overseers.

“*Are the answers from the overseers and the ministers jointly or separately?*—Separately: the application was made separately to each of them, and neither knew that the other had an application, to the best of my knowledge.”

Mr. GOODLAKE, a magistrate for Berkshire.—“*Did the cottagers brew beer in consequence of that public-house being put down?*—No; cottagers have not an opportunity of brewing beer, on account of the *high price of malt.*”

Colonel BLAGRAVE, magistrate for Berkshire.—“*Do you contemplate the absolute necessity of taking away the power of selling beer in this manner?*—I think it would be a dangerous measure, without the *repeal of the Malt-tax*, and the tax again put upon the beer: I think if the tax were put upon the beer, and the *Malt-tax repealed*, it would induce the lower class of the people to brew their own beer.

“*Will you state why, without that alteration, you think it would be dangerous to repeal the present Beer-bill?*—Because I think it has tended to increase the price of barley, and to give a little fillip to agriculture.

“*Do you think that it has any effect in checking the consumption of spirits, and giving the lower orders an inclination to drink beer rather than spirits?*—*I think the lower orders have had an inclination to drink beer rather than spirits;* but it has been reported to me that smuggled spirits have been introduced into those beer-houses, but to my knowledge I do not know it.

“*Do you think that the greater facility of drinking beer has rather conduced to encourage the love of beer than the love of spirits?*—I think it has, and the lower order of people have an idea that beer is much more wholesome for them.”

BREDE (Sussex) Parish Vestry.—“*Had the malt duty been taken off, the agricultural labourer would have had his beer at home, and we think he would seldom be seen at the beer-shop; small-beer is the natural beverage of the labourers in agriculture; at once the most nutritious, the most wholesome, and the best support to the labourer, being part of the subsistence for the production of his physical powers, to enable him to perform a fair day's work.*”

HOVE (Sussex) Parish Vestry.—“*We are decidedly of opinion, if the malt duty had been repealed, it would have been far preferable to the beer.*”

PLAYDEN (Sussex) Parish Vestry.—“*We also beg to observe, that the abolition of the malt duty would have had a far more beneficial effect upon the habits and morals of the labouring class.*”

There was, indeed, one witness, who gave a different opinion, and that was Mr. THURNALL of Cambridgeshire, but he is a great maltster. His evidence was as follows: “*Do you, or do you not believe, if the malt duty was taken off, so as to enable every man to brew at home, that the evils complained of would be greatly reduced, and a better morality amongst the poor be obtained?*—I do not think it is possible for the labourer to brew his own beer; *I am not sure they would not in my county; in the first place he could brew so small a quantity, and there are very few cottages where the whole house is above the size of this room; he is not furnished with a copper; it is totally impossible for a labourer to brew his beer in the districts I have been in.*”

"How was it done *formerly*, do you know?—Persons brewed their own beer, but I should think not a *tithe* of the population brewed; but their habits have altogether altered.

"Is it not a serious thing for a poor man if he brews a quantity of beer, and that beer turns sour?—Yes.

"He avoids that risk, does he not, by purchasing his beer?—*Undoubtedly*.

"You are aware that a brewing apparatus would cost to a poor man only 5s. ?—I am aware it would cost a small sum: but half of them would not be sober while the beer lasted; they would drink it in a day."

[Mr. CHILDERS, a member for Cambridgeshire, observed, that I had read only a part of the evidence of this man; that this man was his tenant, and a very respectable man. It is very true, that I read only a part, and I cited the evidence merely to contradict the notion of the habits of the people having changed. If I did not read the whole, it was merely to save time; and if the orders of the House would have permitted me to reply, I should have observed that Mr. CHILDERS left out, in his reading, the first of the two *nots* which will be found in the second member of the first sentence of the answers of this witness. I believe that Mr. CHILDERS gave the correct meaning of the witness, but that meaning is just the contrary of that which is found in the print; for, in the print, the witness is made to say that he is *not* sure that the labourer would not brew his own beer; and Mr. CHILDERS made him say, that he *was* sure that he would not brew it: the context shows that Mr. CHILDERS's reading was correct, but not according with the evidence reported by the committee. If I could have replied, I should have answered the opinion of this man, that not a third of the people formerly brewed their own beer, by citing the positive evidence given by Mr. JOHN ELLMAN, before the committee of 1821, "that when he became a farmer, forty-five years before that, every man in his parish had his own beer, and enjoyed it by his own fire-side"; and that this evidence was then corroborated by a magistrate of Somersetshire, and by a gentleman who was then sheriff of Wiltshire. I did not like to waste time, as I never do, setting a very high value on time myself, or I should have observed on the latter part of the evidence of this witness, the tenant of Mr. CHILDERS, who tells us, in one breath, that the labourer's beer would "*turn sour*," and in the next breath, "that he would drink it in a day"! However, no observation from me was necessary here; a general smile in the House showed that they smelled out the maltster, and rendered any reply to Mr. CHILDERS wholly unnecessary.]

In short, sir, I am satisfied that there is no argument to be offered in support of the belief, that labourers would not again brew their own beer, if this tax were repealed, and wholly abolished; and of all the benefits arising from this change, I defy pen or tongue to give an adequate description. But there would be another great change take place; that is to say, that farmers would have beer to give to their men who work out of their house, or rather to men who are not inmates of the house. On this subject we have the following evidence, taken before the agricultural committee of last year, of Mr. SANDERS of Lancashire, and of Mr. BROWN, a large farmer and a surveyor, of Wiltshire, and this evidence, in the following words, is very worthy of the best attention of the House.

Mr. SANDERS.—"Does not the Malt-tax press more immediately on a man who gives beer to his labourers, directly as well as indirectly?—I have no doubt if the Malt-tax were removed, it would be a great improvement in his condition."

MR. RUSSELL BROWN.—“Would the labourers in your neighbourhood, if the law were to abolish the beer-shops, and restore only the public-house, be likely to complain?—They would like it quite as well. The *greatest possible relief* that could be given to the agricultural labourers, would be by putting on the beer-duty again, and *taking off the malt duty*, which would enable them to make or buy small quantities of malt, and brew their own beer.

“Do you not think if that were the case, the farmers would be *more ready to give their labourers beer* in agricultural districts?—I am quite sure of it; it is *nothing but the high duty which has kept them from it*; the taking off the beer-duty has been no relief to the agricultural labourer.

“What do you think the people of Devises would say to the putting on the beer-duty again?—Probably, if the malt-duty were not taken off at the same time, they would complain; but if the malt-duty were *taken off, I am sure they would rejoice*.

“Is there, *without them*, convenience for a labouring man to obtain beer for his dinner?—I have myself given my labourers beer, though it has *cost me an immense sum* for my malt bill every year; but still *I know a man cannot work well without beer*, and I wish as much as possible to keep my labourers away from the beer-shops.”

The advantage to the farmer, as well as to the labourer, from giving beer instead of money, is of so much importance as hardly to admit of exaggeration in the statement. Every one acquainted with these matters knows well, that, in times of pressing haste, particularly in harvest, a farmer can do more with one pound's worth of beer than with four pounds in money. Money is too far from the lips to produce immediate effect. Then, as to regular hard work in hot weather. Set a company of men to work at mowing; they ask you for beer, and, as is generally the case, you allow them sixpence an acre, or something an acre, in lieu of beer. The hot sun comes and clogs the spittle in their mouths, and draws the sweat from their bodies. Away they go, perhaps a mile, to lay out their sixpence in beer. Being there, they do not stop with the sixpence. Very likely the field does not see them again for that day: then follows the loss of time, so precious then to the farmer, and they have to thirst for the remainder of the hard work of mowing, or to slake that thirst with water, which communicates weakness instead of strength. Whereas, if they had beer from the farm-house, they would go to the bottles deposited in the hedge, take their drink and return to their work. The beer would be wholesome and strengthening; and it is the deeply-interested master who would then determine the quantity. MR. RUSSELL BROWN told the committee that he does this now; but MR. RUSSELL BROWN is a great farmer, and a rich man: it costs him, he tells the committee, “an immense sum” for malt every year. That immense sum it is not in the power of a common farmer to expend; and, therefore, generally, and almost universally, speaking, hard-working men, and the best of labourers, too, are driven to the beer-shops from this cause; or to some place or other where they have to swallow the adulterated stuff made by the brewers.

Besides all these evils, there is the great evil of evils, the driving of the young people from the farm-houses. Great as the other objections to this tax are, this objection is greater than all the rest put together. This it is, which has been the great cause of the lamentable change which has taken place in the manners and the morals of the working people of England. Every gentleman must know how slender the authority of poor and indulgent parents must necessarily be over young people from the age of twelve years upwards. In proportion as the parents are poor and miserable, in that same proportion, in nature's spite, their authority will be small. To have good grown-up men and women, you must begin the work when they

are young. The hand of the poor parent is not strong enough ; and if the hand of the parent were strong enough, the heart would not be stout enough for this work. Besides, there is no room in the cottage for any body but the father and mother and little children. In the farm-house is their proper place from the age of twelve to that of twenty, or some years more. There there are a master and a mistress, not liable to indulgence on account of kindred ; but bound by the law to provide for the parties in sickness and health for the whole year through ; bound still more strongly by the most weighty interest, to attend, not only to the good habits and the industry, but to the morals and manners of the young people living under the same roof with themselves. Let gentlemen figure to themselves a parish with a hundred young people, distributed amongst the farm-houses, subjected to the control of masters and mistresses, who, of necessity, will compel them to keep good hours, to rise early, to be diligent during the day, to be cleanly in their persons, to go to church on the Sunday, and who have the magistrates always at hand to punish disobedience of their lawful commands. Then suppose these young people all to be turned out and to be upon their own hands ; strolling about on the Sunday, without any regard to the decencies of dress ; assembling in groups, either in beer-shops, or out of beer-shops ; assemble they will, and whoever saw such an assemblage, without seeing mischief of some sort or other being the ultimate consequence ? In short, this is the main cause of that fatal change which has taken place in the manners, the morals, the expertness, and the bodily strength, of the labourers of England ; and every man, who is a judge of the matter, knows well, that this has been produced, in very great part, by the heavy expense required to furnish beer for the servants in husbandry ; and that this heavy expense arises from the tax upon malt, and solely from that tax, no man will attempt to deny. This evil is so great, that, unless it can be removed, all hope of restoring the country to a state of good morals and happiness, and even of safety, may be abandoned at once in despair. The right hon. Member for MANCHESTER drew an astounding picture of the awful consequences of rejecting the proposition for an alteration of the corn laws. He seems to have thought little of the present really awful situation of those who are concerned in the cultivation of the land. But I trust that this House will have that situation constantly in its mind, till it has done its best to restore content to the labouring millions, and restored something like peace and security to the property and the dwelling of the farmer ; and, sir, I am perfectly satisfied that nothing would so powerfully assist in the accomplishing of this, so desirable an object, as the adoption of the motion which I now have the honour to submit to the House.

Gladly would I see the work performed by the noble Lord and his colleagues. Then, indeed, would the Government have strength ; for then it would become dear to the hearts of the whole people. The honourable Gentlemen seem as firmly fixed now as is the seat upon which they are ; but this measure would fix them firmly as the hills.

POOR-LAW STRUGGLE.

(*Political Register*, June, 1835.)

Normandy, 10. June, 1835.

FOR it really appears to be another "RURAL WAR," and threatens to be much more durable and mischievous than the last rural war; and there is this circumstance in addition, in this case; that is to say, that this new scene of trouble, of turmoil, and of boiling blood, has been caused by the Parliament itself; that Parliament duly warned by me of all the consequences. In this respect it is another PELL's Bill affair. The proposition is made in the year 1833; the projectors are then warned, and are besought not to adopt the measure; they persevere a great deal more eagerly on account of the warning and the prediction, as if for the express purpose of making the prophet a liar. Half-a-dozen counties are in a state of partial commotion; the jails are opening their doors to receive those who are called the rebels against the Poor-law Bill! No matter as to any other thing relative to this measure; here is the country disturbed; here are the jails filling; here are wives and children screaming after their fathers; here are these undeniable facts; and what is the cause? Not a desire to overturn the Government on the part of the people; not a desire to disobey the settled laws of the country; not any revolutionary desire; not any desire to touch any one of the institutions of the country. What is it then? Why, a desire and a resolution, as far as they are able to adhere to it, to maintain the laws of their country, as they were settled at the time when the *present church of the country was established*; to maintain those laws which form the foundation, the very fundamental principles of the Government; and which are of two hundred and forty years' standing.

Well, but laying aside for the present the merits or demerits of this measure, no one will deny that it is now the cause of great alarm and great trouble to the Government. We shall by-and-by see the Duke of RICHMOND selling off from divers workhouses all utensils for *brewing*, for *grinding malt*, for *killing and preserving meat*; we shall by-and-by see this LEVIATHAN-PENSIONER at this amusing work; we shall by-and-by hear a poor-law commissioner advising the guardians to look upon and treat poor persons coming for relief as "*beggars*"; we shall by-and-by hear a *peer-chairman* complaining of the *destruction of cattle*, and of fires being set; we shall by-and-by have to take a sort of survey of the blood-boiling in Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Kent, Sussex, and Suffolk. But just at present let us repeat, that every one knows, that this is at present *the great immediate cause of trouble to the Government*. When old GREY, who was all thunder and all vigour, as long as he had cunning ALTHORP's majority at his back, and who became all feebleness and old age and incapacity as soon as he had lost that; when old GREY went snivelling off (having first not wholly forgotten his family), he complained of the *difficulties* in which the Government was placed; and it was curious enough that he had vigour enough left to offer, at *that very*

moment, to bring in the Poor-law bill, which had been passed by t'other place. That is to say, to make a greater difficulty than any that already existed, or than any that could by any possibility exist, short of an open and notorious rebellion and civil war.

There is no doubt in my mind that, with regard to the mere *expense*, this Poor-law Bill will cost more than the amount of the poor-rates themselves; that is to say, more than the amount of whatever has been given during a similar time, in real and *bona-fide* relief to the poor. The thing is manifestly only beginning. Even the foundation of none of the grand workhouses is yet dug out. Two thousand-a-year LEWIS's scouts are at work; they are writing letters and making speeches; the pensioners and parsons and dead-weight are all in a stir. But, as yet, they appear to have laid hands upon nobody but the feeble and the aged, and the poor girls, by whom the lords, their relations, the parsons, the big merchants, the tradesmen and farmers in general, the footmen, the grooms, the coachmen, the huntsmen, the Bourbon-policemen, the soldiers, the retired-allowance people, the pensioners, all the swarms of tax-eaters, *can now have bastards with impunity.*

It is with the young and single men that two-thousand-a-year LEWIS, penny-a-line CHADWICK and their crew will have to deal; or their dealings are not worth a straw. Cunning ALTHORP said that he should recommend that the bill *should not be attempted to be carried into effect until on the eve of hay-making*, when work would be plenty; and so get the Bill silently poked into operation in form, when it was not to operate in fact. What would cunning ALTHORP think of a *refusal of all the men of any parish either to cut grass, or to cut corn*? What would cunning ALTHORP think, if this were to extend itself over a county? Cunning ALTHORP knows that there is no law to compel them to cut the grass or the corn; that there is no law but the law of self-interest; and cunning ALTHORP knows, too, that this is a thing always in the power of the people; that every man has a right to keep his limbs in a state of inactivity if he choose; and cunning ALTHORP knows that if this were to take place, his right of voting *by proxy* would not make the hay and bring in the harvest. This would be one way of answering the insolent poor-law runner, who wishes the labourers to be treated as "*beggars.*"

But again let the turmoil be what it may; let the consequences be what they may, let it never be forgotten that this is a "*difficulty*" created by the reformed Parliament itself, at the suggestion of old GREY and of ALTHORP. Let it be recollected that this is a *difficulty* of their own creating. Be the consequence what it may,³ it is their own work. The weather is fine now; at this season of the year few men want the means of obtaining a meal of victuals; let *November* come, and then let STRATHFIELDSAY tell us, that all that we have to ask about the matter is, *whether it be the law or not.* Well said, STRATHFIELDSAY! It was a famous law that gave you nearly a million of the people's money, for not being beaten at NEW ORLEANS. But laws can be changed surely now. If the law of ELIZABETH can be abrogated, surely we may deal freely with other laws.

However, here is the difficulty come. That which is going on at present is a mere beginning. And I verily believe that the bare expenses occasioned by this Bill, will be greater than the amount of the relief given to the poor. We should never lose sight of the *reasons* for the bringing in, the pushing on, and the passing of this Bill; the reasons given by the aristocracy and the money-mongers, and their swarms of tools. We

must not lose sight of these reasons by any means, and must bring the base advocates of the Bill everlastingly back to them, particularly as they are extremely anxious to keep these reasons out of sight now. A hireling fellow, of the name of JOHN LESLIE, who has the governing of the poor in the parish of St. GEORGE, Hanover-square, has written a pamphlet in praise of the Poor-law Bill. Two-and-thirty rich or titled fellows of the parish have published it under their names, and have told the public, that they have caused six thousand copies of it to be printed at their own expense, for the purpose of circulation. Amongst these fellows are, the Earl of EUSTON, Earl of DARLINGTON, Earl AMHERST, Viscount MELBOURNE, Earl COWPER, Earl of ESSEX, who are here in company with the famous *right honourable* STURGES BOURNE. These fellows make themselves responsible for the whole of the contents of this pamphlet. Everything that it asserts, they assert. It asserts this: "The great object of the Poor-law Amendment Act was to improve the *moral and social* condition of the labouring poor of England." That is an impudent lie! That is an impudent lie, you impudent fellows. Big and brazen as you are, here I tell you that you put forth a most impudent, a most barefaced lie. The Bill was brought forward to you, amongst yourselves, in your own House, and amongst us, in our House, with the distinct allegation (repeated for about the thousandth time), that the measure was necessary to PREVENT THE POOR FROM SWALLOWING UP THE ESTATES OF THE LANDLORDS! It is a base and infamous lie, therefore, to say that its object was to improve the condition of the poor. Let this be remembered, that this is a base and infamous lie, for the purpose of getting rid of the imputation of the real motive.

It is not very easy, perhaps, to come at what you mean by "*social condition*." The word "*social*," means *relating to society*. So that this word, as used by you, means, *mending the state of the poorer sort of people*: it means *making them better off*; it means, giving them a *better share than they now have in the good things enjoyed by society at large*. Now, you certifiers of the truth of as base a bundle of lies as ever were put together, do you not well know, that this measure was intended to make the people of the midland and south of England live upon a COARSER SORT OF FOOD? I charged the Bill with being brought forward with this intention. ALTHORP said that there was no such intention described in the Bill. "No," said I, "not described in the Bill; but you give power to yourselves, or to your creatures, who are to be called commissioners, to do *what they please* in this respect; they will be sure to do what you please they should do; and it is your intention to reduce the working people to a *coarser sort of food*." "No," said ALTHORP. Then I said this: "I have information which causes me firmly to believe, and I do believe, that the barrister who drew the Bill received written instructions for the drawing of it; and that amongst those instructions, one was, so to frame it as that it might be favourable to the desire which was entertained by the authors of the Bill, to cause the working-people, or the poor people (whichever it was) to live upon a COARSER SORT OF FOOD." ALTHORP actually denied this; or at least, cunningly gave it the go-by, or spoke of it as if it were not true. You have seen a pig, reader, when he is at something which he knows well ought to bring him a stroke across the nose: you have seen the workings of his cunning, sharp eyes, to ascertain whether there be a stick at hand. Never did pig look more cunning than ALTHORP

looked when he had wrapped up this staggering assertion of mine. "Well, then," said I, "since the fact is not fairly acknowledged, I move that a copy " of the instructions to the bill-drawing barrister be laid upon the table " of this House." Honest ALTHORP was a great deal too cunning to agree to that motion. It was, therefore, impossible not to believe the truth of my statement, which, indeed, I knew to be true. Well, then, EUSTON and DARLINGTON and AMHERST and MALBOURNE and COWPER and ESSEX, with the word Earl stuck before your names, and with STURGES BOURNE strung at the heels of the list: well, then, I say, is it to *improve men's condition in society*, to compel them to come down to a "*coarser sort of food*"? O! you "*noble*" certifiers; you fine "*noble*" pensioners, certifiers of the truth of a base, lying pamphlet, say at once, with all the high-sounding brass that belongs to you, that it is to *improve a man's condition in society* to reduce him to a coarser sort of food than that which he now lives upon! O, no! you tinkling brass! This was not the "*great object*" of the Poor-law Amendment Act. And now I will tell you what the great object was; or, rather, indeed, I will explain what the authors of the Bill meant by "*swallowing up the estates of the landlords.*"

This singular race of beggars, called English landlords, have, in fact, generally speaking, no estates; that is to say, they have no ownership in the *rents* of those estates. They have a great share in the taxes, generally speaking: they have it in military, naval, diplomatic, sinecure, pension, parsonship, something or another; but these, though enormous in aggregate amount, are principally grasped by a comparative few; and, upon the whole, the havings in this way do not at all equal the amount of the *rents* of the estates. The money-mongers take those rents almost entirely, whether in interest of mortgage, or in taxes. The money-mongers own more than half the estates as mortgagees: they are every day bundling out the old stinking aristocracy, who have basely abandoned the working-people. These old wretches, not able to sell and alienate for ever, first get away out of their mansions and sell their goods to get a ready penny: turn graziers, and, as carcass-butchers, send their venison to London to be eaten by the Jews, who have got the mortgages on their estates. They next think of the GAME! All ideas of feudal honour fly from their minds. No longer the old pretence that the game is kept for sport, and that none but gentlemen ought to possess game. After punishing men for two hundred years for selling or buying game, they pass a law to enable themselves to sell game, or to buy it, while they pass another law to transport a poor man, if he be in pursuit of it in the night-time.

This trade of carcass-butcher and poulterer brings them a little relief; and enables them to live at Boulogne, or amongst the "*enchanted beauties*" of the Swiss Cantons, and the "*high state of morals* there existing amongst the peasantry." Still the carcass-butcher and the poulterer do not yield enough to satisfy their wives, who probably have brought them a good supply. They resort to marriages with the daughters of contracting butchers, *millionaire* loan-mongers, old miser jewellers, and the stock-jobbing crew, to say nothing of play-actresses in high feather, on whom they very frequently live until their voices get cracked; and then they abandon them to be buried by subscription; though it now and then happens that one of these women has the spirit to abandon them, and leave them to the enjoyment of their titles and their empty pockets.

The reformed Parliament having, at any rate, blasted the hopes of getting at new heaps of spoil from the public purse ; and the beggars finding that they have overdrawn with the poulterer and the retail butcher of their carcasses, look back again at the estates ; and we will suppose my Lord LUMPSKULL sitting down with his steward to see if nothing is to be got out of the estate, and finally coming to the necessity of a Poor-law Bill. There has been a *run* upon the shabby tawdry goods in town : my lady has almost been routed : down he comes to the village of STARVE GUT ; squats himself down in a rage in a broken-bottomed rush-chair, in a cobwebbed room where the servants used to be, and sends away for the steward, some skeleton that he finds chopping about among the weeds in that garden where his grandfather had one gentleman employed with a dozen men under him, and two or three boys apprenticed to him, all which the "*heddekated*" son has discovered to have been excessively extravagant and foolish. Comes the steward upon a horse worth a hundred pounds ; and his servant in gay and rich livery, having taken away his horse, in he walks.

LORD LUMPSKULL. Well, Mr. SCUT, I am come with a resolution to settle with you upon the means of my getting something out of this estate. Have you got the rent-roll ?

SCUT. Yes, my lord, here it is.

LUMPSKULL. Let us see ; here is one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve farms ; and here is a rental of four thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven pounds a year ; and yet I am living like a beggar ; and at this very moment the miserable furniture in my town-house is pawned.

SCUT. Very sorry for it, my lord ; but you see, if you look at this paper, that the rent is all taken up, and that I have your order for paying every farthing of it away. The account stands thus :

<i>Dr.</i>	£	<i>Cr.</i>	£
Interest of Mortgage to Christ-killer	2,500	Rents	4,728
Interest of Mortgage to Paper-kite and Co.	1,400	Balance to be carried to next account	6
Law expenses, Stamps, and opinion of Counsel	450		<hr/> 4,734
Own Salary and arrears, with interest on arrears	302		
Three journeys to London for self and clerk to take your instructions and consult Counsel	82		
	<hr/> 4,734		

LORD LUMPSKULL. But, Mr. SCUT, was it necessary to pay all this money in *law* ?

SCUT. Why, my lord, you know with what difficulty I got the money ; and if you knew what I have been obliged to resort to, to prevent that scoundrel CHRIST-KILLER from foreclosing and actually blotting your

lordship out of the county, I am sure you would think nothing of the trifle that I have been obliged to charge for myself.

LUMPSKULL. Well, I see, then, that we can do nothing if we cannot raise the rents.

SCUT. Raise the rents, my lord, with wheat at *four shillings* a bushel!

LUMPSKULL. Yes; and that is the very thing that I am come about. You know my lord CRACKSKULL, don't you?

SCUT. O, yes! most of us know enough about him!

LUMPSKULL. Yes, yes; but though addicted to laudanum and brandy, and though with features none of the most human, he is a very clever man, I can assure you; and he has told me how we ought to go to work, to "*prevent our estates from being swallowed up.*"

SCUT. So you told me in your letter, my lord; but I greatly doubt of it. I have got you, however, a paper, showing the outgoings of Farmer STYLES, which stand as follows:

	£
Rent to my lord	200
Tithes	40
Poor-rates.....	60
Blacksmith	10
Wheelwright.....	7
Wear and tear of horses, tackle, &c.	15
Labour of all sorts, except tradesmen	320
	£652

Lord LUMPSKULL. Ah! here you see the cause of my poverty. It is all nothing, you see, except what goes to the poor; the "*sturdy beggars*" called the poor; and then to them again, under the name of labourers. What a scandalous thing! Here you see these wretches are taking from this farmer three hundred and eighty pounds a year, while I get but two hundred out of the same estate, and the estate is my own.

SCUT. Yes, my lord; but you know that the working-people *must live!*

LUMPSKULL. (*Hastily.*) Why! what for?

SCUT. Why, my lord, to make your farm *worth something.*

LUMPSKULL. Worth something! why, d—n the vermin! how do they make it worth anything?

SCUT. Your lordship must know, that if STYLES had not people to cultivate the farm, he could not pay you any rent at all. Besides, my lord, do you not know that these labourers pay away half their earnings in taxes? Don't you know that the Government takes from them full half the amount of their earnings; makes them too poor ever to be able to lay by a farthing; and that, therefore, when old age, or sickness, or very numerous family come, they are compelled to come to the rates for relief.

LUMPSKULL. Very true, Mr. SCUT, there must be men to work upon the ground, to be sure.

SCUT. Yes; and you cannot have men to work upon the ground without having women and children to live near it, or on it; and they must eat and drink and have clothing, too; for there must be a succession of men, or else no successors to your estate.

LUMPSKULL. But, then, Mr. SCUT, though these labourers are necessary, is it necessary that they should eat and drink so much, and should have meat and bread like us? You see, if these fellows and their families lived upon a COARSER SORT OF FOOD, STYLES might pay them one hundred a year, instead of three hundred and twenty for their work; and then he would have two hundred a year more to give me; and that is the very thing that I am come about.

SCUT. But, my lord, in order to enable them to live upon the hundred a year, instead of the three hundred and twenty; in order to bring them to a *coarser sort of food*; in order to bring them down to gruel, and other kettle-rubbish, how would you go to work?

LUMPSKULL. Why, I should lop off the Poor-rates; give them no relief except in a big workhouse; strip their own clothes off, and put on an ugly workhouse dress; separate the husbands from the wives; separate the children from both; prohibit all intercourse with them from without, as much as if they were in a jail; take away the power of the magistrate and of the overseer; put all power into our hands in the vestry, and to enable us to vote by proxy; so that when I am in Switzerland you can vote for me; and this I can tell you is what is going to be done!

SCUT. I trust in God I shall never see that day!

LUMPSKULL. What, do you want me to continue in the beggarly state in which I now am?

SCUT. By no means, my lord. And if your lordship, and those in your state of life, have the spirit of your grandfather in you, you would not be in your present state, and you would not suffer anybody to mention to you a scheme like that which you have mentioned to me, the folly of which is equal to its wickedness.

LUMPSKULL. What, then, would you have us do? What would my grandfather, of whom you are always talking, have done to save himself from the state in which I now am?

SCUT. Why, my lord, your grandfather would have done this: he would have looked over the list of Farmer STYLES's outgoings, as you have had the goodness to do; he would have seen that, of those outgoings, more than one-half consists of the cost of labour and of Poor-rates. He would, perhaps, have thought that less might do for these purposes: he would have sent for a labouring man of about his own age, and who had worked on his estate from his infancy, and he would have inquired minutely into all his expenditure; he would have remembered the time when a man worked for a shilling a day, instead of the ten shillings a week which he now receives; and he would have found that he was a great deal better off then than he is now. He would have found that the malt, which formerly cost him three shillings a bushel, he has now eight-and-sixpence to pay for. He would have found that this had driven him to the tea-kettle, and that the tea, the sugar, and the time, were become the bane of his life; he would have found that, in the great article of shoes, a pair that used to cost six shillings now cost eleven, not because there is a tax on the leather itself, but because whoever has a pair of shoes must pay a portion of all the taxes which are paid by the shoemaker; he would have found, in short, that there is now a taxation of fifty millions a year; that there was a tax of sixteen millions a year when this man received six shillings a week; he would have found that a labouring man pays a greater portion of the taxes than any body else, and that the only possible

mode of enabling STYLES to pay him more rent was that of causing the taxes to be reduced.

LUMPSKULL. O! as to reducing the taxes that is impossible. ALTHORP could not spare the Malt-tax, and PEEL could not spare it; that COBBETT may talk as long as he likes, but we must keep "*national faith*."

SCUT. Keeping faith is a very good thing to be sure, my lord; but has "*national faith*" been kept with you, whose estate has to pay interest for three times the sum that was borrowed?

LUMPSKULL. That's very true, Mr. SCUT; as far as that goes you are right enough; but there are *other things*, besides the interest of the debt.

SCUT. To be sure there are other things, but that is nothing to you. Make this deduction from the interest of the debt, at any rate.

LUMPSKULL. Ah! Mr. SCUT; you do not seem to know what we may come to if we once begin. That amiable and excellent man, Sir JAMES GRAHAM; that great statesman, so beautifully described by HARRIET WILSON; he proposed to take thirty per cent. from the interest of the debt at once; and all of us landlords were delighted at the proposal; when, all at once, what does that d—m—d fellow COBBETT do! You *know* the fellow, I suppose?

SCUT. Oh yes, my lord! If we don't know him it is not the fault of his enemies, at any rate.

LUMPSKULL. Well; what does that rascal do, think you? He sees what relief the proposition would bring us; he pretends to be our friend: he is always bawling for the land, and against the funds; and what now do you think this wicked devil did?

SCUT. 'Pon my word I cannot guess.

LUMPSKULL. Why, he said that the proposition of GRAHAM *was just*, provided (now do mark this proviso) that all unmerited pensions, sinecures, grants, retired allowances, useless places, military and naval half-pay, were *clean lopped off at the same time*; and that unless that were done, to reduce the interest of the debt would be an act of enormous injustice.

SCUT. Well, really my lord, I

LUMPSKULL. Really! What, do you agree with him, then? And so then you want my brother TOM to lose his half-pay because he never saw a shot fired. You want my uncle NED to lose his pension, which PITT gave him for having lost his estate in a contested election. You want my uncle, the Rev. R. LUMPSKULL, to lose his place as chaplain and librarian; you want my sister SALLY's husband to lose his snug retired allowance, after a service of five years and the abolition of his office. You want my brother HENRY in short you want my whole family to be ruined.

SCUT. Indeed I do not, my Lord. I want you to have an estate which you have not now; and out of that estate to provide in a proper manner for all your younger brothers and your sisters; and to be what an English gentleman formerly was, the independent head of a family, living on his estate; respected and beloved by all around; and not the miserable dependant on whatever gabbling adventurer gets the handling of the public wealth into his power. By the present system of taxation you may be totally ruined and beggared, in spite of all your efforts to save yourself; but, without making such efforts, you will richly merit your ruin: in the one case, you will sink amidst the applause of all good men; in the other case you will sink covered with their contempt; and as to your pro-

ject for putting the wages of labour into your pocket, by compelling Englishmen to submit to Irish treatment and Irish fare, all the reward you will receive will be the execration of the millions whom you vainly imagine you can succeed in oppressing.

Now, stupid loggerheads of Saint GEORGE'S, Hanover-square, here are the true objects of the Bill. This is the light in which the people all over the kingdom view it; and everything that they see done towards the execution of the bill, convinces them that these reasons are here truly stated and described.

There is as much of folly as of savage baseness in the supporters of this bill; for, if they could bring the people to Irish fare by the means of stipendiary magistrates and police, which they have always had in contemplation, where would they then find a market for their wheat at all? And if this family of pensioned LUMPSKULLS could see the English labourers reduced from sixpence to two shillings a day, where would the taxes come from to pay their pensions? LUMPSKULLS never think of this; and they are carrying on a war (which is only just begun) from mere motives of greediness unparalleled, conjoined with ignorance unparalleled.

After another article or two in this *Register*, I shall insert divers extracts from country papers, and a letter or two relative to the progress of the Poor-law Commissioners. These latter seem to be brimful of spite lest the scheme should be defeated, and defeated it will be to a certainty. I will insert the Duke of RICHMOND'S bill of fare, and I will in all cases bring forward the actors with their names at full length. I look upon this contest as the greatest between the aristocracy and the people that has happened in my time. Everything that is base and infamous in the whole country is now rousing itself up to take part in this terrible contest. As I insert the documents of which I have been speaking, I shall here and there have to make an observation; but before I come to this part of my *Register*, I must make some remarks on the motion of Mr. CAYLEY.

MR. CAYLEY'S MOTION.

At one time I wondered what in all the world this motion could be about. The motion was made on Monday, the 1. of June; and appears to have been in the following words: "That a select committee, based on parliamentary declarations of agricultural distress, be appointed to inquire if there be not effective means within the reach of Parliament to afford substantial relief to the agriculture of the United Kingdom, and especially to recommend to the attention of such committee the subject of a silver, or of a conjoined standard of silver and gold." Mr. CAYLEY, I remember that, when a feeling of humanity prevailed in the House, at the idea of enacting impunity to profligate masters and sons, and tradesmen and their sons, and farmers and their sons, and lords and gentlemen's menial servants, including their blasted foreigners, and Bourbon-police men, and half-pay officers, and those great bastard-getters dressed in black; when a feeling of humanity in a great many Members of the House of Commons seemed to be likely to shake even hard and cunning ALTHORP, in his determination to let loose all these profligate wretches upon the poor servant-girls; then, I remember, Mr. CAYLEY, you rose up, and in a very solemn manner expressed your hope

that the noble lord would have the moral courage to persevere ; there being in your opinion, I suppose, great moral courage required in moving, with the support of nine-tenths of the House, against a class of the most helpless and most deserving of compassion of all human beings.

Mr. CAYLEY, you now called aloud for a merciful consideration of the *distresses of agriculture*. What, do not the labouring men belong to agriculture ? Did you call out for a merciful consideration of their case ? You have the word *agriculturists* eternally on your lips. You should leave off this word, which is, in fact, no word at all belonging to our language, or any other language. It was coined in the time of high prices and paper-money ; and the use of it only serves to remind us of the upstart impudence, the contemptible affectation of high manners, and of the base injustice towards the labourers which marked those days. Leave it off, Mr. CAYLEY ; and take the word *farmers* ; or, which is more proper, perhaps, *husbandmen*.

Mr. CAYLEY, who do you mean when you are talking of the distressed agriculturists ? Not the most numerous class, certainly ; for you have just most vehemently supported a law to cause them to live upon a coarser sort of food. Is it the renters that you mean ? That cannot be ; because to relieve their distress the landlords need not come to the Parliament. If they be distressed, it arises from their paying too much rent ; this cause of distress the landlords can remove immediately ; and I believe it will be found, upon an average of England and Wales, that the rents are twice as high as they were in 1792, though the wheat is cheaper now than it was then. Why, then, do you not tell us, that rents have been paid you for years out of what the farmer possesses exclusive of the revenue of his farm ? I know this to be the case, and you know it to be the case. I know also that a good tenant will almost as soon quit his life as quit his farm. However, there are numerous cases in which you can no longer get rents ; and it is totally useless to break up the farmers ; no others can come to supply their place : the farms must be kept up by the present tenants ; or they must actually be *given up to the labourers* ; because these have a clearer right to a living out of them than the landlord himself has.

Mr. CAYLEY, now did you really believe that your motion, if adopted, would do anything towards relieving your distress ? If you could believe this, then the Lord have mercy upon those who are to be relieved by you. You tell us that wheat has fallen to thirty-two shillings the quarter. It glads my eyes to see the statement. I calculated, when in Long-Island, that it might come down to twenty-eight shillings a quarter ; that is to say, three-and-sixpence the Winchester bushel. People thought me mad. Whether the landlords will stand it lower than that I do not know. This is glorious weather, at present : another ten days of it brings down the wheat to my standard. Let that come, or lower. I shall grow, perhaps, this year a hundred quarters of wheat : it will be prime white wheat ; and nothing would delight me so much as to have to sell it at the price of the mere tax upon the bushel of malt ; that is to say, two-and-sevenpence the WINCHESTER bushel ; I have nothing to do with the crack-skulled, whiskey-drenched, jobbing, conceited, itchy, pompous, stupid, vagabond bushel, the capacity of which is regulated by the beating of a pendulum, in sixty degrees of heat, by the thermometer of FAHRENHEIT. O, Lord ! let there come one more good panic (and it must come before it be long), and away goes old quaggy George the Fourth's *imperial bushel*, to follow himself to regions which here shall be nameless.

Mr. CAYLEY, you would not vote for my motion for the repeal of the Malt-tax : you said, that that was of *no use* : to vote for that, it was not worth walking out of BELLAMY's hospitable apartments. I should, however, have gone up to your motion ; and that, too, for the purpose of showing and proving the total inutility, which, however, was not object sufficient to take me from the work of preparing a field wherein to sow Lucerne ; having, besides, suffered so much in the case of the motion of the Marquis of CHANDOS, going home from which, at the end of a period of twenty-seven-hours, without one wink of sleep ; and then hastening back without sleep again, for about twenty hours more. Nevertheless, though I felt no obligation on me, as in the case of the motion of the Marquis of CHANDOS, I should have gone up for the purpose of showing the perfectly *raving* absurdity ; the monstrous dog-days' dream, that the evils produced by PERL's Bill were to be corrected, or in the smallest degree mitigated, by the adoption of a motion like yours. What ! correct the evils of that prodigious measure by a mere slight alteration in the value of money, to be effected by the adoption of a silver standard. There is something so distressingly ridiculous in this, that one can hardly believe one's senses when one reads about it. Just as if the silver would not still bear its proper value ; and just as if every soul who heard you did not know that you were moving for a depreciation of the money altogether ; and for which many persons might have been prepared ; but the astonishment must have been, that a hundred and twenty-six were found to vote for a nondescript motion like yours.

Mr. CAYLEY, there are two ways of correcting the evils of PERL's Bill as to its *future* effects. The first is to debase the standard ; depreciate the money ; Bank-restriction. That's bankruptcy ; open, avowed, complete bankruptcy ; and inflicts an unmitigated and everlasting pecuniary disgrace ; besides ultimate convulsion and a total breaking up of property. I say this, *not in order to prevent it* ; for, *since the passing of the Poor-law Bill*, I have no alarms for my part, at the approach of a state of things like this.

The other way is that of an **EQUITABLE ADJUSTMENT**, which I proposed at a county meeting in Kent in June 1822 ; and for which proposition I was most infamously abused in the House of Commons, by BROUGHAM, by RUSSELL, by Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL, by the late apple-headed CALCRAFT, and by JOHN SMITH. The same proposition I presented to the county of Norfolk, in the next January ; and there are both the propositions in the two county petitions, recorded in the proceedings of the House. At that time, particularly in the case of the Norfolk petition, the execrably villanous London newspapers poured out upon me, with voice unanimous, representing me as a person who ought to be shot from behind a hedge, or something of that sort. I laid it upon these villains pretty decently ; and told the public that it would be led by them till it would be too late for any human being to prevent a revolution in England. It is very curious that the *Morning Herald* newspaper, who then thought it its interest to be one of the most bitter against me, has now come slap round, and laments that my proposition for an *equitable adjustment* was not adopted at the time when the proposition was made ! They always end in this way : it might have been done then ; but cannot be done *now*. To be sure, you cannot bring men back from the grave ; you cannot restore estates that have been sold and the money spent ; but you can put a stop to future wrongs ; you can ~~lay~~ off half the taxes.

Mr. CAYLEY, there have been two or three calls upon me for my plan. Now I am resolved that I will have no goose-gabble about this matter. I will make my motion; and my motion shall be for leave to bring in a bill for the purpose of making an equitable adjustment, &c. If the House agree to my motion, then the Members may tear the bill to pieces, laugh at it, light their pipes with it. If the House do not agree to my motion, I get rid of all the taunts about not producing any plan. Any other mode of proceeding would expose me to the misrepresentations, or the ignorant interpretations of the *suck-mugs* and their villanous employers. Let the House order my bill to be printed; and if it be foolish, let me then pass for a fool. This shall be my way of going on; and if I do not succeed in the leave to bring in the bill, I shall deem it, and the people will deem it, a defeat of my opponents.

Mr. CAYLEY, you are a friend of the Poor-law Bill. That was to "*relieve agriculture*," was it not? What! do you now want something more? You have got a plurality of votes at vestries; you have got a voting by proxy; you have put a stop to that which you were afraid would "*swallow up the land*." Your friend, ALTHORP; your sly friend, ALTHORP, having got a bill passed to prevent the land from being swallowed up, you are safe, are you not? You support the Whigs, do you not? And you have got POULETT THOMSON to support; and POULETT THOMSON tells you that PEARL'S Bill has done you no injury! There was Mr. CLAY, too, who uttered some very moving things. Sir ROBERT PEARL appears not to have known very well what to say. He admitted that his bill had done harm; but that to do fresh harm was not the remedy; and he was perfectly right. I wonder that neither of the ATTWOODS spoke upon this occasion. If either of them had, we should have had sense at any rate; for though I do not agree with them as to the proper remedy, I agree with them as to all the causes of the evil, and as to the total inefficiency of everything proposed resembling the motion of Mr. CAYLEY.

POOR-LAW STRUGGLE.

I shall here insert the documents of which I have before spoken. I have no time to make any comments, and must leave the documents to speak for themselves.

SUFFOLK.

The people issued a handbill at LAXFIELD, for the hundred of HOXNE. The magistrates issued their counter-declaration, forbidding the meeting. The meeting, however, took place, in spite of the magistrates' notice, and certainly their notice contained a lie; for they said that the meeting would be *illegal*. They had their meeting, nevertheless. The magistrates had their *yeomanry cavalry ready in waiting*; but the meeting having reprobated the bill, and agreed to petition against the bill, quietly dispersed, unmolested by the jolterheads. Curious, that the moment the Whigs came back into power again, this sort of work recommenced.

NEW POOR ACT.

Notice is hereby given, that a general meeting of the hundred of Hoxne and parishes adjacent, will be held at Horham on Monday next, May 25, 1835, to take into consideration the various resolutions that will be proposed, and the most proper measures to be adopted, in regard to the Act called the "*Poor-law Amendment Bill*." Business will commence at three o'clock.

As the question is of the utmost importance to all classes, whether rate-payers, working-men of all trades, but more especially agricultural labourers, it is earnestly requested that no man will fail to be present who has one spark of feeling for his kindred, his liberty, and his home! Now or never. Remember, no time must be lost!

HOXNE HUNDRED.

A paper having been circulated, calling together the inhabitants of the hundred of Hoxne and parishes adjacent, at Horham, on Monday the 25. instant,

We, the acting magistrates for the said hundred, do hereby give

NOTICE,

That such meeting, if held, *will be illegal*, and that all persons attending the same will be *liable to fine and imprisonment*, and we do therefore hereby warn all persons to forbear attending such meeting. Dated the 23. day of May, 1835.

EDWARD BARLEE.

HENRY DIVEN.

AUGUSTUS COOPER.

SUSSEX.

The Duke of RICHMOND's relations have denied the truth of all that I have spoken, relative to the Duke of RICHMOND's conduct in the Poor-law affair in Sussex. In order to remove the effect of my statements, there was a "Meeting of the Board of Guardians of the WEST HAMPNETT UNION," on the 18. of May; and they put forth in the *Jew's paper of Brighton*, the following proclamation, which I insert, with all its signatures:

WEST HAMPNETT UNION.

At a meeting of the Board of Guardians, held at the Workhouse at West Hampnett, on Monday the 18th day of May, 1835, Charles Scrase Dickens, Esq., vice chairman, in the chair,

Mr. Ide proposed that the following resolutions be inserted in the minutes:—

"That this Board has read with feelings of disgust a speech reported in the newspapers to have been uttered by Mr. Cobbett, reflecting on the conduct of his Grace *the Duke of Richmond, the Chairman of this Board*, and charging him *with having induced a parish in Sussex to expend 2,000*l.* upon additions to the Poor-house.*

"That this Board feels it but an act of justice to the noble Duke publicly to deny the truth of Mr. Cobbett's statement, which this Board unanimously declares to have been made without the slightest foundation.

"That this Board feels that it is under the greatest obligation to the Duke of Richmond for the *liberal assistance* which his Grace has at all times afforded to the union, and for those *recommendations to economy* which it has been his Grace's *expressed wish should be adopted in enlarging and furnishing the workhouses* belonging to the union, and for the course he has recommended to be pursued, having for its objects *as well the comforts of the industrious poor as the proper and careful expenditure of the monies raised for their support.*"

This proposal was seconded by Mr. Stubbington, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Hack moved that these resolutions be inserted in the *Globe*, and *Times*, the *Hampshire Telegraph*, and *Brighton Guardian*, which was seconded by Mr. Stubbington and carried unanimously.

Mr. John Randall moved that these resolutions be signed by the guardians present, which was seconded by Mr. Chitty, and carried unanimously.

CHARLES SCRABE DICKINS,
Vice Chairman.

Names.	Guardian of	Names.	Guardian of
William C. Dewey,	Appledram,	William Gibbs,	West Itchenor,
James Wyatt,	Aldingbourne,	George Souter,	Boxgrove,
William Young,	West Stoke,	Henry Halsted,	Merston,
Richard B. Robins,	East Lavant,	John Randall,	Oving.
John Hobgen, jun.,	Sidlesham,	John Ide,	West Wittering,
John Rusbridger,	Boxgrove,	Thomas Halsted,	West Hampnett.
William Stubbington,	Selsey,	James Hack,	Pagham,
William Rusbridger, jun.,	Sidlesham,	James P. Hayllar,	New Fishbourne,
John Petar,	Graffham,	George Amore,	Felpham,
William Fogden,	Eastlean,	William Woodman,	Selsey,
John Hipkin,	Singleton,	Charles Chitty,	Northmundham,
T. Rudwick,	Donnington,	William Field,	Rumboldswyke
Charles Clayton,	East Wittering.	William Riley Field,	Eastergate.
Edward Woodland,	Birdham,	Edmund Collins,	Walberton,
Richard Cosens,	Barnham,	Edward Martin,	Upwaltham,
George Osborn,	Tangmerc,	William Laker,	Yapton,
William Collick,	Birdham,	Henry Sadler,	Midlavant,
George Drewitt,	Walberton,		

Now here, as far as it says anything, this proclamation confirms what I said. I said that the Duke of RICHMOND was the chairman of one of these gangs of Poor-law union fellows. I said, that he let a house to the union, and received the rent for it, which house was used as a work-house. These fellows tell a lie. I never said that he had *induced* a parish to expend two thousand pounds in additions to the poor-house, for there had been no such additions made; but I said, that it had been *proposed by some parties* to make additions to the poor-house to the amount of two thousand pounds expense; and this fact this gang of fellows do not pretend to deny. However, they, under their hands, declare the Duke to be the Chairman of this WEST HAMPNETT Union; and the great manager of the diet, and of everything else. And observe, there have been recommendations from the Duke *relative to enlarging and furnishing the workhouses!* O! There have, have there, been recommendations from him about enlarging the workhouse! Now, these insincere jolter-skulls; these great chubby-faced, sleepy-eyed, silly-looking fellows, ten-thousand times more cunning than any London pickpocket; these fellows might have told us, while they had the impudence to contradict me by a lie, what sort of enlarging the Duke had recommended, and whether it were or were not *his own house* that was to be enlarged. I have only to add, with regard to this proclamation, that I am informed and believe, that JOHN RUSBRIDGER is the Duke's steward; that almost all the rest are the tenants of the Duke and of Lord GEORGE LENNOX; except one or two, who are tenants of an old mother DORIEN, I think it is, who is a sort of relation of some kind to this family of LENNOX; this endless swarm of everlasting pensioners.

Now, then, the Duke being the chairman, and the great manager of this WEST HAMPNETT Union, let us take a little look at his proceedings; and, first of all, of what he calls his "DIETARY," which I take from a printed paper, emanating from MASON, printer, of CHICHESTER. The first table is for a man or woman in health; the second for the sick; the third for boys or girls, from three to ten years of age; the fourth for children between one and three years of age. Pray, reader, look well at

it; look well at the man's dinner on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday. Look well at his meat for the week. Look at the gruel, meaning oat-meal and water. Recollect that the meat is weighed before cooking, and the bone included. Recollect that this Duke, and his predecessor, and his predecessor for two hundred years, have been receiving out of the labour of the people of England, as much money annually as would maintain five thousand four hundred poor labourers, according to this table!

But, let us have the table first.

**WEST HAMPNETT UNION.
THE GENERAL DIETARY.**

DIETARY.	BREAKFAST		DINNER.				SUPPER.	
	BREAD.	GRUEL.	BEEF.	POTATOES.	SOUP.	SUET PUDDING.	CHEESE	BROTH.
	Ounces.	Pints.	Ounces.	Pounds.	Pints.	Ounces.	Ounces.	Pints.
Sunday	12	1½	..	..	1½	..	2	..
Monday	12	1½	..	..	1½	..	2	..
Tuesday	12	1½	5	half	..	..	..	1½
Wednesday....	12	1½	..	..	1½	..	2	..
Thursday	12	1½	5	half	..	..	..	1½
Friday	8	1½	..	..	..	14	2	..
Saturday	12	1½	5	half	..	..	..	1½

INFIRM DIETARY.

DIETARY.	BREAKFAST		DINNER.				SUPPER.	
	BREAD.	GRUEL.	MUTTON	POTATOES.	SOUP.	RICE PUDDING.	CHEESE	BROTH.
	Ounces.	Pints.	Ounces.	Pounds.	Pints.	Ounces.	Ounces.	Pints.
Sunday	10	1½	..	..	1½	..	2	..
Monday	10	1½	..	..	1½	..	2	..
Tuesday	10	1½	5	half	..	..	..	1½
Wednesday....	10	1½	..	..	1½	..	2	..
Thursday	10	1½	5	half	..	..	..	1½
Friday	10	1½	..	..	..	10	2	..
Saturday	10	1½	5	half	..	..	..	1½

DIETARY FOR CHILDREN

From 3 to 10 Years of Age.

DIETARY.	BREAKFAST.		DINNER.			SUPPER.
	BREAD.	MILK GRUEL.	MUTTON.	POTATOES.	PUDDING, RICE.	MILK GRUEL.
	Ounces.	Pints.	Ounces.	Pounds.	Ounces.	Pints.
Sunday	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	..	Rice 7	$\frac{1}{2}$
Monday	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	..	Suet 7	$\frac{1}{2}$
Tuesday	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	$\frac{1}{2}$
Wednesday	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	..	Rice 7	$\frac{1}{2}$
Thursday.....	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	$\frac{1}{2}$
Friday.....	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	..	Suet 7	$\frac{1}{2}$
Saturday.....	12	$\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	$\frac{1}{2}$

DIETARY FOR CHILDREN

Between 1 and 3 Years of Age.

DIETARY.	BREAKFAST.		DINNER.		SUPPER.
	BREAD.	MILK GRUEL.	PUDDING.	MUTTON BROTH WITH RICE.	MILK GRUEL.
	Ounces.	Pints.	Ounces.	Ounces.	Pints.
Sunday	10	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	12	$\frac{1}{2}$
Monday	10	$\frac{1}{2}$	Suet 5	..	$\frac{1}{2}$
Tuesday	10	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	12	$\frac{1}{2}$
Wednesday....	10	$\frac{1}{2}$	Rice 7	..	$\frac{1}{2}$
Thursday.....	10	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	12	$\frac{1}{2}$
Friday.....	10	$\frac{1}{2}$	Suet 5	..	$\frac{1}{2}$
Saturday.....	10	$\frac{1}{2}$	..	12	$\frac{1}{2}$

The weather is hot, and my blood boils too much to suffer me to proceed with anything like calmness. Men of Sussex: hear this! understand it; and tell it to your children. The poor-rates of your whole county, including the county-rates, payments to hired overseers, law expenses, and all sorts of things, amount to 281,000*l.* a year. That which is actually given to the poor may amount to two hundred thousand pounds a-year. Now, mark, less than one-half of the interest of the money which this family of LENNOX have drawn out of the industry and sweat of the people of England, by the means of one pension, would *pay the whole of the Poor-rates of the county of Sussex for ever!* I repeat, that this family of LENNOX, by the means of one pension, have sucked more out of the labour of the people of England; have sucked a sum, *one-half of the interest only* of which sum would pay all the poor-rates of the county of Sussex for ever! Read that, and then hear these beggars of jolterheads, cunning as pigs looking for the wind, praise "*his Grace*": *his Grace*, for the "liberal assistance which he has given to the union."

You should know the true history of these LENNOXES. In a book called the Peerage, they brag that they are descended from a bastard of King CHARLES the Second, begotten upon the body of a French woman, while this profligate king had a wife at the same time. The bastard was his, or he believed so; and he made him a duke, and settled upon him and his descendants the *amount of the duty on coals imported into London*. And I can remember these duties being paid to the old duke, who died about thirty years ago. The cunning race began to perceive that it might be safer to have a pension fixed by Act of Parliament in preference to these duties. The amount of the duties became enormous; the reformers fixed their eye upon them; they began to talk about them; and to inquire how the devil they came to be due to these LENNOXES. The LENNOXES, if it were all the same to us, would as lieve that we did not inquire much whence they sprang, and how they came to have the coal-duties. Therefore, instead of thirty or forty thousand a-year (perhaps it was) that they had been receiving in virtue of a mere grant from the profligate CHARLES the Second, they got the base Minister and the borough-monger Parliament to pass an Act of Parliament to settle upon them 12,660*l.* a-year for ever!

Now I have known them have this sum every year, for more than thirty years. Here, then, principal and interest make up a sum, which I have helped to pay out of my earnings, of more than half a million of money; and this is the fellow that sets out the above bill of fare for the people of Sussex. The sum of money which this family have received in this *one grant and pension*, exceeds the sum which would be required to keep the whole of the people of Sussex, man, woman, and child: mind, you jolter-headed beasts of WEST HAMNETT Union, I say, that this family has received from the fruit of the labour of the people of England, a sum of money, the bare interest of which would maintain the whole of the people of Sussex, man, woman, and child, for ever, with triple the allowance that this very duke gives to a Sussex poor man! And, are we such base slaves become! Am I destined to behold in my countrymen a race of wretches so degenerate, cowardly and base, as not to pay due attention to facts like these!

I will visit and revisit this duke. One of the LENNOXES told me, or rather told the House, that he supposed I was actuated by feelings of dis-

appointment at my son JOHN not having been elected for CHICHESTER; and he complimented the son as being so different in point of manners from the father. So help me God, a remembrance of the affair of the election had never come into my mind; and as to the better manners of the son, that son had better not let me know it, if he should ever take it into his head to flatter or speak well of a LENNOX after this affair of the WEST HAMPNETT Union, and after the above bill of fare. On the contrary, I do not believe that it is in the nature of that son, or of any one proceeding from me, not to hold the advocates of this Poor-law in abhorrence greater than they ever held snakes and toads; and I have seen, with not a little pleasure, that this same son, in the discharge of his professional duties, has been engaged in defending some of those men who have been tried at LEWES for opposition to the Poor-law Bill.

Now comes another paper, illustrative of the character of these poor-law-workhouse proceedings. It is a posting-bill, for the sale of *brewing* utensils, and *meat*-killing and meat-keeping utensils, belonging to parishes in the Duke of RICHMOND'S WEST HAMPNETT UNION! Here is sentence of *eternal water* upon the unfortunate poor. Reader, your blood will boil as you proceed. Here you see everything to make provision of beer and meat is to be sold away. I insert the bill just as it stands, and as I have received it from CHICHESTER. Thus it goes all over the world, let the LENNOXES recollect. Let the readers every where remember, that it is the pensioner-Duke of RICHMOND that orders this to be done; for he is the *chairman* of this band who call themselves the Guardians of the Union: let the Americans read this, and let them not believe that I am the only man in England that has any feeling upon the subject.

CHICHESTER.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

BY MESSRS. WHITE AND SON,

Opposite the Council Chamber, North-street,

On WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10th, 1835, at Eleven o'clock,

A GENERAL ASSORTMENT OF

BREWING UTENSILS,

In Vats, Coolers, Tun Tubs, and excellent seasoned Casks of various sizes, among which are some capital Hogsheads, Beer Stands, Pickling Tubs, and excellent Steel Malt Mill.

ALSO,

Five Loads of New Sacks, new Sacking, Thread for Sack-making, 3 cwt. of Riga Hemp, quantity of Tools, half Bag of prime Hops of 1834, and Miscellaneous Effects,

BELONGING to the WORKHOUSE at HAMPNETT.

YAPTON, SUSSEX.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
 BY MESSRS. WHITE AND SON,
 At the Workhouse, Yapton, on Thursday, June 11th, 1835,

A GENERAL ASSORTMENT OF BREWING UTENSILS,

In Vats, Coolers, Tun Tubs, capital seasoned Casks of various sizes,
 Beer Stands, Pickling Tubs, excellent Steel Malt Mill, and Miscella-
 neous Effects,

Belonging to Yapton and Aldingbourne Workhouse.

SALE TO COMMENCE AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

SIDLESHAM, SUSSEX.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
 BY MESSRS. WHITE AND SON,
 At the Workhouse, Sidlesham, on Friday, June 12th, 1835,

A GENERAL ASSORTMENT OF BREWING UTENSILS,

In Vats, Coolers, Tun Tubs, excellent seasoned Casks of various sizes,
 Beer Stands, Pickling Tubs, Machine for Dressing Flour, Steel Malt
 Mill, Hog Pullies and Ropes, and various other effects,

Of Pagham and Sidlesham Workhouse.

THE SALE TO COMMENCE PRECISELY AT ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

Williams and Pullinger, Printers, North-street, Chichester.

Now, reader, I pray you look at this. Here were three parish poor-houses, each of them set up and long established, with the means of providing the destitute poor with beer and meat; with the means of making these wholesome; of preserving them in a good state; and of rendering the poor people tolerably comfortable. And here comes the pensioned LENNOX; here comes this great whale-like swallower of taxes, flings out all the means of providing wholesome drink, and wholesome meat, and well-dressed flour. He is the *chairman*, observe, of the whole of the union; and he thus passes sentence of water and oatmeal and potatoes, upon all that shall become destitute within the precinct of his command, though they have as clear a right to a maintenance out of the land, as he has to the rents of his land. This pensioned LENNOX proclaims *no more beer*: *no more hogs to be killed* for the poor. This LENNOX; this pensioned LENNOX; this tax-eating LENNOX, thus condemns the unfortunate people of Sussex that come within his reach.

Here, in this horrible bill of sale by auction, here we have a specimen of the intentions of sly ALTHORP and his band. Sly ALTHORP said, that the labourers were well off in the north; and that he wished to make those in the south equally well off; and here is his worthy colleague at work, to take beer and bacon from the labourers in the south, in order to make them *equally well off* with those in the north! Well said, old sly ALTHORP; but you have not *done* the thing yet; you have only begun to attempt the thing.

We are to look at the diet-table of this LENNOX as the standard, which the Poor-law Bill is to cause to be adopted, for the purpose of "*preventing the estates from being swallowed up by the poor*"; while this LENNOX himself swallows annually as great a sum as he allows for the maintenance of upwards of six thousand of these poor working-people. The county of Sussex, at the making of the last return on the subject, contained altogether, old and young, 26,328 poor persons, whom the agents of the Parliament had the insolence to call paupers, but who never were so called, until after the present family came to the throne. Now mark this LENNOX: this pensioned LENNOX himself swallows up, out of the taxes, one-fifth part as much money as would maintain the whole of these Sussex "paupers," at the rate at which this LENNOX feeds them! Need anything further be said, even to logs of wood? I ask whether anything equal to this was ever before heard of in the world? And I should like to know what the venerable old gentleman* at PETWORTH is about! I know something about the *havings* of these EGREMONT WYNDHAMS. I know that they can do a little, too, in the way of *swallowing up taxes*. I know something about their legitimacy and illegitimacy; and, if I be not basely abandoned by the country, out it all comes now. They tell us that we are idle; that we are lazy; that we have no right to the means of eating and drinking: we will inquire into *their* rights; and by NAME, too; we will inquire how they came by those things which they call their estates, since they have chosen to abrogate the fundamental law, upon which our most valuable right rested. I have not forgotten the "*RECKONING COMMISSION*"; I have many able hands to assist me. I remember

* To this allusion to the late Earl of EGREMONT, we must add the remark, that, if that nobleman was in *theory* an advocate of the New Poor-law (and we believe he was *not*), he was practically a most beneficent employer. Mr. COBBETT was imposed on, if he was made to believe the contrary.—ED.

Sir ROBERT PEEL's "eleventh plague," and the bellowing he called forth against me: I remember the motion without notice of cunning ALTHORP, which motion, being too foolish, was (oh God!) amended by the Speaker, by a volunteer motion of his own from the chair. O! I remember all this well; I remember the hideous bellowings at the back of sly ALTHORP; and the half female Ya, ya, ya, ya, ya, of the sucking cubs at the back of PEEL! "Come the eleventh plague," said he; "Come Dane, Norman, Roman; come anything but this! We have wept; we have mourned; we never blushed before."

By heavens, I will make you blush now, before I have done with you! But, why all this outcry, in consequence of a proposition made by me to ascertain the real pedigree of the several landholders in the several counties; and to ascertain HOW THEY CAME BY THEIR ESTATES. And, what harm was there in this? What wrong was there in it? There was no proposition to do anything either to them, or their estates; and yet the proposition to come at this fact called forth, "Come the *eleventh plague*," and all the rest of it.

If, however, this be so terrific a proposition, Sir ROBERT PEEL shall have it made before him, in the House, at the risk of the second chapter of the "Ya, ya, ya, ya, ya." The truth is, I have a *great deal of information already*, as the grounds of my proposition for a Parliamentary "RECKONING COMMISSION"; and, upon the grounds of this information, I assert my belief, that those who are called the "noble families," and who are resident in the county of Sussex, actually receive more every year out of the taxes, raised on the people, than THE POOR PEOPLE OF THE WHOLE COUNTY ANNUALLY RECEIVE IN RELIEF! And, are we going to submit to this in silence, while LENNOX is selling the brewing and hog-killing materials, and proclaiming "*water, potatoes, and oatmeal*," in Sussex! I must quit Sussex for the present, and go to other counties; first, however, taking a look at the proceedings at the quarter sessions at LEWES, in the same county; which proceedings, charge of the chairman and all, I shall insert as I find them reported in the *BRIGHTON Patriot*, a paper which I strongly recommend to all my readers.

NOTE BY THE EDITORS.—The paper which we have here given at full length, we give, rather because it was the last effort of Mr. COBBETT's pen, than because of any argument contained in it; for, in fact, it contains but little argument. It was written, as is evident from the strong invective which marks it, under the strongest feelings of excitement, at seeing that the then just-passed Poor-law was being put into effect in the harsh manner that all England is now familiar with; and, as he had taken very great concern in the welfare of the labouring people; as, in all his writings, he had their good principally at heart, the new law (which he had opposed with all his strength while it was passing the House of Commons) and all who acted under it, were the special objects of his resentment. He did not live, however, to carry into execution the warfare, to which, in this *Register*, he pledged himself. Indeed, he was writing from his death-bed; for, having been some time enfeebled by attendance in the House of Commons while suffering from a cough, he had but just gone to his farm near Farnham, in Surrey, when he was laid up. On the 10th and 11th of June, he dictated this *Register* to an amanuensis, sitting up in his bed, and it had scarcely issued from the press before his life was considered in danger. He was once afterwards carried into the open air, and round one of his fields; but he gradually sank, and, on Thursday the 18th June, he died, possessing his faculties to the last moment.

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