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A
R E P L Y
TO A PAMPHLET
ON
"THE STATE OF THE NATION."

**CHARLES WOOD, Printer,
Poppin's Court, Fleet Street, London.**

A
R E P L Y

TO THE

SIXTH EDITION OF A PAMPHLET (*SUPPOSED OFFICIAL*)

ON THE

STATE OF THE NATION

AT

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR 1822;

CONSIDERED UNDER

THE FOUR DEPARTMENTS

OF

FINANCE, FOREIGN RELATIONS, HOME DEPARTMENT,
COLONIES, AND BOARD OF TRADE, &c. &c.

BY JOSHUA COLLIER.

WITH A THIRD CHAPTER

on the subject of

AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS.

“ Quis furor iste novus? quò nunc, quò tenditis——
Heu miseræ cives! non hostem inimicæque; castra
Argivum; vestras spes uritis.” VIRG. Æb. v, 670.

What madness moves *mere women* to destroy
The fond remainders of unhappy Troy?
Not hostile fleets, but your own hopes you burn,
And on your friends your fatal fury turn.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. HUNTER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND

J. RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY.

1822.



P R E F A C E.

THE pamphlet to which the present is a reply, was generally understood to be published *under the immediate auspices of government*; and the number of editions it passed through, to satisfy public curiosity, on this very ground, authorized this belief, which was further confirmed by its *never having been contradicted by the ministerial press*.

Its preface being a technical explanation of its contents, the writer of the present remarks upon it, which must relate precisely to the same objects, sees reason to adopt for the most part as his own, putting the extracts between *inverted commas*, with certain alterations and additions, which will of course vary the sense occasionally. The liberty we have taken in this respect will enable the reader to understand the

substance and connection of the following pages, though he may not have the original work before him.

These are therefore observations on what has been exhibited as a general view “ of the state of public affairs, from the period of the late treaties to the commencement of the year 1822.

“ The circumstances which compose this review had not before been produced to the public with sufficient fulness and distinctness. If some of the matters have been touched upon, and even discussed in parliament, in answer to the observations of the opponents of his majesty’s ministers, or otherwise, they have been discussed only as single measures, and without any reference to their coherence with the system of administration of which they form a part.”

“ The ministers of a free and high-minded country cannot be without a due feeling of the value of public character. They know that in public station, still more than in private life, a good name is connected with the due and effective performance of duties; that character is in-

fluence, and that influence is power ; and that power from influence will extend its operation, where power from law and authority cannot reach ; and that the goodwill of the people towards government has in all ages proved the readiest means of an effective administration. Under these considerations, his majesty's ministers for themselves, and their friends for them, must naturally desire to stand well in public opinion. They desire it for themselves, and they ought to desire it for the country."

" For themselves, they seek public confidence by" studiously, though vainly, endeavouring to make it appear, that they have exercised " a conscientious and effective discharge of their duties ;" and if they had not failed altogether in their proofs, they must have desired, and " desired most anxiously, that a general feeling of the public good, and a general persuasion that the government is industriously occupied in pursuing it, might excite such a spirit of concurrent effort between the people and their governors, as to give manners the effect and authority of laws ; and might bring into disuse any statutes, if such there

be, required, in more turbulent times, to repress public disorders.”

Our business is to achieve a very temperate examination of the variety of facts and falsities, which enter into what they call this “statement and review.”

“According to the form which the administration of the British empire has long assumed, the public business has for a considerable period of years distributed itself into the four main departments of finance, the foreign affairs, home department, and the colonies. Under the first of these departments, that of finance, the first lord of the treasury and the chancellor of the exchequer have it in charge to provide for the maintenance and due distribution of the public revenue, and for the integrity of all those sources of navigation, commerce, manufactures, internal trade and industry, from which such revenue must be derived ; and finally, in co-operation with the other boards appointed for this special purpose, they have to provide for the naval and military defence of the empire, and the maintenance of the docks,

arsenals, ordnance, &c. in all the means and materials of future operation.”

“To the home department belong the maintenance and supervision of the public peace, and the due execution of the laws for the support of external order and tranquillity; whilst the departments of foreign affairs and the colonies embrace, according to their denominations, our relations with foreign states and our own colonies. Following the order of these departments,” they proposed to themselves “to produce and explain to the public, in a general and succinct view, the former and actual condition of each.”

And our examination into this their work will probably show the few difficulties his majesty's ministers had to encounter, aided by the general spirit of the country; and how much less, even according to their own account, they have accomplished than they desire to make the unwary believe. Hence, they have shamefully neglected to conciliate “the due maintenance of the revenue in all its sources, with the due alleviation of the public burdens. How they have maintained the public peace,”

with *too much* cost to public liberty, and under what system they have administered the foreign relations of the empire."

Our remarks on "this review, under the four departments, will necessarily comprehend a general survey of the proceedings of administration, within the whole compass of public business. It will" attempt to "explain" many most important errors, of which they have been guilty (as to millions) as far as they have attempted to enlighten us on the subject, respecting "the state of our finances," compared with "our national resources." We shall examine into their reflections as to "our existing relation with foreign states;" and, "as a part of our domestic policy, the general system under which his majesty's ministers have endeavoured," much less "by discipline than by measures of terror and menace, to restore Ireland to the ordinary administration of law." We shall "show" abundant errors in "what has been done for our colonies, and for the commercial interests of the empire;" and subjoin a few observations relating to "what is now in discussion for the extension of our trade

and manufactures, and for simplifying and facilitating mercantile business," or rather for continuing to throw every obstacle in its way.

In the order pursued, a distribution is made of the subject matter, corresponding with that of the author on the state of the nation, treating the several departments separately; and such few observations as we have thought it necessary to make on the appendix, to render the whole more compact, are embodied in the work.

Under the first head, that of finance, though respect is paid to the important article of dates, all that relates to mere figures is comprised in a second chapter; therefore the one embraces chiefly matters of opinion, the other only matters of fact.

On the whole, if there has been presented to the curiosity of the public, by dabbling in shallow waters, a collection forming a corrupt mass, we pretend only to have employed the arithmetician's art, to reduce it to sterling. Were we tempted to indulge in the liberty of saying another word for ourselves, it would be candidly

to avow the feelings of a true JOHN BULL, which will be found to animate us through the piece, that of respect for the laws, but indifference to his majesty's servants, appointed by a chief set over them, the best paid of any in Europe; and, presuming on the respect we owe to his exalted station, they will continue (since they take his responsibility upon themselves) no longer to enjoy his confidence than while the people go along with them, unless they become masters. It is well known how much the exercise of such undue authority would be inconvenient in domestic concerns—the thing is, to the full, as simple in the government of states.

AN
ANSWER,
&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

FINANCE.

THE Public will hardly require, that this important division of the subject should be treated in detail, relating chiefly to accounts already laid before parliament, where they have undergone a full discussion in their several parts. It is however necessary to take certain general views, which we shall attempt to bring under consideration.

At the conclusion of the war, his majesty's ministers seem very naturally to have considered, that "the amount of the national debt and the pressure of the annual taxation were among the first objects which presented themselves to their notice." But as an apology for not precipitating relief too suddenly a most unaccountable plea is

set up, and an interest pretended to be shown for the condition of the trading part of the community. How this class of his majesty's subjects, either in whole or in part, could sustain any possible injury by so wholesome a change in the affairs of the nation at large, the author has not attempted to explain; and it is equally difficult to excuse, or to pardon, such mistaken delicacy precluding the exercise of an imperious duty, unless it shall be satisfactorily proved, that a reduction of annual burdens contracts the circulating capital, or bears some analogy to it.

We are to understand, that the peace of 1792 naturally suggested itself to their consideration as an example to follow; as they say, that "in all political questions it is not only matter of prudence and policy, but contributes much to the facility of business, to proceed according to some acknowledged rule." Far from denying, indeed, the truth of this observation, we are at liberty to consider whether they made a prudent choice in this precedent as a rule, and whether they have followed it.

As to loading the country with debt and taxation, can it be denied, that Mr. Pitt surpassed all his predecessors in office, and that he has only been exceeded in these high qualities by the present ministers themselves? So little moderation has, therefore, been exercised in these latter

times, that it required to look far back for an estimate, on which the present peace establishment was to be framed; and, forgetting how loudly economy had been insisted upon by the prayer of the public, while the principle had been admitted even by themselves under an enormous augmentation of debt, a diminution of which was rendered so necessary, they consented to adopt a precedent even within their own memories. So much for the prudence of their choice. Whether they have acted up to the spirit of the laws and regulations they had laid down for themselves let us further examine.

As to what particularly relates to the service of the army, notwithstanding this precedent of 1792 was taken for a basis, certain pretences were found, with how much reason we leave the public to consider, to raise it from 47,000 to 99,000. One exception we readily admit must have increased it some thousands, the provision to be made for new colonies, though this was required to have been done with a very sparing hand. And it is evident, that, under an enlightened government, colonies require generally less and less force for their defence. This the author himself also acknowledges by saying, that "the same amount of force would not always be necessary for this service, but that portions might be withdrawn gradually as the

colonies became accustomed to the superior administration of British laws.”

The increase of population affords a miserable argument for keeping up an establishment; this increase so unfortunately appearing only in examining the registers of the poor; and should strengthen our efforts towards reduction in every form and kind, since this charge alone bears so heavy on the farming interest, as well as the public.

If, as an excuse for heaping upon us burdens, the loyalty and patriotism of the great body can be called in question, God is a witness that no reflection can be less merited. “In the peculiar form, which the press of this day has already assumed,” they say, “a new force is given to public passions;” but had the author seen the subject in an indulgent light, he would have expressed himself more justly, that a new force is given to the powers of reason, among even the lowest orders, which places them under better control than an army, or even the laws. None of these several arguments, therefore, offer the slightest pretence for upholding an extraordinary establishment in time of peace.

But we have the highest authorities in aid of our argument upon this latter ground. How did the learned Lowth condemn restraints upon the press when, in a sermon half a century ago, and

in good times, he says, "let no man be alarmed at the attempts of atheists and infidels: let them produce their cause and bring forth their arguments to their own confusion." And Wharton, in addressing the freethinkers, admits, "that whatever be the cause of this folly, it would be unjust to ascribe it to the freedom of the press, which wise men will ever hold to be one of the most precious advantages of civil liberty." He says of himself, "that one of the meanest in this controversy, I should have been ashamed of projecting the defence of the great Jewish legislator did not I know, that assailants and defenders skirmished all under one equal law of liberty."

Now, armed with these enlightened principles, so long established and confirmed by experience, let us compare the conduct of government, at a period when even watchfulness was in repose, and opposition enfeebled by the generous spirit of loyalty by which parliament was animated, when called upon to settle the civil list upon the accession of his present majesty. It will hardly be credited, that the original proposal on the part of the minister was assented to and approved, all parties silently and tamely submitting to the will of the sovereign, whom we most ardently pray, feeling as we do for the pros-

perity of Great Britain, may be looked up to by a grateful people, as the only fountain of honour and emolument in our day.

Richly provided by the vote of parliament, and the calm which subsisted within-doors, ministers turned their attention to the crowd, and dared to proscribe, with the assistance of their usual dupes, their country friends, all the intellectual enjoyment and improvement it was in the habit of receiving, at what they were pleased to deem too easy an expense—the only means in the power of the people of judging of the lives and characters of their superiors, and ameliorating their own condition by the force of such examples. There is food, it must be granted, essential both to the body and the mind: is it possible to conceive, that even under the present ridiculous thirst for high prices, whatever is palatable, or such as can be relished by the species, can possibly come too cheap to the consumer? Do we boast of freedom, and see dust thrown in the eyes of his majesty's subjects to disqualify them to judge in the humblest way, of the learning and opinions of others? Whatever, under the protection of law, is permitted to be written, might even be encouraged to be read.

But let us now return to the subject more immediately under consideration. His majesty's

ministers very properly introduced into the king's speech on the opening of the parliament, in 1816, "that they might rely on every disposition on his part to concur in such measures of economy as might be thought consistent with the security of the country, and with the station which we occupy in Europe." In investigating the several bearings of this proposal, the writer of these remarks sees reason to beseech his majesty to reflect, that the current expenses, of the preceding years, bore no proportion to instances occurring in any former reign, not excepting that of the glorious memory of his father's: that the termination of the war, the time to which we are alluding, had incurred an annual expenditure capable of reductions, which could not be contemplated at any former period of our history, unless it were possible to subtract tens from units.

The whole is stated up to the close of the first year after the peace as a saving of seventy millions. Is it fair to boast, that such reductions were never dreamed of, under any former administration? In the reign of George the Second, the average of the whole revenue did not exceed nine millions; in that of George the First, six millions and a half. Do ministers forget, that in the year 1814 the demands of government, exclusive of poor's rates, exceeded one hundred

and thirty-seven millions, after Mr. Pitt had taken the whole income of Great Britain at less by thirty millions?

But exclusive of the interest of debt, to confine ourselves to the annual supply for ordinaries and extraordinaries, the estimate before the war was taken at twenty millions; can much be attributed to the provident hand of ministers in requiring, the second year, seven millions more, or twenty-seven millions, under a double pressure on the part of the public creditor?

So that, faithless to a treaty, after a war decidedly engaged in against the sense of the enlightened part of the country, too high spirited in herself to countenance arming a phalanx against the power of one soldier, raised from the ranks by his merit, a point of view in which it is but fair to consider it, and certainly enough to silence all claims to the glory of victory; can we sit quietly down under the weight of burdens in the proportion of near three to one?

I will not however withhold from ministers, on the face of these their own representations, which I have only faithfully transcribed, a just tribute to the manliness they have shown, so superior to themselves on most occasions, in having thrown down the gauntlet, and fairly invited these reflections on their own work.

It is true they have exhibited an elaborate

picture; but, through the light thrown upon it in these pages, it will afford at least at first glance great dissatisfaction in the public mind; and viewed more carefully, as we proceed to examine the back ground, it leaves few, and very faint traces of the fostering hand of government, while a glowing horizon still happily but too distantly presents itself, capable of answering to our most sanguine hopes.

During the year 1816, great praise is given to the chancellor of the exchequer for reducing the amount of the floating unfunded debt, and relieving the money market; but by proceeding you will clearly see it was only to make room for a renewed application to the very same fund the ensuing year; which year opened, as it seems, "by a considerable deficiency, not less than ten per cent. of the whole amount of the public revenue:" and to show the unnatural state into which these transactions reduce the country, while the funds were experiencing an almost unprecedented rise, the poor's rates at least kept pace with them; and, compared with the year when Mr. Pitt first came into power, had risen so as to be nearly in the proportion of ten to one. This has no other than a tendency to show, how a gain to the few is a loss to the many, and that the effects of such a fluctuating state of things ought religiously to be avoided.

But, of all the pretences, that of commencing these boasted reductions at the first possible period is the most extraordinary. Was it before remonstrances were reiterated from the opposition side? Were not those, which have been at length acceded to, such as had been for the most part repeatedly refused?

Parliament, compelled by the general distress, which bore so hard upon the parishes, granted a power to relieve the labouring classes, by the application of a million and a half to the employment of the poor. Nothing is said of the application of this fund, therefore I pass it over in silence.

In enumerating the transactions of this year, the abolition of sinecures is among those, which ministers are pleased to throw in the teeth of opposition, as originating with them, and too insignificant in itself to merit their own particular attention. They compute the amount in round figures at a simple £.100,000; and have the effrontery to add, that "its value is nothing, and upon this score to nothing do they lay their claim." Can such language be tolerated, under their determination to pursue an economical regime?

We are told, "that the year 1818 opened under a more favourable aspect than the preceding;" and, goaded we may suppose under

the lash of their political adversaries, " ministers found themselves in a condition of prosecuting their '*resolute purpose*' of reducing the national expenditure." So far from this being acted upon, on the faith of their own statements, they could not so much as return on their steps, for an increase will appear, on referring to the second chapter of this work.

But supposing the contrary, what were the consequences of this improved condition of the country? Did it strengthen the argument with the chancellor of the exchequer, to throw additional weight on posterity by exchanging three and a half for three per cents. ; in fact, no other than borrowing on a half per cent. stock, and still further increasing the interest of the public debt?—the effects of which were evidently more serious than paying a little more or less interest for a limited time upon the issue of exchequer bills. To say the least of it, how contemptible was such a proceeding under the delusive pretence of not adding to the nominal amount of the public debt.

Bystanders see through this quibbling and time-serving, which suit the Jews, the Stock Exchange, and the Bank, while the public are gulled. And it is unfortunately too true (I say it with proper feelings towards men blinded by their interests), that ministers and the monied

men play with odds in their favour while the nation loses. The landed proprietors will soon awake from their slumbers, and find the king with barely a name, amusing himself with the mere orders, gewgaws, and insignia of royalty.

Were the public securities left quietly to themselves, to vibrate by natural causes, there would be fair dealing, and a just criterion formed of their real value, by the true test of public prosperity; while nostrums and quacks put nature out of her regular course. If men born and bred in the vortex of corruption looked beyond the moment, they would discover how this undue influence is calculated to deceive even themselves. The misfortune lies perhaps in the debt itself, and is therefore too deep for an immediate remedy. We have few proprietors of land not also largely concerned in the public funds, which neutralizes their powers and claims a divided interest.

It is necessary we should now proceed to the year 1819, when his majesty, then regent, was advised to "congratulate the country upon three new circumstances in the public condition, the withdrawing the army from France, the great reduction of the naval and military establishments, and the progressive improvement of the revenue in all its sources."

The first of these is represented to be a ground

of exultation, chiefly arising from the circumstance, that "the British government was, by the evacuation of France, necessarily relieved from much extraordinary expenditure, which could not be carried to the account of the payment and sustenance of the troops;" a declaration of so broad a nature, without condescending to enter the least into detail, has naturally excited so much curiosity and suspicion, that it becomes an imperious duty in ministers to furnish their advocate, the author of the work before us, for the satisfaction of the public, with the fullest explanation on this head.

We shall merely refer to the second article, by questioning the disposition of those, to place things in a right light, who vaunt an excess of three millions and a half, in anticipation of a demand, which comes immediately upon them, of ten millions on the part of the Bank, the half of which was to be provided for this very year.

But so far from "a progressive improvement of the revenue in all its sources," let us compare it with the demands upon it. "The ordinary and extraordinary service of the year was a small excess above thirty millions."

So far from a principle of reduction having effected, as they say, an "aggregate saving on the whole of the estimates, on the account for the year, of above half a million," whoever will

take the pains to refer to their own statement on the preceding page, will be surprised to find, that in the department of miscellanies there is an evident increase of at least £.280,000, and that, adding the several items together, the augmentation amounts at least to £.146,000 (but this will appear better hereafter), besides the interest of exchequer bills for the service of the year.

Whose influence was it in the finance committee, which led to the advice of imposing, after years of peace, new taxes to the amount of £.3,000,000, added to the boasted surplus in the consolidated fund? Secondly, the application of twelve millions of a sacred deposit, more than six-sevenths of its acknowledged amount, and the only honest pledge given of a design to relieve posterity from a burden, which, they pretend at least, they will consider as much their duty to bear, as if it had been contracted by themselves; whether they really do or not will hereafter appear. But it must be further matter of surprise, that these several means, so unprecedented in their nature, were found insufficient in themselves, without recourse to the old leaven of loans and exchequer bills.

On the subject of the taxes, considered in their own nature, can we receive any satisfaction in being told, that of four out of five of these new taxes the chancellor of the exchequer, like a

charlatan at a fair, took the money from our pockets without our perceiving it? that he made such a curious selection of the subject matter upon which they were imposed, that the burden is in practice so insensibly felt, that not one person out of five hundred can enumerate the subjects taxed? If we are to pay taxes, like other charges on our establishment, for God's sake let us face the collector: he shall enter by day, rather than like a thief in the night, and open our cellars and storehouses in our presence. Though, like the assessed taxes, we pay them with grudging, we at least see the account, as we ought to do of every item in the arrangement of our affairs. Hence we are enabled to make such retrenchments as a prudent sense of our condition renders necessary, and as the burdens increase.

Let us ask therefore simply, after a temperate view of the transactions of this year, whether, either in substance or in form, "they have felt it more their duty to act than to talk," or whether, in relation to either the one or the other, they merit the "*commemoratio beneficiorum*," as the just reward of their public services.

But what do we find in the third report of the junto composing the finance committee?^(*)—

(*) Who were on the list? Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Vansittart, Mr. Peel, Lord Binning, Sir George Clerk, Mr. Holford, Mr. Frankland Lewis, Mr. Hart Davis, Mr. Gooch,

“Your committee learn, that works, buildings, extensions, and repairs, have been undertaken and executed, both at home and abroad, in a manner little checked or protected against profusion and waste; in many cases without any estimate or general plan; and sometimes extended, according to a statement of an officer of the ordnance (who attended the committee), as views open during the progress of the work. This irregular mode of proceeding, which unfortunately prevailed during the time that all these large works were begun, has had the effect of keeping the House in total ignorance as to the estimate charge of any one of them.”

What shall we say of the minister, but that “the stone shall cry out of the wall against him, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it?”

To crown these brilliant measures, ministers claim for themselves credit for what they are pleased to call another way of exercising their “*resolute purpose*,” by introducing the act generally called Mr. Peel’s Bill, to restore the currency to its original state. This subject naturally divides itself into two parts; first, the merit in

Lord Clive, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Wilbraham Bootle Wilbraham. The actors in these scenes speak for themselves, and show the treatment the nation receives from its representatives. They, however, in this solitary instance, have passed a most severe censure on themselves.

itself, as it may be affected by the laws of justice, which are immutable; and, secondly, its immediate consequences. The victory they pretend to have obtained we shall treat with the contempt it deserves, since no one took up arms to oppose them; and as to those immediately concerned, they made use of every occasion to compliment them on their return to honest principles^(b).

Legalising an alteration in the currency must appear, under an impartial view of the subject, morally bad, enabling engagements to be fulfilled between parties on terms certainly not contemplated at the time of the bargain, and therefore exercises an authority to arbitrate accounts between debtor and creditor, with whom the public have no concern; by which one loses what the other gains, and by no act of their own. In order to set this matter in a clear light, we will suppose, for example, by the effect of the restriction, in round numbers, the change for a one pound note is twenty shillings, and for a sovereign thirty in the market. I had in corn, the value of which was yesterday £.2000, to day £.3000. I owe as much, and am just clear of the world. Had I made arrangements with my

(b) When Bonaparte read some ministerial boasting, "Pay your bank notes in gold," said the shrewd usurper, "then I shall believe you really prosper."

creditors yesterday, I should still be £.1000 in their debt; but, thanks to the restriction, I am exonerated from any claims upon me by an "ex post facto" law, and my creditors are defrauded.

Then how was it with the public creditor? His income was virtually reduced while his dividends were paid in paper, by the rise in the markets proportioned to the depreciations in the currency. Nor did the base paper which he received, or the base manner in which he was deprived of any redress, establish his confidence in public faith. In this instance, as well as what related to the income tax, as affecting funded property, whether belonging to absentees or not, the public creditor could not feel himself otherwise than at least disappointed, after all the methodistical cant by which his interest had, above all others, been attempted to be supported; both these acts operated therefore in violation of a principle, pretended to be held sacred.

But, in the second place, we had proposed to consider the immediate consequence of this measure; and it should be understood particularly to relate to how far the revenue has been virtually increased by returning to cash payments. And of this there can be no doubt, in the proportion above described of three to two. Therefore, before we carry the justification of ministers through the whole piece, as they pretend it originated in

themselves, let us take the trouble to inquire, whether, in their furor for reductions, they have manifested their "*resolute purpose*" to arrive at this desirable object, by eagerly embracing so favourable a moment for lessening the public burdens to an amount equal to the difference between taxes received in gold or in the depreciated currency. The return to cash payments approaching, and being provided for, gold became of the same value as the paper which represented it. In short, when government received twenty shillings in the form of taxes, it was no longer twenty shillings of a mere nominal, but of an effective value, so materially was the revenue improved. Yet, in spite of economy, the succeeding year of 1820 was ushered in with an increased demand on the public of £.300,000, as the total amount of the ordinary service and the total supply experienced no sensible diminution. The ways and means were the same, and therefore required the same animadversion, and a double sense of obloquy, on the part of those capable of inquiring into their merits; and, what is still more extraordinary, they have the effrontery to introduce the ways and means of this year as no other than the usual manner of proceeding, though the last year was the first, and the present but the second attempt of the kind, in appropriating the sinking fund.

We have little to remark on 1820, as they appear only to have returned to the estimate of 1818, with this simple difference, that they thought proper to apply an additional million of the said fund over the last and preceding year, *viz.* thirteen millions.

In proceeding at last to a more general view of the subject before us, we shall agree most cordially in granting, that at the conclusion of the war our forces were great and complicated; that officers and men deserved well of their country; and that “at the end of no former war were such establishments to be reduced, and so many soldiers and sailors to be thrown upon the agriculture of the country.” But what is the natural inference to be drawn? Can any thing appear more a matter of course, in answer to this part of the subject, than the larger the pitcher the more can be spared? Let the quantity be measured out which can be spared, as the enormity of the expenses incurred during the war requires no less than suitable reductions at the peace.

On the contrary, we are taught to believe in the urgent necessity of continuing a certain extended scale of expense, on the absurd ground, “that *innovation* is already at work in every part of Europe^(c).”

(c) Rebellion is when bands of men within a state oppose themselves with violence to the general will, as implied or

The charge is too true; the danger imminent. But to whom can we attribute it, to the people or their government? Will troops preserve tranquillity; or, oppressed like the people, and of the same species, fraternize with them, and achieve the consolidation of their power? What is the end of civil government, but strength and security for every individual under the empire of laws, in framing which both the soldier and the citizen enjoy their full share?

The cultivator gathers fruit in the ripening season; the enlightened statesman does the same with *reformation*, the growing fruit of an improving order of things. Obstruct or accelerate its natural progress, *innovation* follows, like fruit not gathered in due season. The one may be compared to a wholesome and nourishing aliment, greedily devoured by the people to satisfy the ameliorating condition and taste of society; the other the cause of the destruction of a barrier chosen for its defence, under conflicting elements which separate a people from its government.

Reformation, owing to that natural and unexpressed by the public authority. But the sense of a whole people, peaceably collected, and operating by its natural and certain effect upon the public counsel, is not rebellion, but the parent of authority itself. Reform in the commons of parliament might be obtained by that which must and will in the end obtain every thing from any government, however constituted, the slow, gradual, and progressive effect of public opinion.—See *Lord Erskine on the State Trial*.

interrupted stream of gradual improvement which takes place in human affairs, grew and flourished under British protection in North America; but, neglected to be gathered, became *innovation*, and fell like decayed fruit from the tree. It has been the same with the Spanish and Portuguese settlements: and however these convulsive movements in the order of nature may eventually conduct to the most important ends, it becomes our shortsighted views of the administration of human affairs carefully and assiduously to avoid precipices; though, under the dispensations of an all-wise Providence, we may plunge ourselves and others into a calm.

It is happy if great changes in civil institutions are brought about, without so far separating, in the minds of individuals, a sense of interest from that of duty, as to produce a state of weakness, to which in such a case they must momentarily tend, providing certain incentives to evil, and hiding places for the guilty.

The peninsula of Europe has experienced at least some shades of suffering in these respects; but on the whole, in a general view, presents to kings and their ministers a lesson of experience, superior to any example hitherto set before them. The reflecting part of these kingdoms, obedient to the seasons, are happily conducting, by gigantic strides, through the lights of our day, these people to a prudent course; and with a dignified

moderation, becoming true loyalty^(d), they are attempting to preserve the authority of their chiefs, flattering themselves with the cheerful hope, however distant, that ancient prejudices may be abandoned, to give place to the united power, moderation, and security of states. These changes, synonymous with *reformation*, are natural in their course; but when interfered with by the most skilful artisan, its certain consequence is the annihilation of the throne. And we shall further remark, that it is among the many consolations, provided for by the frame-work of civil society, that it instructs us of this imperious truth, that if any thing exceeds the inward satisfaction arising from a gentle exercise of power, armed with justice, in kings, it is the spontaneous manifestation of gratitude in their people. How differently are our feelings awakened by the iron sceptre held over the corn fields of Poland, and the cradle of the arts. Ultras may forge fetters, and despise the inward man, not yet subject to their control; and though we see them industriously at work, their empire will be short, under existing circumstances. This we presume, by a

(d) The old French word "loiaultè" was first introduced to us by the adherents of Charles the First, after his intermarriage with Henrietta of France, to signify a firm and inviolable attachment, and includes the "quand même" in the modern lexicon of that nation. We would be understood to use it in its general acceptation—an habitual attachment to the authority of our chiefs.

generous reader, will hardly be thought extraneous matter, unfit to be introduced; but we will return to the task we had more immediately imposed upon ourselves.

In considering the resources of the country, the commerce, the navigation, the manufactures, the internal trade, considered as a whole, and not in detail, ministers, or rather the brilliant pen of their advocate, has drawn a most animating picture, perhaps with few exceptions a true one, of public prosperity. For though he has looked up many avenues of beautiful perspective with Herschell's magnifying powers, there are more of these avenues, to which his attention has never been drawn. But however narrow may have been the scale of his observations, we see, under the heads here enumerated, "that our funds of commerce and industry exist in the same vigour and integrity as during the war;" that the cotton manufactures alone, which may be taken as a broad example, constituting in themselves more than half our foreign exportation trade, have increased from seventeen to twenty-three millions; and it is but fair and candid to admit, which we cheerfully do, that if these general statements bear them out under a closer investigation, they are the more extraordinary, from a gradual and unprecedented diminution of prices, felt as affecting every article of trade.

We are prepared to contemplate an inexhaustible source of exultation in our future prospects; which feeling must animate the breast of every Englishman proud of his country. In the hope, that the conveniences and comforts, to be enjoyed down to the lowest, may answer to the most sanguine expectations, under the protection of wholesome laws, and less profusion and excess in the habits of those looked up to, as examples to others.

To what can we attribute this happy condition of things? Certainly not to a narrow, time-serving policy, but to the people as a mass; to a high state of refinement as respects the sciences and the arts, which directs not only our war tactics; but, above all, that enterprising spirit as to general concerns, which everywhere prevails; in short, the genius of the age in which we live; so proud an eminence, when it acquires a certain consistency, increases by an improving ratio. Greece and Rome were examples of it. In short, there is a principle continually operating, which cannot fail to weaken the effects of an illiberal policy, to which, if not thoroughly watched, men are too often tending when invested with power.

Adam Smith has well explained it, "that the habitual efforts of every individual to better his own condition, when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle,

that it is alone, and without any assistance, not only capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions, with which the folly of human laws too often incumber its operations; though the effect of these obstructions is always more or less either to encroach upon its freedom or to diminish its security."

In short, the flame of intellect disseminates so vivid a light through the atmosphere of these realms, as to leave us assurances, that we may be guided even through the rather discouraging observations which conclude this part of the subject.

They say "it is notorious, that the accumulated stock of our manufacturers and merchants has diminished at least thirty per cent., and that a capitalist, who ten years since was worth £.20,000 in the value of his stock in hand, is now not worth £.14,000, or to adopt a popular term has suffered an extinction of a third."

Evils are not without their compensation and grace to lessons of experience. Ministers are become more moderate in their views, notwithstanding the zenith of power on which this country is seated; they confidently assert, "that the system of loans and new taxes has reached its termination; that we are now living upon our income, and are in condition yearly of redeem-

ing some part of a mortgage, which undoubtedly presses heavily on the industry of the people.”

As to the latter observation, certain rapacious hands have applied the substance and left only the shadow, provided for this object, by their predecessors in office, in the instance of the sinking fund, the inviolability of which had been established for years as a principle, and from which they had pledged themselves never to depart. Can it be necessary to explain so simple a proposition, that the only way to pay off is to lessen the debt? That to pay one and borrow four is not paying but borrowing three; a system of mischievous jobs, by which the friends of ministers and ministers themselves command the markets, at the expense of opening a dangerous door to corruption, by which crowds of hungry mouths gain admission, and gape for food, gathered from the spoils of their country.

To conclude, we find in the appendix the most absurd boasting, as to “*the wonder of wonders of wonders*” introduced by the chancellor of the exchequer, into his new system, “namely, to meet the expenditure of the year by the actual money income, without the aid of loans, or new taxes; but to maintain the sinking fund of five millions, and with that amount, increased by gradual reduction in the expenditure, and by the progressive productiveness of the sources of the revenue, to

operate from time to time in the money market, in buying up, exchanging, and reducing the public stocks, so as to reduce the capital debt from a higher to a lower denomination of stock."

What more is implied in this unmeaning waste of words, than meeting the expenditure without the aid of loans; and, leaving a very minute portion of the sinking fund to operate as formerly. Why take from the merit of the ministers of George the First, and the last of the illustrious house of Brunswick, in whose reign government adopted this first part of what Mr. Vansittart vainly calls "*his new system*," and religiously adhered to it, as long as it continued, during a period of thirty-three years, without ever troubling themselves with the law or equity of the case, whether children collectively, any more than individually, are bound to pay the debts of their fathers. As to the rest of this grand system, this dereliction of principle, it entirely originates with themselves: the great besom with which they clear out the corners of the treasury, without sweeping them absolutely clean.

To illustrate this by an example. The only general principle of finance, which can be attributed to the sagacity of the present government, and acted upon up to this day (for as to the future, they confidently assert that it cannot be pursued) is comprehended in the spirit of the late

measure for providing for the pension list, to drive off the evil day, to extend the periods of our payments, and to leave as little as they decently can for the liquidation of the debt: whereas, not “*an income tax*,” which they were forced to abandon, but a *property tax* properly so denominated, rated on capital, and not on the industry and rising spirit of the country, is now without exception admitted among all ranks to be the fairest in its principle of any impost whatever, on every possible ground, and would meet all the exigencies of the state in peace or in war, under certain regulations, and established on a principle of accumulating ratio, on a geometrical scale. This has been fully explained by the writer in a publication which has appeared in different forms, and particularly in the Monthly Magazine of June, 1820, page 426 (*).

(*) Nearly half the revenue of France arises from “*l’impôt foncière*,” being a property tax, equally on all lands, houses, manufactories, and every species of rent, except interest of money; and we never see a finger held up against it.

At Hamburgh, every inhabitant was obliged to pay to the state one fourth per cent. of all that he possessed, and as the wealth of the people of Hamburgh consists principally in stock, this tax may be considered as a tax upon stock: every man assesses himself, and in the presence of the magistrate puts annually into the public coffer a certain sum of money, which he declares upon oath to be one fourth per cent. of all that he possesses, without declaring what it amounts to, or

The system of finance, under the wiser administration of men dear to their country, Mr. Fox and after him Mr. Perceval, was boldly to face the enemy, instead of shrinking from their duty; and if the demands upon the revenue were ever so great, it is admitted, that they had determined “to raise as much as possible of the total expenditure within the year.”

Whoever administers the affairs of Great Britain must now, at last, profit by following their illustrious example; as those gentlemen now in power do not conceal the truth, when having at last “confidently asserted, that the system of loans has reached its termination.”

Had they sooner been convinced of their error, the debt would have been no further increased by their means. We should have been living all

being liable to examination on that subject. This tax was generally supposed to be paid with great fidelity.

At Zurich the law ordered, that in cases of necessity every one should be taxed in proportion to his revenue, the amount of which he is obliged to declare upon oath. — *Memoires concernant les Droits*, tom. i, p. 74, 163, 166, 174.

In Holland, soon after the restoration of the Prince of Orange to the Stadtholdership, a tax of two per cent. on the fiftieth penny, as it was called, was imposed upon the whole substance of every artisan. Every citizen assessed himself, and paid his tax in the same manner as at Hamburgh, and it was generally supposed to have been paid with great fidelity. — *Adam Smith*, vol. iii.

along, as they at length pretend we are now doing, on our income, or rather revenue⁽¹⁾, which, unfortunately, however, they require should be on an ample scale. For, a nondescript order of beings in themselves, without any extraordinary redundancy of talent, illustrious birth, or even fair character, in order to preserve their places, they have too many powerful friends to conciliate in the money market, to observe a strict economy in the public service.

There is however one solitary question, lately too much agitated apart from general principles, on which it is but bare justice to say they have manfully supported the dignity of the country; in opposing the short-sighted views of their country friends, whose liberal ideas, if any they possess, must wholly be attributed to the company they keep. Ministers have shown themselves disposed to despise so meddling a spirit, by the apathy they have exhibited in turning nearly a deaf ear to their remonstrances. Is not it folly to conceive, that the pressure of taxation, or divers other evils, bear in the main harder upon the farmer than his neighbours? The produce of a farm must calculate employment of capital, a living profit, wear and tear, as well as labour and other charges, including poor's rates and tythes, before the rent can be estimated; and

(1) For experience has taught us, as in the years 1813, 1814, and 1815, the revenue might exceed the income.

this alone will establish the just value of the land. If a landlord receives more, neither the laws of God or nature will justify him in so doing, and the onus will not fall where it ought. On the contrary, if he rest contented with what in all reason is his due, the farmer and his family are not oppressed by him. The agriculturist has always a source of consolation peculiar to his own case—he rests on the powerful arm of his landlord, who ought to live so far within his means as to be capable of assisting him.

Doing what has been equivalent to reducing his assessed taxes to the half, is, after this manner of reasoning, no other than a bonus to the landlord. It would not have been too much to have ceded the whole, in common with the other classes, who are at least equally oppressed by them.

But further, as the pamphlet which we confine ourselves to answer, terminates with a few observations on this said agricultural distress, without contemplating any adequate measures of relief, it shall not be said that the cause is entirely abandoned; for we, who profess to feel as the nation, have devoted a third chapter exclusively to this subject; and, if it were not too presuming, promise ourselves we have pointed out the source of the evil, and with a double dash of the pen provided the simplest means of remedy for what the landlord himself may be supposed to suffer from low prices.

CHAP. II.

FINANCE (CONTINUED).

THE preface implies, that our purpose in this place is to consider the subject in a more confined sense, as it relates to matters of account. Our attention is immediately directed, by the work before us, to "what reductions have been made by his majesty's ministers in the annual expenditure of the country, from the conclusion of the war to the present period." In so doing, we have thought it best, in order to save trouble to the reader, to comprise, in the form of the following Table, a succinct view of each year respectively, collected from what the author has diffused through his several pages. And the gross and palpable errors to be afterwards pointed out, by comparing their own statements as here exhibited, can hardly be believed, by people the least conversant in the nature of accounts, and the accuracy required in laying them officially before the public. We shall bring to our assistance no documents not referred to in the work itself. Our object is simply to point out, as obviously as we can, the

extravagance of their own contradictions, some of which are really too manifest not to be imputed to design. As to the Table itself, excepting as to what appears in *Italics*, each article will be found faithfully extracted from the work in question.

T A B L E.

1816.

p. 18. The supply of the army was taken at £.10,564,000; navy £.9,430,000; ordnance exceeded £.1,500,000; miscellanies had been estimated at £.2,500,000. p. 47. The total of the ordinary expenditure (for army, navy, ordnance, and miscellaneous) was £.24,887,000, *but which is too much, upon adding these sums together, by nearly a million.* p. 17. We find the whole supply of the year £.27,000,000.

1817.

p. 18. The army was taken at a small excess above £.9,000,000; (p. 23) it had been £.9,080,000; navy was reduced to £.6,000,000; but (p. 24) we read the supply was £.7,596,000, which included a sum for the reduction of the navy debt: *this certainly requires a little more explanation.* p. 19. Ordnance, from exceeding £.1,500, was reduced by nearly half a million; while (p. 24) we find the ordnance was £.1,270,000.

p. 19. Miscellanies were reduced to £.1,700,000; however, in p. 24 we read they were £.1,795,000, and that the total of the supply for these four branches had been a small excess above £.20,000,000. *This does not correspond, for taking the navy as stated one way the total is no more than £.17,965,000, and the other £.19,561,000.* p. 19. The total supply was a small excess above £.22,000,000.

1818.

p. 24. The army was £.8,900,000. p. 30. The supply taken for the army was £.8,970,000. p. 24 and 30. Navy was £.6,456,000, ordnance £.1,245,000, miscellanies £.1,720,000; which makes in the whole £.18,391,000. *In this we do not vary very much, for they call it (p. 24 and 47) a small excess above £.18,000,000; and which they say makes a saving of nearly £.2,000,000 upon the former year.* *In this, however, it must be seen we differ very widely indeed.* p. 46. The total of the ordinary and extraordinary supply was £.20,900,000.

1819.

p. 30 and 41. The army was £.8,900,000. p. 30. Navy, 6,436,000; but (p. 41) had been £.6,400,000. p. 30. Ordnance diminished to £.1,191,000; but (p. 41) had been only

£.1,190,000. page 31. Miscellanies were £.1,950,000 ; but (p. 41) on making up the account for the year was a small excess beyond £.2,000,000 ; *which several sums may be fairly taken as a whole at £.18,527,000, with which they agree nearly,* calling it (p. 31) a small excess above £.18,400,000. *They state also* (p. 41), that the total amount of the annual ordinary service of the year had been £.20,400,000 and a small fraction ; and the whole sum to be raised for the ordinary and extraordinary service was a small excess above £.30,000,000.

1820.
 p. 41. The army was £.9,500,000 ; but (p. 45) it was this and a fraction. Navy £.6,500,000 and a fraction. p. 41. Ordnance had been £.1,190,000, and was this year nearly the same ; whereas (p. 45) it had been nearly £.1,200,000. p. 41. Miscellanies were £.2,500,000 ; though (p. 45) we read £.2,400,000 and a fraction. *Therefore they are nearly correct in saying* (p. 44), that the total for the four ordinary divisions of the annual expenditure had exceeded £.19,600,000. The total supply (p. 41), including a sum for the reduction of the unfunded debt, was £.29,700,000 ; (p. 44) when making up the accounts of the year appeared to be £.30,000,000.

1821.

p. 45. The army was taken at £.8,700,000; navy £.6,500,000 and a fraction; ordnance £.1,195,000; miscellanies £.1,900,000; amounting in the whole, as they say (p. 44), to £.18,000,000 (*though it is something more*); and in this year it seems the total supply did not exceed £.20,000,000, a reduction of demand, as they say, on the resources of the country, of £.10,000,000. *How does this appear, when we have shown, from their own statements (p. 19), that the total supply for the year 1817 was but a small excess above £.22,000,000, and (p. 46) the total of the ordinary and extraordinary supply for 1818 was but £.20,900,000? Had they not stated this simple sum of £.10,000,000, as a reduction of demand generally on the resources of the country, but on the increased expenditure of the year immediately preceding, consequent on the glorious epoch of the coronation of his present majesty, the matter would be better understood, and less surprise excited among his loyal subjects.*

Now for an impartial examination into this account, as compared with their deductions.

1. p. 18. The supply of the army for the first year, 1816, was taken at £.10,564,000; in 1817 at a small excess beyond £.9,000,000. This loose estimate however explains itself (p. 23) by

stating what the supply really was, *viz.* £.9,080,000. From which it is pretended, going back to p. 18, that a reduction was effected of nearly £.2,000,000; by some new rule of subtraction, certainly not according to Cocker, unless £.1,484,000 comes so near the amount as hardly to make any important difference in the business of finance.

2. In referring to the same page, we find the supply of the navy for the year 1817 was reduced to £.6,000,000; but on proceeding to p. 24, the supply had increased to £.7,596,000, which included a sum for the reduction of the navy debt; and that in 1818 it was £.6,456,000, inferring a saving of nearly a million. Now the generality of our readers, if in their right senses, would certainly have made the comparison with the net sum referred to in the former page, rather than to a sum comprising an extraneous charge upon it; and what in such case would be the natural conclusion? That, instead of a saving of nearly one million, there was an increase of nearly half a million.

In showing progressive reductions from year to year, the rule prescribed is, that the sum deducted from the first year is the sum from which the third year is to be deducted. See therefore three successive years in their statement of the supply for the navy.

p. 18. 1816 was taken at £.9,434,000
 1817 was reduced to £.6,000,000
 p. 24. 1818 was £.6,456,000
 and nothing is more clear, than that an increase
 in this department of £.456,000 followed the re-
 duction which took place the preceding year. . . .

But view this determination to embarrass the
 question in another light. p. 24 we read, "in
 the navy, the supply for 1817 was £.7,596,000,
 which included a sum for the reduction of the
 navy debt. In 1818 it was £.6,456,000, being,
 as they say, a saving of *nearly* one million in the
 navy." Hence, independent of the sum appro-
 priated to the reduction of the debt, the supply
 must certainly have been, for the year 1817,
nearly one million more than the succeeding year,
 or *nearly* £.7,456,000. But why so, when in
 p. 18 we find it had been reduced to £.6,000,000?
*To show, by an attempt to mislead, that the reduc-
 tion in this year was greater than the reality by a
 million and a half.*

3. We come to examine the unaccountable
 falsity of the declaration made (p. 24), "that for
 the year 1817, the total of these four branches of
 the expenditure (*viz.* army, navy, ordnance, and
 miscellanies) had been a small excess above
 £.20,000,000. For the year 1818 the same sup-
 ply was a small excess above £.18,000,000, a
 saving of nearly two millions upon the former
 year." What the separate articles of navy and

ordnance were in the year 1817, as we have before observed, is not quite so clear as the subject requires. But as to the one, we shall adhere to their statement (p. 18), instead of involving it in an extraneous charge, which appears not to belong to the ordinary annual expenditure of these departments; and as to the other, p. 19 we are led to understand, that the ordnance for 1817 was reduced from a million and a half by nearly half a million, or was in fact about a million; but we will give them credit for its being, according to p. 24, £.1,270,000. See the Table.

	1817.	1818.
	£.	£.
Army.....	9,080,000	8,970,000
Navy.....	6,000,000	6,456,000
Ordnance	1,270,000	1,245,000
Miscellanies	1,795,000	1,720,000
	<u>£.18,145,000</u>	<u>£.18,391,000</u>
		18,145,000
		<u>£.246,000</u>

So that, instead of a saving of £.2,000,000, these totals, deducted from each other, leave an increase of £.246,000.

4. p. 31. They say, "the aggregate saving on the whole of the estimates in the account of the year 1819 was about half a million; whereas, according to the several items enumerated in their preceding page, it will be shown, that, instead

of any reduction, it presents an excess of £.86,000. See the extracts from the Table.

	1818.		1819.
	£.		£.
Army.....	8,970,000	8,900,000
Navy	6,456,000	6,436,000
Ordnance	1,245,000	1,191,000
Miscellanies	1,720,000	1,950,000
	<u>£.18,391,000</u>		<u>£.18,477,000</u>

But if we allow, instead of £.1,950,000 for the year 1819, under the article of miscellanies, as here stated, that the real amount was a small excess beyond £.2,000,000, as we find, in p. 41, the augmentation on the general estimate over the preceding year equals at least £.200,000, or nearly a quarter of a million of excess, instead of half a million of reduction. How it can have been thought prudent to send forth to the public such egregious errors in the account, it remains for the authorized advocate of ministers to explain.

5. We are not teaching arithmetic to children, or concerning ourselves with trifles: the finances of at least the most powerful empire in the world, the annual expenditure of which, with all their boasted economy, has exceeded the sum total of all the other states of Europe—it is this we are contemplating, and it is this which they have pretended fully to explain, and to a farthing. In the conclusion (p. 47) let us see how far this demi-

official production continues to answer our hopes in this respect. They confine themselves to the ordinary expenditure for the army, navy, ordnance, and miscellanies. The total for 1817 was £.20,000,000. This varies from their statement of the particular items (p. 24), for (see the Table) taking the navy at the least, it is no more than £.17,965,000; but taking it at the most, with the sum for the reduction of the navy debt, we find it only £.19,561,000. p. 47. They say, the total for the year 1818 was a small excess above £.18,000,000; whereas, if we consult the several items separately (p. 30) we find the amount to be £.18,391,000: 1819, they say, was nearly the same. In fact, according to their own account (p. 30), there appears only an increase of £.99,000: therefore we proceed to 1820 (p. 47), which they call a small excess above £.19,000,000. Now the public would hardly believe, by turning back to p. 41, that the several items added together complete a sum above £.19,600,000; and therefore, that this small excess reaches £.600,000: to corroborate which (p. 44) we find they agree, that it has even exceeded this amount, for (in this page) the total for the four ordinary divisions of the annual expenditure, the army, navy, ordnance, and miscellanies, had exceeded £.19,600,000.

6. But now for the most important point to which they have challenged our attention, *viz.* as

to what reductions they have made progressively. p. 47. They say, a small addition which took place in 1820 was thrown off the following year; therefore, it should seem very properly to appear, that they profess not to extend the merit of their claims to the gratitude of the nation beyond the years 1817, 1818, and 1819. Let us extract their own words: after enumerating the total amounts of the expenditure for each year respectively, they say, "being a reduction in 1817 of £.5,000,000, in 1818 of £.2,000,000, in 1819 of the same." Could, therefore, any sober man in England, with the use of his vernacular tongue, understand the total of the reductions for these three years to be less than £.9,000,000? But, on the contrary, we shall see the truth by referring to the table before us.

1816. (p. 47) We find the total to be £.24,887,000, but looking to p. 18, in adding each article, the amount is £. 23,994,000

1817. (p. 24) They say, the total supply for these four branches had been a small excess above £.20,000,000. To avoid the dispute whether the sum for the reduction of the navy debt belongs to it or not, we take it as such, 20,000,000

Reduction this year £.3,994,000

	£.
Reduction, brought forward . . .	3,994,000
1818. Here we do not vary very much, for they call the total (p. 24 and 47) a small excess above £.18,000,000, which in adding up the several articles (p. 24 and 30) amounts to £.18,391,000: it seems, therefore, that the reduction this year is	1,609,000
	<hr/>
	£.5,603,000

1819. By computing the several items (p. 30 and 41) we find the total for these four branches of the ordinary service may be taken at £.18,527,000, which proves an augmentation in this year, under the most favourable view, of

	156,000
	<hr/>

Therefore, even according to their own account, though they would make appear reductions to the amount of £.9,000,000, the nearest the truth reduces itself to

	5,447,000
	<hr/>

As to the sums of £.6,000,000 (p. 18), and £.7,596,000 (p. 24), given respectively as the expenditure of the navy for 1817, they could only be so introduced, like many other acts and

speeches of the present administration, to throw the real question into complete confusion, and to cover the inconsistencies of the finance committee from the moment it entered upon its labours; for from this period until that of its happy dissolution, when impartially viewed, it will be found we had only recommendations; and, instead of reductions, a gradual increase took place in the ordinary annual service for the four departments of army, navy, ordnance, and miscellanies: and what is more remarkable, it was the same in the general expenditure of the kingdom. Let us refer to the several items in each year, which have been before enumerated, from the table, page by page, and founded on their own statements alone.

For the Years	Ordinary Service of the four Branches.	General Expenditure.
	£.	£.
1817	18,145,000	68,571,000
1818	18,391,000	68,821,000
1819	18,527,000	69,494,000
1820	19,600,000	70,850,000

Being an increase of nearly £.2,500,000 in the general expenditure, and nearly £.1,500,000 in the ordinary service of the four branches since the date of the first economical report, in the recollection of our readers, when the opinion of the committee was emphatically expressed, as to the

necessity of approximating as nearly as possible to the establishment of 1792. And further, it stands uncontradicted, that the very last year, of 1821, there was a larger disposable force, available for the purposes of government, by 132,367 men. And that though the supplies voted for the military establishment at the former period had not exceeded £.2,331,149, it had then increased to £.9,500,216; notwithstanding the point of approximation, to which the eye of parliament and the country were directed, by the advice of their committee, was the sum of £.4,123,000.

Had not the author of the pamphlet before us shown too much discretion to engage our attention on so delicate a subject as the civil establishment, our observations on this branch of the public expenditure might be read with interest. It stood, at the period of the peace of 1792, at £.1,003,000; but pending those three years of renown, when we were under the special protection of the finance committee, rose from £.1,885,000 to £.2,090,000.

We may presume, that enough appears in this faithful representation of facts to convince the whole world how disingenuous are the pains which are taken to conceal from the public, in spite of lessons of economy, the increasing profusion of government.

CHAP. III.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS, OR THE INTEREST OF THE LANDLORD CONSIDERED.

THE concluding passage to the first chapter on finance led us into an engagement, which we would fain flatter ourselves will not be disappointed in the following pages: and though with real deference to the public we are presumptive enough hardly to doubt of complete success, we see difficulty in giving sufficient circulation even to an argument calculated to place the subject in an acceptable point of view.

Our strength principally consists in the impression already made by a striking picture, where the features of the wealthy landlord exhibit traces of mortifying disappointment at being doomed to suffer all the losses, which are falling on his tenants. It is not therefore to them, but to him, that we offer support; and should we be so fortunate in our endeavours as to point out the means of relief, it is his gratitude alone that we have any right to claim.

A consultation of mediocrity has been held,

from one adjournment to another, probably waiting to see what turn the disorder might take; certain medicaments were prescribed and administered; the one to excite a desire to ride on horseback, the other entered into the ingredients of their beer, possibly to encourage them to drink freely; for they have since experienced the inconvenience of a total incapacity to explain the symptoms of their case to the faculty; nor have they been persuaded to swallow a single dose lately recommended by the members of this learned consult, in their separate capacities. Divided in opinion, they had not been able to act as a body.

So little, therefore, having been effected by the wisdom of our counsels, it becomes us to consider whether those engaged in this important inquiry were not guided by their own several interests, in not taking a wider field, making out a general case, and putting the axe to the root of the tree. The tree, however, which bears such evil fruit, is still standing, and the task must fall upon others.

The inquiry divides itself into two parts; first the nature of the intercourse in agricultural and other raw produce between ourselves and our neighbours, and in our intercourse abroad; or the home and foreign trade in raw produce; and, secondly, the extent and species of capital, or con-

fidence subsisting between dealers, which answers instead of capital, with which the trade is carried on.

As to the first, we shall treat it as becomes every subject which falls under consideration, particularly one of so much importance as the economy of states, both in a moral and political point of view.

A mind properly directed embraces the well being of all susceptible nature, and particularly the human species; the general happiness of which being most within our sphere ought to precede all other considerations. And amongst the surest means of arriving at this desirable end, is to throw the fewest obstacles in the way of obtaining subsistence; above all in what appertains to the necessaries of life. We may safely class all the produce of the farm under this head. Besides it comprises much more than half our national industry, or the means of employment.

While they whisper, that "a general confederation of Europe may move up in defence of the common tranquillity" (see p. 85), why not extend so liberal a principle, connected with general happiness, to the means of subsistence, and banish want from our doors, while we have determined to live together in peace?

Inhabiting, as we do, a climate certainly not

the most favoured by nature, the superiority we have acquired as to our manufactures may entitle us, as an object of taste at least, to give this branch of our national industry certain peculiar protection, without the danger of incurring the resentment of our neighbours. But why should it extend to the necessaries, or even comforts of life, which are the common wants of us all? Temperature and soils, and the temptations there are to explore the bowels of the earth and the ocean, vary everywhere. If other nations like ourselves have wants, which exceed their means of supply, the arts of navigation should come reciprocally to the general aid. We find corn from Poland to the Crimea; both corn and rice in America; oil and wine in Italy, France, and the Peninsula of Europe; wool from the latter country and Saxony, so essential to our fine cloths; cotton from the Brazils and other warm climates, necessary to the support of at least the half of our valuable exportation trade; Russia, Sweden, and Norway furnish hemp, flax, iron, timber, and the juices of their pines for our shipping; from the two Indies we are amply supplied with all colonial produce. And what do these countries take from us in return? Our surplus growth, and, what is of more importance, the produce of those rich veins with which Great Britain abounds; and our staple manufactures, perhaps enhanced in

value in the proportion of ten to one, by the industry and ingenuity of the lower classes; which has the advantage of securing their loyalty and attaching them to the general welfare of the community at large.

Why should a nation, at present happily in friendly relations with others, entertain so absurd a policy as to shut their ports against neighbours by high duties or prohibitory laws? A commercial country above all seeks to encourage others to become commercial. Were the whole world open to ships under every pavillon, a nation, with the superior advantages we enjoy, reaps the first fruits. Restraints are therefore generally bad, though bounties might possibly be renewed without danger; but we must fear this even rather deviates from the general principle of noninterference. What succeeds with individuals in pursuit of their particular interests may be applied to national policy; and we have often known this expedient resorted to among dealers to rid the market of a surplus quantity, in various trades, that what remained in the market might obtain better prices. Such bounties may be permanent as heretofore, or be granted only at low prices, or even be proportioned to the average price of the market when under some given standard. There are perhaps ten arguments against bounties, but twenty for them, while, in

comparison with our neighbours, we pay, on every kind of produce of our soil and industry, a much heavier species of excise, under the general head of taxation: but it is evident these bounties should not exceed a fair retribution. Such encouragement might preserve the lands in cultivation, support the demand for labour, and perhaps even relieve the poor's rates very sensibly. It might be safe to extend this principle to grain, perhaps even to stock and other produce of the farm; for while the ports are open to a free import on the one hand, nothing is to be feared from a forced exportation on the other. At Amsterdam, where there is the greatest trade in corn, markets fluctuate less than in any other port in Europe⁽⁸⁾.

It is needless to add, that a free trade would co-operate with our navigation laws in extending the demand for our shipping, and assist in maintaining our naval superiority; but above all, the farmer would be placed in respect to his produce in his natural position, and even, if certain bounties were granted, enjoy a superior encouragement on the part of government: he would grow no more corn than is precisely pro-

(8) Que la disette du grains regne dans les quatre parties du monde, vous trouverez du froment, du seigle et d'autres grains à Amsterdam; ils n'y manquent jamais. — *La Richesse de la Hollande*, tom. i, p. 376.

portioned, in a relative view, to our atmosphere, soil, and climate. On this system all countries would be on a fair balance, to produce what suited them best, and such articles only as would find a preference in the general market.

By such an enlightened policy, the consumer, who on Christian principles we feel to be our neighbour, whether in England, France, or in Greece, is furnished on fair terms, and no distress could possibly occur but where it would be immediately relieved: for the foreign merchant, whatever country he may inhabit between the Poles, finds his interest in contributing, free from restraints, equally to the wants and enjoyments of all neighbouring states. Though we cannot command the seasons, changes will take place everywhere; yet there is always abundant food in the world, so that we may enjoy constant plenty, by abandoning narrow principles, and taking heed not to control the circulation of what the benevolent wisdom of Providence has designed for the use of all: which corresponds with an observation of Count de Verri, "that it is a melancholy error to suppose, that the nations of the Earth are condemned to throw the dice to determine which of them shall submit to famine."

In 1800, when the crops in Great Britain were so extremely deficient, they were exceedingly abundant in Spain; but the harvest of

1803, so productive here, was so deficient in Spain as to produce famine.

It is hoped, that what has been here briefly introduced, corroborated as it decidedly is by the testimony of all writers deemed worthy of being quoted as authorities, will be a death blow to the corn bill, against the avowed sense of the whole country, and opposed even to the private opinions of ministers themselves, except on the state ground, adapted to too many cases, that of keeping their places. In short, it has made us a host of enemies abroad, fixed on the government of the country an eternal reproach, and accelerated its natural consequence, agricultural distress. It is only continued as a boon to certain persons, who are too blind to see how heavy a calamity it brings upon themselves.

There is also another general point of view, in which this measure ought to be considered. "Of all causes of rebellion," says Lord Bacon, "those of the belly are the worst. The first remedy, or prevention, is to remove, by all possible means, that material cause of sedition, which is want and poverty in the estate." Such laws, as this we are now contemplating, set completely at variance the producer and consumer. The former has no chance of getting rich without distressing his fellow citizens, grinding the poor, and turning the bounty of nature into a curse.

But as there are unfortunately those, who lend a deaf ear to all reasoning on a broader scale, we will confine our further remarks on this prohibitory law to its several bearings, as affecting the relief for which it was immediately intended. The experience of seven years has proved the absurdity of supposing this scheme would terminate the distress complained of. The difficulties are daily increasing; while, owing to the progressive diminution of capital, the sufferers are less able to make head against it. And who can attribute the fall in the price to inadequate protection, while it has been so evidently entirely caused by the restriction? It increased the price very soon to £.4 18s.; and the two following years averaged £.3 16s. 6d.; thereby encouraging farmers to put more land in cultivation than the demand could possibly require, and the great landlord to raise his rents as leases fell in. This mania therefore for production, assisted by fine seasons, has so clearly contributed to reduce prices, that we think few will pretend to dispute it. And as long as the restriction laid on importation in 1815 is persisted in, we shall have a constant alternation of high and ruinous low prices. Fluctuation is an evil to the tenant, which, though falling on the landlord, ought to be avoided: the speculator is the gainer, and feeds on them both.

Let us see how it directly affects the landlord, as to the payment of his rent. Suppose 60s. to be a fair average price, by which the production of a farm in common seasons might reach £.500. We will compute that a fifth is the landlord's; as much the living of the farmer, out of which he may save what he can; three-fifths at least are absorbed by the interest of capital, seed grain, fodder for cattle, wages of labour, assessed taxes, poor's rates, tythes, &c.

At this price we will suppose no temptation to throw more land into cultivation; but if the first or second season, or both, are unfavourable, as was the case in 1817 and 1818, the harvest runs short of the demand, and the situation of the farmer is stationary, for he loses in quantity what he gains in price; while, too ready to flatter himself, by reckoning on the continuance of present prices, the next thing which enters into his mind is to pay interest on an increase of capital; both living and labour are of course higher: yet, having provided the means, he is encouraged to put second and perhaps even third lands into cultivation. This we will suppose the general feeling, as it has been from 1819 inclusive. The span being greater, though the season is yet unfavourable, or rather the market bare, the supply again meets the demand, and we return to old prices. The farmer will have increased the value of his

produce this year perhaps a fifth, say to £.600; but his charges increased this first year in preparing new lands at least a third, say to £.400: he has as much left for his landlord and himself; but it has been an expensive year to the farmer, and he must maintain the growth still two or three seasons, to answer the extra charges he has engaged in by a broader cultivation.

Wear and tear is going on, or rather takes a wider stride every succeeding year; three or four favourable seasons follow each other; produce falls a third; sales cannot be effected at more than £.400; the increased acres in cultivation still extend the charges beyond £.300—what becomes of the rent? There is barely enough left for the farmer's own living. Though prices may be forced up, to the serious injury of the community at large, if he makes a few tolerable years, he must have a Russell for his landlord, not to raise his rent.

Soon after passing the act under consideration, it will hardly be disputed, that advantage was generally taken of the depreciation of the currency, further assisted by high prices, to raise rents in gold, virtually we will say to £.200, but in paper nominally to £.300. The produce of the farm, multiplied by five, may be calculated to produce £.1500, of which the expenses being three-fifths, are £.900. We return to cash pay-

ments; the rent becomes virtually as well as nominally £.300; prices fall; the produce sells for half, say £.750. How is the rent to be paid, or even the expenses of the farm, which saddle the poor man with a debt of £.150 annually, while his family are absolutely naked and starving? It is impossible that tenants can fulfil their contracts with their landlords, or even their neighbours, under such a change of circumstances.

Never country has shown more industry, patience, and patriotism; and, but for this corn bill, and the abuses practised among dealers, no country has enjoyed greater prosperity than it would be now enjoying.

At present we are paying nearly double the continental price for an equal quality of the staff of life; but return to a free trade, and well regulated bounties, prices to the *farmer* would be governed by the general average throughout the commercial world. We should encourage the growth of corn, as well as other raw produce, by taking measures for an increased demand for exportation, an advantage enjoyed by our neighbours, who, though they may have no bounties, have, which is the same thing, much lighter burdens.

It is not, however, by an open trade alone, even suitably encouraged, that we are to hope for

adequate *general* relief. We therefore recommend most earnestly an attentive consideration to the second part of the inquiry—as to the effects of the extent and species of capital, or confidence subsisting between dealers, which answers instead of capital, with which the trade is carried on.

Now, at least as far as respects all the necessities and even conveniences of life, nothing is so essential as to produce an exact conformity between the supply and the demand. Among ourselves and our neighbours, in times of abundance, excess is hardly felt; but if adverse circumstances change the complexion of things, or either scarcity or famine stares us in the face, the most easy and natural bounds are set to waste or extravagance by raising the market price, through the ready force of opinion, in employment of capital, or by turning produce over from hand to hand, among those who are satisfied with a small profit, and have a knowledge and confidence in the stability of each other. But in case of a plentiful supply, this commercial spirit can only operate to the real injury of the consumer. If persons engaged in this trade have either money, or an unbounded command of credit to assist their projects, they may possibly succeed, but more generally receive severe lessons. For such enterprises, when the supply even meets or exceeds the demand, often disappoints their ex-

pectations : yet, in spite of the danger of involving their own ruin and that of others, these cases too frequently occur to influence the market price.

Bread, as we have before hinted, is a striking instance of the mischievous interference of middle dealers, to the injury of the public. For in times of plenty, and when the farmer at home receives less than the price abroad, the consumer pays (if the expression can be pardoned) through the nose, in most instances, to the degree hereafter explained.

The custom of dealing by sample, in many of our great markets, very much contributes to this disease. A farmer does not come to sell, but oftener to try the market, and sometimes engages to deliver at a given time ; many sales and resales take place before the delivery : to use the common expression, the article passes through many hands. Whereas on the continent, a more limited confidence has not introduced such refinement in trade. The cultivator drives his team to the " Grande Place," and sells and delivers on the instant to the baker, or to families who draw their own bread, to whom the miller is generally indebted for his employment. There are rich millers, however, who buy largely for their own account ; but their flour passes seldom through any other than the same channel. On the con-

trary, in our markets it often happens, that eight or ten buyers intervene between the farmer and consumer; each forces up the price, so as to have a living profit, and to answer the risks run in their mutual dealings. By which means it is too evident, that the farmer receives much less than the consumer pays.

Excessive taxation has been justly assigned as one cause of the evil; and no doubt it has considerable weight, and will continue to have, while our neighbours are so much more favoured in this respect, unless we afford the relief of bounties to encourage an exportation; but this will be found, as to those articles to which it is extended, an ample recompence, under proper regulations. Bounties are within the power of the legislature, which reduction of rents, as respects the farming interest, is not; though this latter would certainly, in this confined sense, produce a more general effect. What landlords do reluctantly, they are notwithstanding forced to do. They availed themselves of the nefarious alteration in the currency, we will say a third: they now either must renounce a part, or receive virtually more than they contemplated when the leases were granted: a proceeding, not only uncharitable, but unjust, in every view of the question, and what no tenant under equal laws can be compelled to pay.

We are far from confining our argument to bread corn, or even to grain generally: fodder for cattle, beasts, many other articles, the produce of a farm, are suffered to pass through too many hands, with the same inconvenience to the public; and likewise a variety of raw produce, brought to market from the interior, or by means of our importation trade, and used in our manufactures. It is almost as necessary to contrive means of economy in the supply of those goods, which enter into the composition of our staple articles, as it is to put food into our mouths, in order to maintain a decided preference in foreign markets. To the glory of this country, much has been done by the improved state of our machinery; but who can calculate the drawback, enough in many cases to cancel our superiority in this respect, the relative prices of living and labour, from the weight of taxation.

Our own as well as foreign manufactured goods, on the contrary, are generally less perishable in their nature, longer under process, remain months and years in the hands of dealers, and require a vast display and variety to furnish warehouses and shops for the choice of customers. Here the absolute necessity of long credit, to supply the deficiency of capital, seems to follow as a matter of course, between the manufacturer and the different dealers in this kind of

traffic; rendering these articles not susceptible of any limits to the confidence to be placed between the parties among each other, through the different stages of the work.

Both the demand itself for these goods, constituting chiefly the comforts and luxuries of life, as well as the confidence subsisting between individuals engaged in a common interest, to prepare them and bring them to market, are among the highest sources of exultation, when duly considered; since the one is introduced by a state of improvement in the arts, to which the sciences have contributed, and the other to an amelioration in character itself. We place confidence in each other from a brotherly principle, which the generosity of nature inspires, too often without suspecting the arts of the designing. We meet a fellow countryman in the company of a few friends, his companions; inoffensive in his manners, strict in his morals, with some education; we have the generosity of heart to judge of him as we do of ourselves. Can we suppose that this man means to injure us? and as far as to minor transactions make no farther inquiry. These soon lead to important concerns, by which the unwary are often involved. But this order of things, though attended with occasional evils, may be considered, on the other hand, as encouraging a laudable spirit of enterprise in com-

mercial transactions, and giving life to manufacturing industry. It is, however, in a certain respect, most injurious in its tendency, by introducing along with it a jobbing principle, or so many absolutely unproductive labourers among us, as far as relates to objects of the first necessity.

The farmer is needy, and the dealer gives him money for his grain, taking every advantage of his necessity. The liberality of dealers is seldom shown but towards each other; for having ground the farmer, they grind the wheat, and they grind the baker, whose best customers are so inattentive to their domestic concerns as to take credit; therefore the poor man wants it, and cannot go to the best market: by this means he pays twenty to twenty-five per cent. more than the ready money baker, whose concerns are upon a large scale. And this enormous difference is sifted through, in passing these several channels, from the farmer to the consumer, a cruelty to both. Suppose a loaf at ten pence: one penny goes for the land, five pence at most to the farmer, for profit, wages of labourers, cattle, &c., and four pence to the millers, dealers, and bakers—a most exorbitant proportion. While in France the law has provided, that every baker, butcher, or fuel merchant, shall have a capital proportioned to pay in ready money, or by means of obligations on the banks. These dealers give little or

no credit, and the articles come cheaper to the consumer than we can form any idea of in England. A family now at Versailles pays for the best wheaten bread, where the farmer gets as much for his corn as in England, five pence for four lbs. of $17\frac{1}{2}$ English ounces each, or, what is the same, the quartern loaf; and for a most excellent sweet wholesome bread, in which there is a proportion of rye, not quite three pence half-penny English currency. Yet there are few parts of France well cultivated: in some provinces, Burgundy, Champagne, and Franche Comté, they know not what it is to fold sheep, nor to have artificial grasses. The teeth of their harrows are everywhere of wood, and the ploughs of the same construction as four hundred years ago.

Another fact is important: Lord Somerville states, "that the bran and pollard pay for grinding. A quarter of wheat makes a sack of fine flour, and half a sack of seconds." Therefore the proportional value is as two to three: yet the price has generally been but a sixth lower, and the average of last year has shown it to be even higher. This proves that flour is sold at much too high a price. Let us take wheat as among the easiest examples, though certainly not the most favourable in establishing the fact as to the gains of middle dealers, they being much greater on many other kinds of goods here enumerated.

	<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Wheat, during last year, averaged, according to accounts before parliament ^(h)	2	14	5¼
The allowance for grinding and baking, by the act, is	0	18	0
	£.3 12 5¼		
Lord Somerville says, that the quarter of wheat produces 120 loaves, which at the present price of 9½ <i>d.</i> , but allowing for seconds say 9 <i>d.</i> , is	4	10	0
	0 17 6¾		
There remains, therefore, for middle dealers, a profit of near 25 per cent., or	0	17	6¾

Much pains will be required to draw a line free from objection as to such merchandize as ought to circulate with the accommodation of a liberal credit, and such where limits are to be prescribed; but in the sequel we shall endeavour to submit a proposal on this head so defined, as at least to entitle us to the indulgence of the public: at any rate we shall do something by

^(h) Application was made at the office in Carlton chambers for the average returns, beginning on the 1st of January, and ending on the 30th of June. It was asked, for what publication it was intended: and this work being shown, they refused to give the returns without authority for so doing: therefore we avail ourselves of the last year's, during which the average of flour was 1*s.* 2½*d.* the sack higher than the quarter of wheat, or 55*s.* 7¼*d.*

instituting an inquiry, which may hereafter be attended with better success. We are aware that we take an Herculean task upon ourselves, and our readers will already begin to despair. But it is a crying evil that we have to remove, and that without political convulsion, if possible; while compassion must be excited for those, who are, perhaps without seeing the extent of the mischief, innocently instrumental to it. With respect to the lower classes, complaints increase, their existence is at stake, and annihilation must follow before the disease can work its own cure. And though originating in feelings, as before observed, which constitute the glory of national character, yet, should it be found that the evil is without a remedy, and that a suitable discrimination is in itself a thing impracticable, what will be the natural conclusion to be drawn from it?—that there is a point towards perfection, which human institutions cannot reach—that we are already arrived at the zenith of our power and grandeur, and must begin to descend.

It will be seen, that our view in this second place of this treatise is to confine within very narrow limits, in point of time, the extent of credit to middle dealers, or forestallers, of all alimentary articles of the first necessity, and what is generally understood by raw produce, if possible to their utter discomfiture; because this

class of beings, if they are suffered to infest the markets, must live, and increase the price of articles in proportion to the means of their living, generally obtaining credit of which they are undeserving, and might turn their industry to a much better account. While to raise the price in the market, acknowledged to be a real gain, to the public in the hour of scarcity, there are enough to be found, in a country where capital is not wanting, who regulate their affairs on solid principles, and with a view to their own interests, spin out the supply, without the superfluous assistance of the former group, who neither produce nor improve any thing which passes through their hands, and require to be hunted like drones from the ranks of society ; but it must be done with caution : their army is in full march : already we descry its centre and the two wings, if they are not supported by a corps of reserve. The centre is the most formidable, and has marked on its banners liberty or death ; therefore, in order to preserve the peace, it becomes us to produce such arguments as will be convincing, that they may treat us, at least in this respect, as faithful allies to their sacred cause. The right wing supports the evasions, which may be set up as likely to be practised by the designing in opposition to our theory ; and the left the narrowness of the accommodation, which might perhaps put some of the

first purchasers of raw materials for the purpose of manufacture to inconvenience.

It is our business, therefore, in the first place, to impose a sufficient guard upon ourselves not to infringe on the liberty of the subject; in other words, to allow the enjoyment of as little control as is consistent with our relations in civil society. Something, it is an acknowledged principle, we are compelled to sacrifice to preserve public peace; and among the rest such as the various laws, many of great antiquity, called statutes of limitation, which on so many accounts have been provided by the wisdom of our ancestors, and had even been introduced under the Athenian commonwealth. In case of an "assumpsit," or promise to pay money to the plaintiff, they may plead "non assumpsit infra sex annos," he made no such promise within six years, which is an effectual bar to the complaint. This law, however, was enacted to prevent perjuries, which might ensue, if a man were allowed to bring an action for any injury committed at any distant time, and it must be seen does not apply precisely to our case; but as far as it is demonstrable, that statutes of limitation have abundant precedents, and having been advantageously enacted, avowedly for the protection of the public peace, they may with as much reason be shortened in their periods, to insure a regular supply

of food, on reasonable terms, as it would be difficult to point out any effect more likely to produce general tranquillity.

We have laws for preventing debts contracted by minors from being recovered; and they are almost as much children in domestic economy as minors, who do not pay in ready money for the necessaries of life.

Entertaining the most liberal views as to the rights of the subject, and going even beyond Adam Smith, we think with Turgot and the most decided of the French economists, that even the laws of usury may be dispensed with without danger. The same with monopoly; and we profess ourselves friendly even to the principle of noninterference in its fullest extent. Yet monopolies, which are not conducted with discretion, are ruinous in their effects; call them forestalling, regrating, or engrossing; where the parties have not sufficient capital to protect themselves, therefore, though the law may not oppose them, they deserve not the protection of the law: it is an extremely different thing to wink at the licence and to lend it support. We have the authority of Lord Coke for saying, that "monopoly was without law, but never without friends." And it has too many; but, like usury, we ourselves conceive it imprudent to have laws to restrain it.

We are not making new laws, but withdrawing

the protection of those at present existing in certain cases. We hope we are improving in morality, at least in a sense of honour and a horror of shame. This state of feeling stamps the character of an Englishman's transactions with the world, and makes repeals more wise than adding to our numerous statutes, which generally violate the constitutions of free states.

We dislike the interference even in France, which however is conducted on a principle less inimical to approved maxims than most of our excise laws. We have numerous restraints on pawn-brokers, publicans, brewers, and many others. The customs alone confine a variety of channels, which would otherwise be open to general commerce; and so jealous is the common law of England, that it attempts to prevent the spirit of engrossing corn by suffering it not to be sold in the sheaf.

However, it is not our business to overturn any prevailing system, by the slightest renewed attack on individual liberty. Under these several considerations it is our purpose to propose, *that the courts of law or equity take no cognizance of actions for debt a month after the delivery; either of articles of food of indigenious or foreign growth or manufacture, of any of the produce of a farm, or of any raw produce used in our manufactures.*

Trifling and daily occurrences of this nature will still be under the regulation of courts of requests, and as far as the jurisdiction of magistrates extends.

We are far from taking credit to ourselves, of which we should be undeserving, were we to claim originality in introducing this measure; it is to Mr. Playfair that we are indebted for the idea *in a more confined sense*, and also for some of our remarks upon it, in a work accompanying his ingenious tables on this subject.

Under such a regulation can the rich suffer? No; only the necessity of putting a little more order into the management of their affairs; what they had eaten must be paid for, or they would have no more to eat. Would the poor feel much distress from it? No; those who trust them a few days, as good neighbours, will not require the protection of law. How is it between seller and buyer? It certainly narrows the market⁽¹⁾;

(1) Which a certain Scotch peer will complain of: in short, nothing but a system of loans, from government down to the pauper, can widen the markets to his taste. He happily stands alone in this opinion; and having already one leg in the grave, the other will hardly advance another step to save his country. Such ideas are of a piece with his profound ideas on the sinking fund, hitherto considered as "a new way to pay old debts," but according to him "the devil to pay."

that is, it makes fewer engaged in raising prices on the consumer: but all business would be done on solid principles, and abundant trouble saved to all parties, as transactions would generally be completed at the time of delivery, or while in memory, as far as respects the articles in question, which form a material part of our intercourse with each other.

Having endeavoured to establish a rule, and reasoned a little on its advantages, we must next consider the evasions which may be practised in opposition to our theory; and we really think they can hardly be numerous, or very available. The temptations would be greatest, where the intercourse takes place between the cities and the provinces; but which, by means of bankers or agents, would be generally very easily removed. Some inconvenience, however, will occasionally arise among a certain class of traders, who have not this resource, and where the waggoner or coaster are only known between the parties; and were these cases more numerous, they chiefly occur as to manufactured goods and luxuries, on which long credits are still allowed to be extended and have legal protection; and where this is not the case, remittances to a certain extent for the most part are, or ought to be, in every tradesman's power worthy of credit. However,

to remedy as much as possible the inconvenience in this respect, it might not be imprudent to afford the protection of the laws to an extension of credit in distant transactions.

It is easy to see, that a dealer who gives no credit with his corn, his bread, his meat, or his cotton for manufacture, may lend money to an equal amount to pay for them, and thereby give the same accommodation to his customers, and thus evade the want of protection from the law in so doing; but it leaves him open to proofs, which may make it appear a manœuvre between the parties, by which they may incur a certain expense on both sides, and where redress would be ineffectual. We possibly open a door to many artifices not to be foreseen, at least by a common observer; but it may be safely left to ministers, who are no novices in matters of detail, to provide the remedies.

As to the first purchasers of raw materials being put to inconvenience by the necessity of paying too soon for the articles they work up, if it produces only less speculation to their injury, they will reap, in this respect, an important advantage from it: they have country banks generally at their elbow, whose business it is to furnish accommodation on easy terms; and when we sit ourselves down to consider, how small a propor-

tion the price of the raw materials bears to manufactured goods, in iron, in cotton, or even in wool or in silk, with those who have capitals at their disposal to pay for work weekly, can the credit which they obtain with the raw material afford the slightest argument, except in very few extraordinary cases of real necessity, and where it is better on all accounts that the transaction should not take place? for where means are so cramped, trade is seldom successful.

This digression, in a work more properly confined to the four ordinary departments of the public service, it is hoped we shall be pardoned for introducing in the form of this third chapter.

Our design has been, we hope not fruitlessly, to tender our feeble services in opposing the three tried enemies of peace and plenty, the corn bill, the middle dealers, and excessive taxation. The first by recommending its repeal; the second by no coercive measure, but simply withdrawing our protection from unproductive labours; the third by suitable bounties.

Hence we flatter ourselves it will be seen, that we advocate the more than fashionable *cause of non-interference* in its utmost latitude: but, to enjoy all the advantages of it in common with our neighbours, it is necessary to remove or re-

medy the obstructions peculiar to our own case, which are, the weight of burdens, less felt by our neighbours, and that noble and generous confidence, as far as it is mischievous, which the sons of liberty and glory inspire in each other.

A pamphlet by the writer, which bears much on this question, entitled "DEARNESS NOT SCARCITY," may be had of R. Hunter, St. Paul's Churchyard, price 1s.

T H E E N D.

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Poppin's Court, Fleet Street, London.