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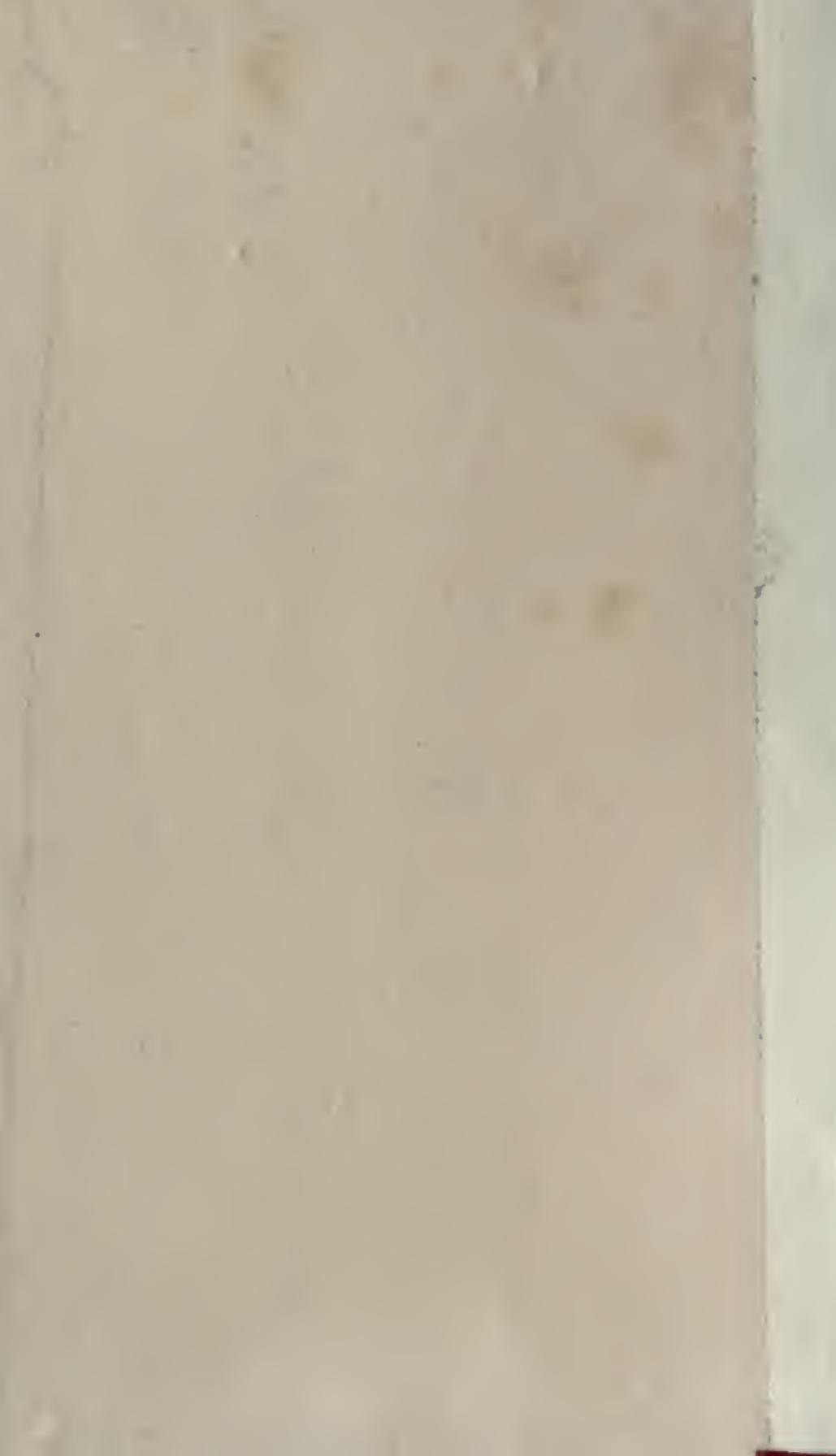


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R H C. Reynolds

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*From the columns of the Register
Lissold,
Ephes*

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

TRADE, MANUFACTURES,

AND

Commerce,

OF THE

BRITISH EMPIRE,

ADDRESSED TO THE

MERCHANTS OF THE METROPOLIS,

ON THEIR LATE

Petition to Parliament.

Φείδω τῶν κλειανῶν.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR J. M. RICHARDSON, 23, CORNHILL,
OPPOSITE THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

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OBSERVATIONS,

ſc. ſc.

THE relief of the Commercial Interests ranks among the first and most important subjects of public consideration. Indeed the momentous crisis has, at length, arrived, when every man of feeling and information is alive to the question, whence the miseries of an unhappy people are derived and how they can be relieved.

In vain have remedies hitherto been sought for, or palliatives applied. The evil has gone on progressively increasing, till it has assumed a most dangerous magnitude. Our cities are thronged with numberless multitudes, whose countenances are clouded with sullen despair and dark desperation. Visionaries and empirics still traverse the kingdom, preaching disaffection and dispersing sedition. Discontent spreads "as a plague spot;—concession produces commotion,

—restraint precipitates rebellion, — while infidelity, like an unextinguished volcano, bursts anew, and rolls its devastating lava over the whole face of the country. *Lean unwashed artificers*,—desperate and profligate men,—criminals escaped from justice,—*a banded multitude of robbers and assassins*,—the very filth and offal of the state, counsel and control the people. Rank and authority are derided and insulted, in secret or in public,—knowledge is rejected and despised,—ignorance and indigence alone command respect,—to be poor is to be enlightened,—to be rich is a crime.

Thus the weak are intimidated, and the wealthy denounced; there never was a period when so much of the capital of the country was withdrawn for the purpose of being invested in foreign securities; a sort of panic seizes the public mind; there is a general *sauve qui peut* amid moneyed men, each endeavouring to outran the other in removing capital from the country.* It is said, also, to be a well-known fact, that some noble lords, intimate friends and allies of his Majesty's ministers, have sold large sums out of our funds, for the purpose of investing them in foreign securities.†

At a time when every artifice was successfully used, which the audacity of falsehood could invent, to deceive the credulous by tales of ficti-

* Mr. A. Baring.

† Mr. Ellice.

tious distress, and excite the worthless by malignant outcries of cruel oppressions;—when crested sedition was excused, and became bold in its impunity, and levelling audacity was countenanced in its insults upon the wealthy and the great,—it was not to be wondered at, that the ignorant and the timid, should feel doubtful of the future fate of their country.

Then it was, that men, whose sensibility and humanity it were indecent to ridicule, became anxious to investigate the cause of these evils;*—but alas, they found nothing so formidable to encounter in the inquiry, as their own political prejudices and party animosities. They wept inflammatory tears over the miseries of the poor, till their accumulated sorrows depraved their intellect and disturbed their imagination. Is an inquiry proposed into the state of the manufacturing districts?—some revolutionary martyr, “shaking his gory locks,” rises and demands retribution. The meeting at Manchester must therefore be inquired into.—Poor laws and sinecures,—the currency of the country, and the confinement of Hunt,—a minimum of wages, and the inquest at Oldham,—duties on imports, and the Liverpool Orangemen,—the corn laws and the magistracy of the country,—the steam engines at Manchester, and the whole machinery of the

* Mr. Bennett's motion, December 9th, 1819.

state, are subjects so inextricably connected in their minds, that any inquiry into the one, necessarily involves the discussion of the other also. They feel the feverish pulse of their country, and sigh *for just so much public calamity, as would serve to turn Ministers out and get themselves in.** Thus it is that the miseries of a million of people are mocked and derided;—it is thus, that faction and fury, and mad exasperation, are fed and encouraged.

That the discussion of a question, which involved not only the prosperity of the nation, but the very existence of a large portion of its most useful members, should have been regarded as a fit occasion for the indulgence of political spleen and rancorous hostility, is indeed a lamentable instance how men of the mildest natures, may insensibly yield themselves up to the guidance of the demon of discord. But it was no sooner obvious, that the desolations of distress were wielded, both by public faction and party animosity, as weapons in the contest for power, than it became the opinion of many, that you, who are the natural representatives of the great manufacturing and trading interests of the country, should publicly appear, as the promoters of a parliamentary inquiry, on a subject purely commercial.

* Mr. Wilberforce.

A petition was accordingly prepared, setting forth,—*that you were deeply impressed with a sense of the distressed state of the commercial and manufacturing interests,—of the general want of confidence, and of the extensive and increasing evils which are the natural consequence of this state of things, and therefore of the pressing necessity, THAT LEGISLATIVE MEASURES SHOULD, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BE ADOPTED FOR THE RELIEF OF THOSE INTERESTS.* And you, being apprehensive that the *House* would adjourn without adopting any measures tending to an inquiry into the causes of those evils, and, at the same time, feeling satisfied, that if such inquiry were to be instituted, the result would be extensively beneficial, by laying open those causes, and bringing under the view of the *House* the means by which you confidently believe the existing evils may be alleviated and eventually removed,—you intreat most earnestly, that the *House* will take this most important subject into their most serious consideration, and that such an inquiry may be instituted, as shall put the *House* into full possession of the various causes which have operated with such lamentable effects; that the *House* may thus be enabled to form a correct judgment of the measures which it may be expedient to adopt.

Thus, agreeably to precedent, no matter how objectionable the proceeding might be, you respectfully approached the legislature of your

country. It is obscurely hinted, that *something* has, at length, been discovered; though no one knows either the means or the end, nor can describe with distinctness what that *something* is; indeed, it is much to be feared, that you yourselves, have fixed on no practicable plan of relief, nor formed any distinct termination of your views. But as you have succeeded, by the opinions you have promulgated, in seducing the nation into the belief, that the existing evils can be removed by *legislative interference*, it may not be improper to examine the grounds upon which such belief is founded.

Of the petition itself little can be said, for but little is known. It anticipates most important advantages, but with becoming modesty refrains from suggesting to the House, the means by which such advantages are to be obtained. The deficiency is, notwithstanding, in some measure supplied, by the opinions of those who promoted, and of those who supported the petition. But since there are few persons of knowledge and experience, who will endure the labour of investigating mere opinions, in the absence of the facts upon which they are grounded; and since there are more, who, being wholly unaccustomed to such investigations, would consider them to be useless;—therefore, the subjects which have been proposed for the examination of a Com-

mittee shall merely be stated, and the opinions* of those contrasted with each other, who think that the existing distress may be removed by legislative interference, that men of ordinary apprehensions may understand, from the confused and contradictory schemes which have been suggested, whether the nation ought to anticipate the enjoyment of those extensive advantages, which you so confidently predict will result from *legislative inquiry*; or rather, whether this system of dependence on the measures of the government has not tended to paralyze the energies of commercial enterprise, by which alone tranquillity and public prosperity can be restored to the nation.

It was said, that relief† might be expected, by a modification of the several stages for the return to cash-payments, and by inquiring whether the price fixed for bullion in the first payment, should not continue during the whole time of the preparatory transactions, also whether payments in silver might not answer all purposes, as well as payments in gold; for the state of the currency has‡ a very material effect upon the distresses of the country. By the issue of a pro-

* See Mr. Bennett's motion for an inquiry into the state of the manufacturing districts, December 9, 1819; and the debates on the petition of the London Merchants, &c.

† Mr. Irving.

‡ Mr. A. Baring.

per circulating medium, we should have been saved a great addition to the national debt.

On the other hand, it is more reasonably urged,* that a cause so totally inadequate as the resumption of Cash-payments, cannot be productive of so great an effect as the prevailing distresses; or, admitting it to be the source of the evil,† it is, at the same time, also admitted, that the existing regulations cannot be disturbed; for that nothing could be more fatal than any interference with the system already adopted, and any thing calculated to favour the cry against the arrangements which have been determined on, would inevitably increase the mischief and confusion. To which it may be added, that since the return to Cash-payments has been effected, its operation on the commerce of the country, has been found to be neither baneful nor beneficial. Thus much, for the advantages to be derived from this first branch of the inquiry.

A minimum of wages is another subject to which it is proposed to direct the attention of a committee. If 100,000 men,‡ it is said, are engaged in trade, and 20,000 of that body are compelled to work on terms inadequate to their support, the remainder must supply the deficiency, or the country generally must be encumbered for that purpose; and as the wages of the operative

* Mr. Ricardo.

† Mr. Brougham.

‡ Mr. A. Baring.

labourer have, from this cause, been materially reduced, the distress it occasions may be remedied by examining into the character and operation of the poor-laws.

It is difficult to conceive, how any discussion of the principles by which the poor-laws punish the industrious or compel the idle to labour, is to acquaint us with the cause, why he who is free to fix what price he will upon his labour, is reduced to pauperism, and then compelled to work on terms inadequate to his support. Or, if it be admitted, that a deficient demand for our manufactured articles and a consequent excess of population, be the cause of the existing distress, and of the increase of paupers, it is equally difficult to conceive how that cause can be removed by any inquiry into the treatment of paupers and the system of the poor-laws.

Then again, it has been said,* that the demand for the manufactures of the country would revive, but for the disturbed state of the manufacturing districts.

Thus, disturbance is caused by distress, and distress by the deficient consumption of our manufactured goods, both at home and abroad. To what purpose then, it may be asked, will a committee inquire into the cause of the deficient demand for goods, if that demand will revive and increase

* Mr. A. Baring.

on the restoration of order? or, why is their attention to be directed to the restoration of order, as the means of relief, if distress be the cause of disturbance?

The heavy burden of taxation is the next subject for inquiry. Two instances among many are selected; the tax upon wool, and the tax upon silk. We are informed, that if the committee were appointed,* and the woollen manufacturers were examined, the committee would be told, that they must either give up the trade, or the tax.

And yet, some of these same manufacturers (for in every stream 'tis said there is an eddy, which for a time opposes its course) who were very lately deputed to oppose this tax, admitted, in a liberal and laudable spirit, their ability to *undersell* the foreign manufacturer, notwithstanding this ruinous tax upon wool.

It has not yet been ascertained, whether the evidence to be given before the committee by the silk manufacturers, in favour also of their exemption from taxation, would be in any thing more consistent, than that which has so lately been given by the woollen manufacturers themselves.

It may be safely assumed, that the weakest examples were not selected, to strengthen the assertion, that this species of taxation was the

* Mr. Ellice.

cause of distress. If, therefore, our manufacturers can successfully compete with the foreigner, in his own market, when there is a demand for his goods, notwithstanding the weight of this tax, by what kind of argument is the committee to be convinced, that all similar taxes are the source of distress.

It is, however, reasonable to suppose, that some modification of the tax upon wool might be effected, if in any case it can be shown, that it excludes the manufacturer from the foreign market.* With such exceptions, if any there be, it is obvious that an exemption from the tax, would be a direct contribution from the purse of the public, to the pockets of individuals, rather than any alleviation of the wants of the poor: for examples are not wanting to prove,

* The effect of the unequal operation of this tax, on fine and coarse woollens, would seem *prima facie*, to merit the attention of the House. On an average of the former it is equivalent to a duty of 5 per cent. while on the latter, the average cannot be less than 15 to 20 per cent. This remark applies only to such woollens as are manufactured from foreign wool, or from that quality of English wool which competes with the foreign. If the duty were so adjusted, as to equalize its burthen on all descriptions of woollens, its operation would be less pernicious to the trade in general, equally productive to the revenue, and more effectual as a premium on the growth of fine wool in England.

that liberal wages are not immediately nor necessarily consequential to large profits.

We are informed that the value of land in the manufacturing districts, has followed the decline of trade and manufactures. The manufacturing interests are clamorous against high prices; the agricultural interests among them, say, unless you keep the prices high, we cannot exist. The former cannot carry on their trade, unless prices are lowered;—the latter cannot pay rent and taxes, nor exist as a class of men, unless prices are raised higher.* Indeed it is the strange but strong feature of the intensity of the great distress, that from the largest land-owner to the humblest weaver, a great uneasiness and depression prevails.†

To relieve this distress, the tax upon wool must first be removed, notwithstanding its operation contributes to assist the farmer in supporting the burthens of which he complains. And the fact has not been disproved by the manufacturers themselves, that this tax does not upon the whole affect in any material degree the consumption of their goods; it is also proved to be beneficial to the farmer; and it will hereafter be productive to the state. If this be true, that which was before stated, is again true;—that the removal of the tax, would so far impoverish the agriculturist

* Mr. Bennett.

† Mr. Baring.

and diminish the resources of the state, to enrich the manufacturer, without advantage to the poor.— But yet, the removal of this tax, and therefore of all similar taxes, is named as a means of relief, for the consideration of the committee.

A revision of the laws relating to corn is also proposed. The result of those laws, by enhancing the necessaries of life, is to raise the price of labour, which consequently reduces the profits upon capital; and when the profits upon capital are low here, while they are high in other countries, capital naturally goes out of this country.*

It is admitted that these laws do in some measure maintain the high price of corn; on the other hand, it is not denied, that the farmer is too heavily burthened already, and that he cannot pay rent and taxes if corn be low; yet to lighten his load corn must be *reduced!* †

* Mr. Ricardo.

† Much has been written to prove, that the duty on the import of foreign corn, resolves itself into that division of property which goes to the rent, and therefore that the landlord is thus indemnified for his taxes at the expense of the community, without benefit to the tenant. If corn be maintained by the operation of causes independent of protecting duties and prohibitory statutes, above the price that is required to repay the tenant for his labour and skill, and the use of his capital, the surplus profit is justly resolved into rent. In such cases the value of land cannot otherwise increase than as the value

Again,* wages are regulated by the proportion which capital bears to population. This country

of property in general increases. On the other hand, if that price be maintained by artificial means it is true that the landlord ultimately reaps the surplus profit, and the public is, in the same ratio, unjustly taxed. In this case the value of land is maintained or may even increase while all other property decreases in value.—It is affirmed that this effect is now produced by the duty which is imposed on the import of foreign corn. But the import price of corn was determined by a calculation of the profits which were necessary to repay the tenant for the capital and skill he employed, according to a rental of land at its then average value. At no period during the war was the value of land so low.—Has the value of property in general, fallen below it?—Have the burthens of the state, or the expenses of the tenant, since that time, been diminished?—If not, it is obvious that the profits which were *then* necessary to repay him for his skill and capital, cannot *now* be resolved into rent, by the operation of this duty, nor can the landlord thus shift from his shoulders the weight of taxation. Therefore to admit a free importation of corn, without any diminution of the public debt, is in effect, to throw a large portion of the country out of cultivation, and in the same degree to sacrifice for the protection of the fundholder, the capital which is invested in land.—On the other hand, to diminish the public debt without a corresponding diminution of the duty on corn, is in the same proportion to sacrifice the property of the public creditor for the protection of the agriculturist: in fact, the question as to which of these measures shall be adopted for the *immediate* relief of the country, lays wholly between the public creditor and the land-owner; but the practicability and policy of adopting either, at the present juncture, may fairly be ques-

* Mr. Ricardo.

possesses a large capital, a limited extent of soil, and an increasing population; therefore the profits are lower here than they are in those countries where this limitation does not exist; and our capital follows where profit invites it.

Where this limitation does not exist, it is assumed, that as capital is not transferred without motive or advantage, no other check equally powerful exists; and where profits are high, the operative labourer is not compelled to exchange his labour on terms inadequate to his support; hence it must be inferred that the condition of the poor is not depressed, for the same exuberant profit which causes a demand for labour, makes poverty impossible.

But are these conclusions justified by the state of the foreign markets? Has our manufacturing capital been transferred? Is the condition of the lower classes abroad superior to that of our own poor?—Without consulting any other source of knowledge, we know that the mighty misery sweeps like a pestilence over the whole continent of Europe and America; that emigrat-

tioned. If agriculture and commerce 'wax and wane together,' a *gradual* diminution of the public burdens, accompanied by a like diminution of the duty on corn, is the only safe and prudent course for the legislature to pursue; but it were easy to prove that the operation of such measures could not be productive of the *immediate* relief anticipated by the petitioners.

ing artificers and labourers wander in wretchedness through foreign climates, soliciting in vain that employment, and those liberal wages, which are said to be the result of large profits abroad and the transfer of our trading capital. The delusion which led them from their native home has vanished; they are either hired to lawless adventurers, or for plunder, barter their liberty to military freebooters.*—The speculating noble, the wealthy Jew, and the jobbing capitalist, when their judgement is allured by the hope of gain, may exchange for a time, British for foreign securities; but the manufacturing and trading capital of the country is not so readily transferred.

The next and last subject for the committee to examine, will be the system of restrictions and restraints upon commerce,† which, though advisable in time of war, is hardly desirable to be continued in time of peace. We are told that trade is depressed by unwise prohibitions, and industry crippled by unnatural restraints; that what is wanted of foreign productions, cannot be imported and consumed at home, while that which is superfluous at home, cannot be exported and

* They who on their arrival in America are unable to defray the expenses of their passage out, are sold like beasts in the open markets. A melancholy instance of the barbarous and avaricious policy of our transatlantic friends.

† Mr. Irving.

manufactured abroad; in fine, that freedom of trade is the road to wealth, while protection and exclusion conduct to ruin.

With what facility this system of prohibitions and restrictions, behind which commerce has for ages found protection, may be broken up, or its reform become a source of present relief, will be best understood by a hasty review of the rise of the system itself. Such a review will very briefly show, how commerce grew up to strength and maturity, and how its final prosperity was insured by prohibitions which induced, and laws which compelled the consumption of our home manufactures, until the effects of that system imperceptibly entered into and influenced, either immediately or remotely, the value and security of almost every description of property in the kingdom: and thus the danger of precipitate innovation, in an ancient and complex policy, and the relief it would give, may readily be estimated.

In the very remotest periods of our history, the country appears to have been rich, and comparatively powerful, in proportion as protection was extended to industry and commerce. Thus it was that shipping gradually multiplied, and the science of navigation led the way to the possession of extensive colonies. Then opened a new field for ambition, and a new direction was given to the struggles of rival and commercial nations. The

waters of the ocean were dyed with blood, by the nations of Europe, in search after gold,—commerce commenced a rapid career of advancement,—and naval dominion arose.

Here, therefore, when other nations began to feel the importance of commerce, may the historian commence his inquiries into the annals of our commercial protections. He who will carry his researches farther back, and penetrate the obscurities of time, may collect facts, curious indeed, and amusing, but too remotely affecting the subject before us, to attract serious attention.

Elizabeth, seeing the great advantages to be derived from trade and manufactures, granted them powerful protection, by laws which secured them from the injurious effects of an importation of such articles of foreign production, as rivalled our home manufactures.

These encouragements, combined with other circumstances, drew from the Netherlands a large capital, and the most valuable improvements.

Under the reign of the pedantic James, a vigorous commerce was carried on, by which the people were greatly enriched; but advantages were lost which ought to have been preserved, by resistance to the encroachments which were made by the Dutch, on our prohibitory system. In consequence of the measures which were afterwards adopted, to recover those advantages, a virtuous

but misguided Monarch, ennobled a scaffold with his blood.

This system, which had been neglected by James, and but feebly defended by Charles, was, after an expensive but an inglorious contest, maintained by his son.

As commerce and conquest are not necessarily allied, the wars which succeeded and secured the liberties of England, brought no consolations of profit, to those whose glory is gain.

The French, ever studious of the interests of trade, watched with jealous vigilance the growing greatness of our commerce and manufactures, and profited much by a temporary but unwise relaxation of our prohibitory laws, during the peace of Utrecht. New bounties, prohibitions, and restrictions, were soon afterwards required to secure to the nation, the advantages of exclusive commerce to our newly acquired possessions, in the East and West. Some approximation, indeed, to the principles of a free trade was effected in 1786, when a commercial intercourse, founded on the basis of reciprocity, was agreed to between France and England. In respect of national produce, it is well known that France possessed every superiority; but this disadvantage was more than compensated to us, by the perfection to which our manufactures had attained under the restrictive

system; so that this period was happily termed the "*honey moon*" of our connexion with that country.

During the finance war which followed, the system of restrictions and prohibitions was carried to a most unexampled extent, and the extraordinary difficulties in which the country was involved, led ultimately to the adoption of the boldest experiments on the sources of wealth that were ever recorded. The public expenditure rose gradually from 17 millions to upwards of 60 millions. As successive burdens were imposed, and property of every description was fathomed and measured, its resources were disclosed; its nominal value increased, in proportion to the imposts it had to sustain; the productions of nature and of art, of land or of labour, rose to the same level, and that level was maintained by a rigorous enforcement of the prohibitory system.

Foreign competition was the consequence of peace; and then it was discovered, that whilst all other manufacturers were *entrenched to the teeth* by bounties and prohibitions, or had attained such perfection and strength under the protecting system, as enabled them to maintain without loss, a contest with their rivals, one class (the manufacturers of land, who sustain the burden of the poor, and supply their share to the exigencies of the state) remained unprotected. Laws were,

therefore, passed, restricting the importation of foreign corn.

Thus, hath the prohibitory system had existence from those remote periods, when rival and rude nations first discovered the importance of commerce, down to our own times, till at length, all our political relations, and property of whatever description, have become essentially implicated in it. This fact alone, if none other existed, is sufficient to check those wild expectations of advantage, that are encouraged by the clamour for speedy innovation in an ancient system, in which only length of time, prudence, and practical wisdom can, with safety, effect a reform. Indeed, it is always extremely difficult to determine, what remote interests may be affected, or what may be benefited, in any single case, by the repeal of a prohibitory statute. A more diffuse, or more complicated question, or one of greater delicacy and difficulty, could not be discussed; it proposes no less than the reconciliation of every jarring and discordant interest in the state.* If the immediate reform of such a system can be rendered productive of relief to the nation, the

* The order of nature, teaches all nations to adopt freedom of trade, as their only true policy. But, however sound this principle may be in theory, it is found that in the conduct of affairs, the most formidable difficulties occur to oppose its adoption.

committee must exercise a keenness of perspicacity, to enable them to pursue consequences to a far greater distance, than previous committees have hitherto done, or their zeal for reform will but increase the disorders they pretend to remedy.

Having thus cursorily considered the opinions of those who support the petition, it appears that the cause of the existing distress is attributed to—

1. Currency.
2. Poor-laws.
3. National debt.
4. Prohibitory laws.

And though many of these subjects have been considered before by previous committees, yet at every new crisis at which the country arrives, it is always expected that they should be considered again. Upon each of them evidence is to be heard;—deputations of merchants, manufacturers, and traders, must crowd the doors of the committee, each pregnant with some scheme of interest, to increase his own gains, and lessen those of his competitors.—The facts admitted by one class, are to be contradicted by another.—Contradictions produce doubts, and doubts are productive of discussions, *which the pertinacity of political disputants may continue without end.*—Nevertheless, these claims upon the attention of the House have been at all times attentively listened to, when

respectfully urged, not on account of any immediate or extensive relief which such investigations are likely to produce, but because the House is ever moved by any general distress, to sympathize with the nation.

And when will the labours of these committees be concluded?—are the profligate and the worthless, to be invigorated by delay?—can private benevolence soothe disaffection and calm exasperation?—or, what at last will be the relief which is to content the restless, and rejoice the country? The public is perplexed to understand, by what means you will quicken and enlarge the comprehension of the House, annihilate the obstructions of prejudice and party, analyze contradictions into principles, and effectually put to shame the anti-patriotic sophistries of interest, upon questions which have hitherto served but to display logical conflicts, vehement animosities, and puerile ostentations of theoretical knowledge.

Experience hath shown, that no period can be assigned for the termination of such investigations, and it will hardly be consistent in those who affirm that legislative interference can alone relieve the country, to solicit the aid of private charity; with much less consistency will they refer the bankrupt manufacturer and the wretched mechanic, to the laborious reports of a Bullion Committee, or point to frigid speculations on

the poor-laws, the reports on prohibitory laws, or to crude and half digested schemes for the payment of the national debt.

Hope, without help, may alleviate for a time the load of affliction; but repeated disappointment enervates the mind, or drives it to madness. When the dream of assistance is over, hunger will again torture the wretched to crime, famine will awaken them to fierceness, and atheism urge them to blood. The nation will therefore have cause to look with serious apprehension, to the possible failure of your honest and well-meaning endeavours.

Surely the charge of exciting discontent, will properly attach to those, who under the vain hope of removing the existing evils by legislative interference, shall only revive those empty cries,—“No prohibitions,—no restrictions,—a free trade,* and down with the Corn bill.”—“No Jews nor old women,—no National Debt,—Liberty and Equality, and down with the poor laws.”—The miscarriages, into which you would thus plunge the legislature of your country, cannot but lead the ignorant and the superficial, to discredit the ability of the House to manage with advantage the affairs of the people, and weaken the de-

* What is a *free trade*?—It is a term of large and comprehensive signification;—by many commercial writers of the present day, it is defined to be, a *free importation of corn!*

clining confidence of the nation in the safety of the state.—Let such inauspicious events and incautious conduct, terrify the country with doubts, rouse discontent, and excite unhappy divisions;—Let dejected petitioners swell the battalions of reformers,—while you, gentlemen, are busily engaged in withdrawing your capital, and the Revolutionist in taking advantage of the confusion,—Infidelity herself would embrace you, and Radicalism rejoice in such able coadjutors.*

But whence is the necessity for encountering these evils?—why rush upon this mass of mischiefs?—You answer,—that the profit of the Capitalist being less here than it is abroad, capital is withdrawn, consequently commerce languishes, and the country is endangered.

If such be indeed the fact, surely the most important inquiry would be, whether foreign commerce be the basis upon which the happiness and security of the nation ought to have been built. A merchant it has been said† very properly is a Citizen of the World; it is in a great measure indifferent to him from what place he carries on his trade, and a very trifling disgust will make

* Those who fail in their efforts to obtain relief by legislative measures, may at least consistently appear hereafter in the ranks of the parliamentary reformers.

† Adam Smith.

him remove his capital, and together with it, the industry which it supports, from one country to another.

The ephemeral existence of those states which have made the prosperity of commerce, the first principles of their political economy, and considered it to be the basis of their power and greatness, affords ample room for serious reflection.—Mercantile capital is withdrawn, and the safety of the state is endangered!—Alas, well may the Historian and the Philosopher hereafter exclaim, “Where is that haughty city, once opulent and powerful, whose trade enabled her to give laws to the world, whose wealth equipped fleets and armies?”—And as he wanders on the banks of that glorious river, on whose bosom the wealth of Empires has floated, or surveys the relics of fallen greatness in Broad-street or Change-alley, he may perchance stumble on some ponderous record of your wealth, and by deciphering the period of our fall from the columns of a ledger, learn that the spirit of a people, resolute and free, sunk like a taper in the socket, because, the life-blood of the state was profit on trade!

But to return to our subject. The fact is, a population has been cherished in the sunshine of commercial prosperity; the day of distress visits them, they are clamorous and perishing for food, and what is the reply?—Look to the Government,

say the Merchants, we shall abandon the country because the profit on capital is low :—You must *die* says the Political Economist, no possible sacrifices of the rich can save you, there is no relief for your miseries but in the *grave* :—Revenge cries the agitator and the infidel ; revenge will explain your political rights,—equality or death :—The people blaspheme and are rebellious, says the Magistrate,—the law must repress them,—unsheath the sword !!

Amid the uproar and confusion that follow, from the furious contests of lawless disorder, with the Ministers of public justice, the people pause to reflect, and during *the dread stillness of condensing storms*, with the simplicity of honest ignorance, but in the energetic language of freemen, they thus address themselves to you.

“ Whilst other nations have dug silver and gold
 “ from the bowels of the earth, we have been a
 “ mine to our country :—for the last twenty years
 “ you have been growing rich by our labours :
 “ —your wealth encouraged our activity, and re-
 “ warded our ingenuity :—we were contented,
 “ and disdained dependence, we were happy, and
 “ blessed God for the increase of our families.—
 “ But now we are called a superfluous popula-
 “ tion :—we ask for employment, and are advised
 “ to emigrate ; but when away from our homes,
 “ should we think on the hills and green fields of

“ our native land, our spirit and activity, would
 “ languish and die within us,—we should feel
 “ that we had ceased to be Englishmen;—our
 “ cottages, our fire-sides, nay the very air that we
 “ breathe, though unwholesome, is dear to us;—
 “ our life is the whirl of our machines and the
 “ bustle of trade;—we have the feelings and
 “ affections of our nature, and we cannot like
 “ brutes be transferred to new pastures.—Wise
 “ men, called economists, have also told us that
 “ we are become too numerous to be profitable,
 “ —that pestilence and famine must destroy us,—
 “ that we must be *starved into annihilation* for the
 “ advantage of trade.* But we have looked to the
 “ original of things, and we find that the designs
 “ of a beneficent Providence evince as much kind-
 “ ness and concern for the poor as for the rich,
 “ and we will not thus ignobly perish for the profit
 “ of others;—*self preservation is the first law of*
 “ *our nature,* AND WE DARE TO THINK OUR-
 “ SELVES MEN.†—Cunning and designing per-

* No reduction of our manufacturing population is consistent with the obligations we are under of supplying the exigencies of the state, and creating annually new wealth for the gradual extinction of our debt; for it is only by their productive labour that this can be effected.

† “ *We must die any way,*” said the women of Culrain, as they rushed among the bayonets,—“ *better to die here than in America, or at the Cape of Good Hope.—We don’t care for our lives.*”

“ sons, who secretly triumph in our distress,
 “ have mingled in this crowd, some to rob us of
 “ our religion, that they may deprive us of all
 “ consolation in our distress, and drive us to
 “ desperation,—some of our loyalty, that they may
 “ urge us through blood to seize upon power,—
 “ and some of our confidence in the government,
 “ that they may frighten his Majesty to a change
 “ of his Ministers.—The serpent’s cunning and
 “ the adder’s poison are upon their tongue ;—they
 “ would have us petition with the sword,—through
 “ poverty and despair we listened and were mad ;
 “ —but we are neither infidels to our God nor
 “ traitors to our King ;—we care neither for Whig
 “ nor for Tory,—we want neither Universal Suf-
 “ frage nor Annual Parliaments,—but we hunger
 “ and thirst for that labour which the use of your
 “ capital alone can create. * * * *

* * * * *

“ *Good people*,—WE can suggest no means for
 “ your relief, but a sense of decency compels us
 “ to petition the legislature on your behalf :* be
 “ patient therefore,—peruse the learned reports
 “ of the House upon your case,—*contemplate and*

* “ It is said, the remedy is beyond the control of Parliament.
 Even if it were so, and though it could be clearly made out that
 no positive benefit would follow the labours of the Committee,
 yet, I insist that the House of Commons is called upon, by a sense
 of decency, to institute an inquiry.”—Mr. A. Baring.

“ *be instructed,*—WHILE WE ARE ENGAGED IN
 “ WITHDRAWING OUR CAPITAL, BECAUSE PROFIT
 “ IS LOW.”

When men of real integrity and ability in a state, can thus let their anxieties for their personal interests, so easily take the place of a patriotic concern for the national welfare, WHEN THEY EVINCE THE FEAR OF LOSING WEALTH RATHER THAN OF ENDANGERING LIBERTY, the period of weakness and corruption draws nigh.—Alas! where is that ardour of affection which hitherto united all classes of men for our joint preservation?—Is no tie but that of profit acknowledged?—Does national feeling languish, amid the anxieties and the admiration of wealth, and the public mind appear supine?—or, if it be roused, does it assume only a diseased and dangerous activity?—Daily events would seem at least, to warrant the assertion.

Are the poor distressed?—the minister is reviled, and must relieve them. Are the people restless?—a breathless terror seizes the rich, and they run to the state for protection. Are the gains of the trader diminished?—the legislature must be petitioned to increase them. — The wretched infatuation seizes all ranks;—the famished must be fed,—the weak and the wealthy assured,—and the profits upon commerce improved,—in short the public mind itself must be strengthened and sustained

by the Government. Upon the first appearance of difficulty, whether real or imaginary, all classes of the people lay down their load, and cry with the helplessness of infants to the Government for aid; while the stoutest minds sicken and are bowed down by this infirmity, and the ignorant indulge the rage of desperation, uttering in the fierce paroxysms of their fury, loud blasphemies and bitter revilings,—the revolutionary infidel, *fixing his hopes on public calamities, sits like a vulture, waiting for the day of carnage.*

Must the learned professions be loaded with dulness, and literary bachelors, swept from the counting-house, crowd our universities?—Shall our factories fall to decay, and our Merchants cease to be the “Great and the Honourable of the Earth?”—Must the holocaust of a million of men be offered up by the economical system of the day, for “a sweet smelling savour” to the nation, that plenty may abound and order be restored?—Shall the active and enterprising spirit of the whole nation be laid to sleep, while the Minister forms plans for the merchant, and finds employment for the poor?

God forbid!—Though mercantile energy be for the moment disproportioned to the occasion there is for activity, it cannot be unreasonable to hope, that you will eventually consult your own character, if not the safety of the state, by

throwing off this mental vassalage.—Nothing is done, or worse than nothing, by loading the table of the House with clamorous petitions; it engenders a spirit, which incapacitates men of practical knowledge, from turning to the energetic adoption of any measures calculated to relieve themselves, or their country.

To determine what remedies can be applied with success, it is necessary to investigate the cause of the existing evils.—For the last twenty years, our political and financial difficulties have operated to excite the country to an almost preternatural energy; every obstacle to commerce, and every additional tax upon trade, appeared but as premiums to some new invention. The most important mechanical improvements followed each other in rapid succession;—factories sprung up, as it were, from the ground;—the labour of more than one hundred millions of human beings, was performed by a population not exceeding fourteen millions,—and never in human story were results so splendid and stupendous obtained, by means apparently so contradictory.

But the power of production, even previous to the termination of the war, had sensibly exceeded the power of consumption, notwithstanding the monopoly we enjoyed. Upon the return of peace, the productive power of the Continent, having also greatly increased, was added to

our own, and then it was, that the magnitude of the evil became apparent. As capital abounded, and confidence was at that time unlimited, our manufacturers not only supplied the merchant with goods to the orders he received, while labour and all raw materials were high, but they also became merchants, and shipped on commission, that they might obtain by advances on the surplus quantity of their manufactured goods, (which neither the merchant nor the foreigner could purchase), the means of maintaining the credits they had raised at home.

Thus, not only was a very large portion of the real commercial capital of the country exported, but also a proportionate part of the capital which confidence had created;—thus too, were the foreign markets over-charged with our goods;—corrupt competition succeeded,—prices were reduced,—confidence was impaired, both at home and abroad, and ultimately withdrawn;—embarrassments ensued, of which forced sales were the consequence,—and returns, were for the most part made in foreign produce, the value of which has been daily diminishing, from the surplus quantity of produce, that was similarly produced by fictitious causes operating abroad, as well as by the abundance of successive harvests throughout the world.—Thus the home-markets are over-charged with foreign commodities, as

the foreign markets are glutted with our exports ; —for each payment that is made, two forced sales are effected, and the boasted increase of our revenue has proved to be the result of a trade, ostentatious indeed, but ruinous, of which we now see the vanity, and lament the failure ; neither is it any longer paradoxical to affirm that the Government is enriched, as the Country is impoverished, while both are endangered by plethora.

On the other hand, a doctrine has been broached, which is opposed to this explanation of the cause of our commercial distress. It is said, that augmented supply is identical with extended demand, and therefore, that the stagnation in trade, is not produced by the application of machinery and scientific power to increase the supply of commodities beyond the means of consumption, but by an increase in the supply of a *particular* class of commodities, unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in the supply of those other commodities which should serve as their equivalents.*

That the supply of one set of commodities constitutes the demand for another, is an axiom

* L'engorgement n'a lieu que lorsqu'il y a trop de moyens de production appliqués à un genre de production, et pas assez à un autre."—*Traité d'Economie Politique, par M. Say.*—See also the *Edinburgh Review*, No. 64, Art. 11.

in political economy, which can be admitted only with very considerable qualifications. If *one* particular kind of commodities may be increased by scientific power or by adventitious causes, beyond the means of consumption, that is, without any corresponding increase in the supply of the class which served as their equivalents, *every other* kind may in like manner be increased, and thus the evil be produced of which we complain. Demand and supply, are then no longer identically the same.

To this it has been answered, that though a glut be occasioned when an increase takes place in the supply of *some* particular commodity or class of commodities, yet when an increase takes place in the supply of commodities *in general*, the different articles are employed in the purchase of each other.*

But as commerce is very properly defined to be the exchange of equivalents, so when one class of commodities is exchanged for another, if the quantity of the one be increased without a corresponding increase in the quantity of the

* “ Je ne conçois pas que les produits de l'industrie d'une nation *en general*, puissent jamais être trop abondans, car l'un donne les moyens d'acheter l'autre. La masse des produits, compose la masse des richesses d'une nation; et les richesses sont une chose, dont les nations ne sont pas plus embarrassées que les particuliers.”—*M. Say*.

other, unless the productive cost of the whole of the increased quantity be the same as the cost of the smaller quantity, such commodities can no longer be considered as the purchasers of each other, because they are no longer reciprocally equivalent.

Therefore to affirm that in all cases, the supply of one set of commodities constitutes the demand for another, is to assume, that the productive cost of the one continues at all times to be equivalent to the productive cost of the other, than which no mode of argument can be more hypothetical, nor any hypothesis more absurd. It cannot be true in the case we have supposed, nor is it true in many more instances that might be mentioned, and these may easily happen, and in effect have happened very frequently, entailing the ruin of our commercial prosperity, producing disaffection and a spirit of insubordination, which have hitherto been checked, by restrictions upon public liberty.

Notwithstanding it is obviously manifest (so long as commodities are brought to market in such proportions that the things offered to be bartered against each other are equal in productive cost, and therefore in value,) that an increase in the supply of one class of goods will afford increased equivalents for the purchase of an increased supply of another class, yet it is not very

logical to deduce from such premises, that effectual demand is nothing more than the offering of one commodity in exchange for another, nor rational to glide into the admission that demand and supply are therefore identical.

When, in consequence of some increased power of production, an increase takes place in the supply of manufactured goods in general, it is known by experience, that a very considerable time may be required to produce a corresponding supply of equivalents. While this stagnation continues, the merchant and the manufacturer are submitting to the gradual reduction of their capital, by resorting, as their necessities urge them, to forced sales, or by bartering their goods against commodities, which are unequal in productive cost to their own.*

It is true, that a re-action is felt when a corres-

* “ Je conçois que la circulation peut être obstruée par des certains produits trop abondans; c'est un mal qui ne peut jamais être que passager, car on cesse bientôt de se livrer à une production, dont les produits excèdent les besoins, et tombent dans l'avilissement, pour s'occuper de la production des denrées recherches.”—Can the manufacturer then, readily and without loss withdraw his fixed capital, which is invested in mills and machinery, and apply it to other undertakings?—But M. Say himself, shortly afterwards adds: “ Bien des capitaux se trouvent engagés de manière à ne pouvoir jamais concourir à une autre production que celle à laquelle ils ont été voués dans l'origine.”

ponding increase takes place in the commodities which are considered as equivalents; but such dangerous oscillations between poverty and wealth, are not only unfavourable to commercial prosperity and the moral habits of the poor, but inimical to public liberty and the best interests of the country; and though it be granted, when the re-adjustment has been effected, and commodities are brought to market in quantities duly proportioned to each other, that the increased supply will be accompanied by increased demand, no conclusion can thence be deduced that demand and supply are necessarily identical. Every fact that can be brought to prove that a re-adjustment *may, at some future time*, be effected, will prove that production *has* increased, and may therefore continue to increase, beyond the power of consumption.

Hence, if the transition six years since from war to peace, be one principal cause of our present distress, by disturbing the due proportion in the quantities of the different articles brought to market, a derangement which is not even yet re-adjusted, it is clear, that however the words demand and supply may, in the logic of a review, be correlative and convertible, in correct reasoning upon commerce, such terms cannot be so applied; for if production and consumption stimulate

the increase of each other, what limit can be assigned to the increase of either?—It has been said,* that the limitation exists in the means of production; but since no allowance is made for those obstructions which occasionally retard the operations of commerce, an error is committed similar to that of which a person would be guilty in practical mechanics, if he applied the laws of theoretical mechanics without regard to friction and the resistance of mediums; for as in theoretical reasoning upon production, no limit can be assigned to human inventions, so production, like motion, may be continued *in infinitum*, by a law which is beyond human comprehension;—an absurdity, that carries its own refutation along with it.

These observations have been rendered the more necessary, because to this doctrine may be referred those opinions which prevail,—that the distress has but a temporary cause,—that palliatives alone are required, and that the *vis medicatrix commercii*, aided by legislative interference, will effectually remove it. Whereas, it is obvious, that in spite of every attempt to mitigate its effects, each succeeding re-action in commerce, is followed by concussions of increased violence and duration, which not only disturb public tran-

* M. Say.

quillity, but shake to its very base the frame and fabric of the state.

That the ancient system of commerce may in time be advantageously modified, and freed from its embarrassments, is not denied;—that the poor-laws and the public burdens aggravate the distress is also admitted.—All this is true,—and what then?—the evil which arises from the power we possess of manufacturing to a much greater extent than the home or foreign consumption requires, remains unremoved, by which a species of calamity is generated, more extensive than any ever yet known among us.

We are nevertheless told, that since the restoration of order in the manufacturing districts, trade is reviving;—a commercial re-action is said to have taken place. But whence proceeds this re-action, and how far will its consequences extend towards the extinction of the cause of our commercial distress?—Have the continental manufactories declined?—Has foreign consumption increased?—or equivalents been produced for our goods, proportioned to our power of production?—If neither the one nor the other be the cause of this boasted re-action, who does not readily perceive, that as the excess of our exports is gradually absorbed by the foreign markets, so the demand for our goods proportionately revives, and

that such commercial re-action cannot extend beyond the cause which creates it? But should the minister again have occasion to congratulate the House on a miraculous revival of trade, the experienced will regard it as the omen of an alarming crisis for the country.

New channels of commerce can alone raise the demand for our goods, to the capacity we possess of producing them, whence immediate relief might be found; therefore this is a subject to which, of all others, the serious attention of the country should be called. It is second to nothing in importance to the state.*—*Let but practical men substitute an active spirit of enterprise, for that querulous and languid dependence on the government, which is their reproach, and our condition is far from hopeless.*—Regions yet unexplored lie open to commercial adventure, nor is any other knowledge required than that which we already possess, to secure the advantages of

* Admitting that the import price of corn be annually reduced 2s. per quarter, till it reached 50s. fifteen years would be required to complete the operation; and this seems to be the most rapid diminution which the advocates for the repeal of the duty, will venture to suggest.—Will any important change in the system of the poor laws, or the cautious and gradual abolition of the restrictive system of commerce, be effected in less time? if not, what means can be resorted to, but the opening of new channels for our goods, for the relief of the abject poverty of the people?—See note page 15.

enterprise to the nation. It is but to project and perform;—under the steady guidance of experience and prudence, Prosperity is your Genius.*

Stores of exhaustless and neglected wealth, lie buried also in the British fisheries. The seas which encompass our island, stretch before us like expanded gold;—more wealth has been raised out of them in one year by strangers, than by Spain from the mines of Peru;—but our supineness has been proverbial.—Providence has placed the rich treasure at our feet, let us at length stoop to take it up. Say not “there is a lion in the way;” but boldly “launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.”

The extension and encouragement of our fisheries “is of most essential importance to the wealth and commercial prosperity, as well as to the naval strength of these kingdoms;”† and never, at any period of our history, was there an occasion, when the spirit of national enterprise

* Among the inquiries which are connected with the improvement and extension of the markets we at present possess, it is important to ascertain, whether the Governors of our colonies are men whose qualifications are suited to their trust;—whether the skill and vigour of their administration be such, that no possible commercial advantage is lost to the country by their appointment; and whether the subordinate offices also, be ably filled, and their duties comparatively well executed.

† Preamble to Act 48th Geo. III.

could be so advantageously directed to this object, as at the present. (See Appendix.)

Experienced merchants associated FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVISING SOME DISTINCT PLAN, *to be submitted, if necessary, to the attention of the House,* will better succeed in their efforts to relieve the country, than all the clamorous petitioners, the frivolous debaters, and heated politicians in the kingdom. In the feverish delirium of political dispute, objections are urged against every fact;—the main question is abandoned for frivolous disquisitions,—indecision and procrastination are the consequence,—till the time for action is passed. But the deliberations of practical men are characterised by concentration of effort, promptness of decision, prudence, skill, and rapidity of execution;—*it is for them to fill up the outline.*

Should the suggestion be adopted,—should a spirit of commercial enterprise spread itself, like the waters of the Nile, over the whole face of the country, burying in its course the political mania of the day, your example will have produced the happiest and most important results.

While mad democracy would crush beneath its hoof the laws and religion of the land; while hopeless misery produces a restless craving after change, and every Sampson that boasts his mightiness, waits to shoulder the gates of govern-

ment, IT IS FOR YOU *to lead the ignorant and deluded people back to their honest labour*;—IT IS FOR YOU *to stand in the gap between the dead and the living, to stay the plague, and bid the destroying angel depart for ever from our land.*

Let but the activity and mental energy of the country be reused, and directed to its proper object, and our difficulties, though great, are in no respect insurmountable. The sources of our wealth are not broken up, neither are they exhausted: if our prosperity have declined, it hath arisen from the neglect and abuse of the very means we possess to improve and secure it.

*“ Whatever may be the natural wealth of a people, or whatever be the limits beyond which they cannot improve on their stock, it is probable that no nation has ever yet reached those limits. The same errors in policy, and weakness of manners, which prevent the use of resources, likewise check their increase and improvement.”**

Hitherto the vigour of the nation has been unhappily suspended in anxious dependance upon the measures of government;—forgetful of the great truth, that the government itself exists by the enterprising and energetic spirit of the people;—that in all the great hazards we have ever run, amid the dangers that have threatened public

* Ferguson.

liberty, or the distresses that have clouded our commercial prosperity, the people themselves led the way to the measures by which they have triumphed.

Let us not forget, that when our very existence was menaced by foreign enemies,—when every faculty and every energy of the country was brought up to the contest,—the spirit of the people was the central impulse, etherial, mighty, and incalculable in its action upon the wise and fearless measures of the government. Let us not forget also, that during that period of most awful visitation, when the eagles of France, flying over the mouths of the Ems, the Weser, and the Elbe, threatened to exclude us from the continent of Europe; when the united energies of a most powerful confederacy were directed against our commerce; when our manufactories were depopulated for the recruiting of an army, and trade was harassed in every quarter of the globe,* no enterprise was too arduous for you to undertake, no difficulties insurmountable.—The industry of the poor was exported in defiance of danger, and the treasures of the globe were paid into your hands.—Britain was your mansion, and the world your farm.

Such was the burst of our glory ;—thus

* M. Gaudin's Report, 1807.

mighty was the spirit of commercial enterprise.— And have the events of our age brought this truth into doubt,—that every sublime effort of the government, is but an emanation from the people?— Have we yet to learn that the public mind is vitiated, its passions corrupted, and its energies debilitated, by systematically inculcating the necessity of looking to the legislature for relief?

Though such be the pernicious effects of the example of some political drivellers, it is impossible that men whose vigorous and resolute spirit has so long attracted the attention and admiration of all Europe,—whose exertions of understanding and integrity have commanded the confidence and esteem of the world,—whose activity and penetration of mind have gained them the first rank among nations,—“should sink from their high honours” and suffer their elevated and enterprising spirit to be cradled to rest, by a tame and degrading dependance on the legislature for aid. Interest, and reputation, and humanity, “shame that will not sleep, and the sting of unperformed duty” demand, and enjoin, that some effort be made to raise the country from this practical debasement;—this end obtained, and the nation, by the blessing of God, *may still proceed in her mighty march of improving excellence, as she has hitherto proceeded, and remain to the end of*

*time the sanctuary of morals, the refuge of liberty, the region of peace and of happiness,**

PACIS EUROPEÆ ARBITRI,
MARIS DOMINI ET VINDICES,

* * * * *
* * * * *

The appeal is made to the hearts and understandings of men, who possess the power of directing and steadying the public mind to its proper object, *Commercial Enterprise*.—"Let not the odious name of projector prejudice your opinions, for what I propound deserves not that title. There is no burthen that the invention of lewd brains can vex the commonwealth with, but they style it by the name of a project, pretending a fair face under a foul vizor. The difference betwixt them and me is this:—I have no end but for the common good of the kingdom;—I neither exact nor expect gain;—I treat of no new devised tax or tolles;—I invent no new impositions, nor raise contributions;—I inforce no man to undertake, nor compel people to adventure;—my meaning is not to leave our fruitful soil untilled, our seas unfrequented;—In what I propound, I do not direct you to the eloquence of books to perswade, to the inventing wits to intice, to the affecting tra-

* Mr. Wilberforce.

veller to encourage, nor to any man that with fair words may abuse you ; I perswade out of reason, that the beginning of my propositions may be examined, that the end may be approved, and counsel may be taken of the wise ; then, I doubt not, my undertaking shall be acceptable,—**ALL MEN SATISFIED,—EVERY MAN ENRICHED, AND OUR PRINCE AND COUNTRY STRENGTHENED, FEARED, AND ADMIRERD.**”

APPENDIX.

ON THE BRITISH HERRING FISHERIES.*

LEGISLATIVE inquiry, and parliamentary reform, have each in their turn, been insisted on as measures, by which the Government might restore prosperity to commerce;—the draining and cultivating of bogs,—the digging of canals,—the levelling of hills,—a system of small farms,—and a division of the country into parallelograms,—have also been suggested as National undertakings for the employment and relief of our redundant population;—but the riches contained in our seas have been overlooked and forgotten.

It is well known that there are no fisheries in Europe

* The information contained in the Appendix, is chiefly drawn from the following tracts and treatises,—“*British Monarchy*, 1576.”—“*England’s Way to win Wealth*, 1614.”—“*Britain’s Buss*, 1615.”—“*The Sea’s Magazine Opened, written by a person of honour*, 1653.”—“*Hitchcocke’s New Year’s Gift*, 1685.”—“*Colquhoun’s Wealth and Resources of the British Empire*.”—“*Reports of the Commissioners for the British Fisheries*.”—*Dr. Hibbert on the Discovery of the Shetland Cod Bank*, and *Mr. Stevenson on the Scottish Fisheries, published in No. 3, of the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*.

of any great extent but what subsist on the shores of this Island. Our seas are emphatically denominated by foreigners,—*Neptune's store pond*. Holland, with her bogs and sandy downs, owes the rise and support of her greatness, her reputation abroad, and her strength at home, to the wealth she has raised out of them. Nearly two centuries back, she sent forth to our coasts upwards of 1900 busses, from 60 to 120 tons each, with fleets of fly boats averaging 200 tons, which busses and ships were estimated to employ 40,000 families, and as many seamen. So early as the year 1553, the single town of Enkhuisen equipped 140 vessels for these fisheries, which afforded a living to 12,000 individuals. In the year 1601, 1500 busses set sail in three days from Holland for the British herring fisheries; the annual sale of which article alone, was estimated at 300,000 tons, and the total value of fish annually caught by foreigners on our coasts, was calculated at ten millions sterling; of which sum, six millions per annum was said to be realized by the Dutch, who in their statutes, aptly term the British seas, *the gold mine of the commonwealth*.

We have repeatedly endeavoured by force, and a prodigious expense of blood and treasure, to deprive them of this commerce, but less frequently have we attempted by well directed commercial efforts, to rival them in that spirit of persevering industry and frugality, which alone has enabled them to maintain their ascendancy in this trade over us.

Notwithstanding the encouragement which the legislature formerly held out, and the sums that were raised by the public to prosecute our fisheries, the adventurers have bequeathed no advantages to the nation, except the knowledge of the causes which involved them in ruin. In

the reign of Charles the First, an association of the three kingdoms for a general fishing company was ordered; but its failure was occasioned by the civil wars which followed. The second Charles resumed it on a more judicious plan, but the necessities of the King obliged him to withdraw his subscription, and the concern was dissolved. In 1677 a new Royal Company was started; large sums of money were subscribed, but the King's death and the troubles of the succeeding reign put an end to its proceedings. Soon after the revolution, the plan was undertaken on a more extensive scale, but no accounts remain how it was dissolved; it is supposed to have arisen from the partiality of William to the Dutch. In 1749, the matter was again taken up by the Parliament; subscriptions were opened, but from the bad management and indiscreet measures of the agents that were employed, the Company sunk and exhausted their capital.*

If it be asked, why have so many specious plans subsided in miscarriage, *after so much laboured contrivance and pompous display?* the answer is,—that we fished at an intolerably dear rate, and the Dutch at an exceedingly cheap one;—no other reason can possibly be given. British fishing has been conducted for the most part by the agents of corporate bodies, while the Dutch trade has succeeded by individual enterprise; indeed, it must be obvious to every one, that any Fishing Society having for its object the support of the great body of our poor, must necessarily labour under many serious disadvantages, arising not only from the employment of ignorant persons, but of persons who have contracted, idle, extravagant, and disorderly habits: whereas our rivals pursue the trade

* See article "Fisheries," Encyclopædia Britannica.

with great skill, incomparable industry, patient perseverance, and provident care; add to this, that those who are personally engaged in their fisheries, have generally an interest or share in the profits of the vessel, and that the labour performed in a given time by persons so circumstanced, may fairly be estimated at one fifth more than that performed in the same time by persons in the employ of public Companies, who have no such interest.* If the relaxed energy in the management of the affairs of such Companies, be also compared with the vigilant and economical industry which is displayed in the conduct of individual concerns; and the vicious habits of the poor as well as their unskilfulness in this branch of trade, be likewise considered, it is no exaggeration to affirm, that by an attention to these points alone, a saving might ultimately be effected more than equivalent to one half the value of the labour employed.

Be it observed, in answer to the objection that our poor are unskilful, that it is not impossible for them to learn.† If an exception be taken to their habits of indolence and profligacy, let it not be forgotten that those habits have been acquired under the influence of a degrading system,

* Almost every servant girl in Holland, had a share in the busses which fished upon our coasts. In the interval of their domestic occupations, they were engaged in providing nets, &c. towards defraying the expenses of the vessel.

† Dutch agents might be engaged to instruct them, or active and intelligent persons commissioned to acquire in Holland the knowledge which it is supposed they cannot acquire here.—Anciently, the Dutch supplied us with cloth made from our own wools;—at this day they supply us with herrings caught in our own seas.—As we drew from them the art of manufacturing our cloth,—so may we also obtain the knowledge they possess of curing our fish.

which has effected the dissolution of their independence, whereby every man is rendered careless of his own character. Provide them with labour, and they will burst the shackles of their vices ;—instruct them and they will soon become skilful. The great body of our poor, are without dispute, naturally more religious, more intelligent, reflecting, industrious, and persevering, than the poor of any other nation under Heaven.

What, though some adventurers have run upon wild notions, and catching at shadows have lost the substance, no objections can from thence be urged against a prudent and gradual advancement of our fisheries. Whether such a scheme be viewed in respect to individual gain, or public advantage, its prospects are equally encouraging. Employment might immediately be found for twenty or thirty thousand poor, in net-making, cork cutting, making of barrels, casting leads, rope and sail making, &c. admitting that only 500 vessels, averaging twenty tons each, were engaged.

In the interior fish is but little known, even in most maritime towns it is considered to be a luxury, and seldom reaches such a price as to be accessible to the poor ; whereas with proper encouragement, as much wholesome and nutritious food might annually be obtained, with a considerable profit to the vendors, for nine millions, as now costs the country 45 millions. “ But in order to render it acceptable to the labouring classes, it must be introduced as a marketable article, in a corned state, and must be limited to shoal fish, such as herrings, pilchards, and mackarel ; and to cod, ling, hake, and all other fish of a large size, which from their abundance can be easily procured and afforded with a profit at a cheap rate. Being slightly salted, the dealers will run no risk by con-

veying them into the interior of the country, while salt being the poor man's sauce, and the chief seasoning to his potatoes they will be universally preferred to the fresh fish, were it even practicable to convey it in large quantities to the interior, without risk of putridity, before it could find a market. Since the introduction of potatoes, great facilities are afforded towards reconciling the mass of the people to the use of fish, which did not exist when bread only was the vegetable food of the people. The corned fish gives a relish to the potatoe, and the potatoe to the fish."*

But the home consumption of fish, is not the only market from which we may derive advantage. If the herring trade was pursued with skill and industry, it has been estimated that Austria, Russia, and Poland, would eventually take off nearly three millions of barrels annually; while the continent of India, where herrings are almost literally unknown, presents consumers to an incalculable extent, whom we may command without competition.

That such a mode of employing and supporting our poor, would be more gainful than our present wasteful and debasing system, cannot be doubted.—How much would be saved to the nation in poor's rates by one year's successful fishing?—what animosities, what evil spirits, what malignant designs would be forgotten in this peaceful and patriarchal occupation?

In time also, the fisheries might be made the foundation of an ample and lasting revenue to the crown.—But if national advantage be considered, it is not to be overlooked, that every vessel is a seminary of sailors and offi-

* Colquhoun's Resources of the British Empire.

cers; that by the frequent riding out great storms in small busses and doggers, fishermen become habituated to danger, so that in tempests and in engagements they work wonders.

One of the most effectual expedients therefore, for supporting our dense population, elevating the moral character, and improving the condition of our poor, extending our commerce, increasing the resources of the country, and rearing a race of hardy heroes for our defence, is to encourage the establishment of fisheries upon our coasts.

Although the interests of commerce are safely deposited in the hands of each individual, yet there are occasions when the formation of public companies may invigorate the nation, and lead the way to general enterprise. With this view, two schemes have been projected for the establishment of a Fishing Company;—the first having for its object the immediate employment of the whole of the distressed poor;—the last being more limited in its operation.

PROPOSAL.*

1. That towards raising a Joint Stock Company, for employing the poor in a national fishery, the sum of _____ be raised.
2. That the money subscribed be called stock, and be assignable.
3. That every subscriber, at the time of such their subscription, pay to _____ one full fourth part of his, her, or their respective subscriptions, and in default of such payment, every subscription to be utterly void and null.

* This proposal appears, with some additions, in a small tract, entitled, "*England's Way to win Wealth*," published in 1614; see note, page 51.

4. That the residue of said subscriptions, be paid by such proportions, and at such days and times, as by a general court of the said subscribers shall, from time to time, be appointed; and in default of such payment, that then the fourth part first paid as aforesaid, be forfeited to the use of the corporation hereinafter mentioned, their successors, and assigns.
5. That the subscribers be incorporated by act of parliament, (by the name of the Corporation for Employing the Poor of England in a National Fishery,) with perpetual succession.
6. That at a general court to be held for the said corporation, thirty be chosen out of the said subscribers by plurality of votes, and presented to the parliament.
7. That out of the said thirty, ten be nominated Fathers of the Poor, and directors of the national fishery, by both Houses of Parliament, approved by his Majesty, and accountable to them for their trust.
8. That in case of vacancy (by the death or misdemeanour of any one of the said Fathers of the poor) during the sessions of parliament, the said corporation to present three, out of which his Majesty and Parliament to nominate one, as before, and so *toties quoties*. But in case the Parliament shall not then be sitting, that such vacancy be filled up by the majority of the surviving Fathers until next session of Parliament, and then the corporation to present, and the King and Parliament to approve as before.
9. That such Fathers be empowered to constitute, under the seal of the said corporation, a sufficient number of deputies in each county in England, and that such deputies be and be called Stewards of the Poor.
10. That the said Fathers and such Stewards of the poor, be exempted from all parish offices.
11. That the said Fathers and such their Stewards, be vested

with all authority now in justices of the peace, and that all parish officers be subordinate and accountable to the said Fathers and such their Stewards, in all things only relating to the poor.

12. That the said Fathers and Stewards have freedom to set the poor at work, about such of the said trades relating to the fishery as they shall think fit, with a *non obstante* to all patents that have been or shall be granted.
13. That, until the business of the Fishery be sufficient alone to give employment to all our poor, (or at least, during ten years next after the establishing a National Fishery,) the said Fathers and Stewards of the poor, may be empowered to employ such of them as they shall think fit, in erecting Schools, Hospitals, Workhouses, Warehouses, for the Corporation, in making enclosures, in repairing sea-banks, draining fens, cleansing and deepening rivers and havens, in building and repairing churches, bridges, and causeways, in mending roads, implanting oaks near navigable rivers, and fruit trees in inland countries, also in cleansing of streets, common sewers, and the like.
14. That all the poor rates be collected as heretofore, &c. &c. and paid quarterly into the treasury of the said Corporation, as a recompense for their providing for the poor, and freeing the nation from beggars.
15. That the sum subscribed be always kept entire, as a security to indemnify the nation against the charge of the poor, and the income and profits be only divided amongst the subscribers.
16. That the treasure of the said Corporation be accounted as sacred, and that it be felony to embezzle, lend, convert, or apply the same to any other use than maintaining the poor or carrying on the business of the Fishery.
17. That the said Fathers may buy up, when cheap, a certain quantity of corn, coals, &c. yearly, and lodge the

same in their granaries for the use of the poor, but not make merchandize of them, or sell them again in England.

18. That the Stock in the said Fishery be not chargeable with any rates, duties, or impositions whatsoever.

19. That debts due to the Fishery, for goods by them *bonâ fide* sold and delivered, take preference of all others, except those due to the King.

20. That the said Fathers and Stewards, be empowered to bind such single persons to the Company, as the churchwardens and overseers of the parish are empowered to put out apprentices. The boys to serve till twenty-four, and the girls till twenty-one years of age, at one of the trades more immediately relating to the Fishery.

The boys being in the fishing season employed at sea, and working at other times at that trade relating to the Fishery to which they were bound, when their time is out, will be able to get their livelihood either by sea or land; and to render them more capable of serving their country, the said Fathers or Stewards (at four o'clock each Saturday afternoon) should cause them, when on shore, to muster and exercise, although only with staves and for diversion, to play at cudgels, or fence, and reward the conquerors with the liberty of wearing small ribbons, whose distinguishing colour, red, blue, &c. should entitle them to be called captains, lieutenants, &c. &c. by the rest of their fellows, till the next week's trial of skill. How soon would emulation beget address, and what a treasure and strength to England would such a sea militia be, always ready for service, both by sea and land, and yet no charge to the nation till actually in it.'

It has been said that the employment of the poor on any large scale must invariably fail in its object; but the reasons which have been urged against such schemes do not apply to the extension and improvement of our

fisheries.* But lest the possible failure of so comprehensive a scheme, be an objection fatal to its adoption, the following outline of a plan more limited in its views is offered for public consideration.

1. That a Joint Stock Company be formed for employing 4000 able bodied and industrious poor, and 1000 discharged seamen.
2. That the Capital or Stock of the said Company, consist of shares, at per share, with permission to increase the number of shares to whenever the subscribers shall think fit.
3. That the subscribers be incorporated by the name of the Benevolent Fishing Company.
4. That every parish, subscribing shares, and providing annually nets, ropes, &c. equal in value to the interest arising from their respective share or shares, be entitled to send persons to the Fishery; such persons being subject to the approbation of the directors or managers, of the said Company; that as the said poor die, or otherwise leave the service of the Company, the said parishes be allowed to send, as the case may be, other poor to supply the vacancies that may, from time to time, occur.
5. That all parishes be empowered to treat with the Company, for the employment of their able bodied and industrious poor.
6. That the said parishes being non-subscribers, whose poor are employed by the Company, do supply the Company annually with nets, ropes, barrels, &c. which may be manufactured by their infirm poor; the quantity of materials so supplied, being proportioned to the number of poor such parishes may have in the employ of the said

* Malthus, Vol. ii. p. 108. Sir F. M. Eden, Vol. i. p. 467.

Company; the said parishes being indemnified against the said poor becoming chargeable to them, so long as they continue in the employ of the said Company.

7. That parishes be empowered to apprentice out boys and girls for years to the said Company, upon providing the said boys and girls annually with clothes, and furnishing the said Company with nets, ropes, &c. in proportion to the number so apprenticed.
8. That when 4000 able bodied and industrious poor, and 1000 seamen are thus provided by the parishes, and approved of by the Company, no farther number be admitted into the employ of the said Company, until they, the said Company, have ascertained by experience the most advantageous mode of conducting the Fisheries, with a view to their becoming more extensively beneficial to the nation.
9. That as the poor are engaged by the said Company they be employed in previous preparations, such as
 1. Building cottages on the coast at ten or more fishing stations, to be selected by the Company.
 2. Erecting warehouses, &c. at the same; making nets, ropes, barrels, &c. &c.
 3. Building 500 Busses, averaging 20 tons each.
10. That to each Buss there be appointed, upon an average, eight poor, (boys included), and two seamen to instruct and direct them.
11. That one supervisor, and ten experienced fishermen, be appointed to each fishing station; that their wages be determined by the number of barrels of fish exported annually.
12. That a certain portion of all waste land in the vicinity of the said fishing stations, be granted to the Company for the use of the said poor.
13. That to each fishing-station be allotted acres

of land, to be divided among the families of the said poor at a rental, and be cultivated by them.

14. That each parish having persons in the employ of the said Company, purchase barrels of fish annually, or so long as the said persons shall continue in the employ of the said Company.
15. That the poor in all workhouses be supplied once per week with fish, instead of meat; the said fish to be purchased of the Company by the respective parishes.
16. That no prisoner, (except in case of illness), be supplied with, or allowed to purchase butcher's meat, but that instead thereof, they be fed with fish, to be purchased of the said Company.
17. That 3 per cent. interest on the capital subscribed be allowed to the subscribers.
18. That all debts due to the Company, for goods, &c. *bona fide* sold and delivered by them, take preference of all others, except debts due to the King.
19. That the Company be exempt from all taxes, rates duties, &c. &c.
20. That the profits of the Company be allowed to accumulate, until a sufficient sum be realized to enable the said Company to form an additional fishing station, and then to be so applied, and so on *toties quoties*.
21. That Savings' Banks be opened at each station, and that the Company also establish banks for the purpose of advancing money at a low interest upon sufficient securities, to enable industrious men to provide themselves with boats to fish on their own account.
22. That at each station there be formed a Benefit Club, a free Chapel belonging to the established Church, a National School, and a Circulating Library for the use of the said poor.
23. That none of the poor, who are members of any poli-

tical club, be, on any pretence whatever, admitted into the employ of the Company, and that all persons in the employ of the said Company, subscribing to such clubs, be immediately discharged.

24. That the Company be empowered to dispose of their boats, or to let them on hire, &c. to the poor, as they shall see fit, at a reduction of per cent. from their actual value ;—discharged seamen of his Majesty's navy, of good character, being allowed the preference of all other purchasers.

25. That each poor person who shall thus become independent of the said Company, be entitled to a premium of such premiums not to exceed the sum of per annum ; of which be paid by the parish to which he belongs, and that the said parish be then discharged from a proportionate part of the obligation to provide nets, purchase fish, &c.

By some such arrangements as these with the respective parishes, together with the rents arising from the grants of waste land, the low rate of interest to be paid to the subscribers, the exercise of skill in the curing of the fish, and a vigilant economy in the management of the Company's affairs, it is presumed that they would be able to compete successfully with the Dutch in most of the foreign markets.—But what though a loss be sustained?—the fisheries would still be a more profitable employment of the poor, than the almost useless labours in which they are now engaged by parishes and charitable societies.*—Is it not more advantageous to raise food from our seas than stones from our quarries ?

* The sum annually expended in support of the poor, cannot be less than ten millions per annum ; and he must be a bold man who will affirm that they cannot be supported more economically by the establishment of fisheries.

“ Fisheries upon a large scale round the coast, would be no sooner organized, than hordes of small dealers called hucksters, would resort to the sea-coasts, and circulate the corned fish through every part of the interior of the country, not excepting the villages. In Great Britain, where there are no less than 1183 towns, containing 5,272,712 inhabitants, besides perhaps six times the number of villages, where fish could be dealt out to 6,683,591, forming the rural population, at very moderate prices, it is scarcely possible to conceive by what other means a greater blessing could be conferred on the nation. Such a state of things would give a new and improved character to the labouring people,—an independence of mind which they cannot feel at present,—a security against want,—a luxury which has hitherto been inaccessible,—a diminution in a considerable degree of the parish rates, and a gradual decrease of that debasement of character which parochial relief engenders. When new and improved habits should, through this medium, be fully fixed, the greater diversity of food, which would be accessible at moderate prices to every labourer, would speedily produce a moral effect highly interesting, and incalculably beneficial to the nation, by rendering the surplus labour of the country more productive, through which medium only, empires, kingdoms, and states, become opulent and powerful.”*

If it be objected that success is too hypothetical, and that the nation may suffer from the disappointment of ill-placed expectations,—the most conclusive and satisfactory answer is afforded by the Reports of the Commissioners for the British Fisheries. They prove incon-

* Colquhoun's Resources of the British Empire.

testibly, that intelligence, activity, and industry alone are required, to ensure the success of any Company that may engage in such an undertaking.

The British Fishery Corporation was established in 1786; its means have been too limited to enable it to make any great or rapid progress; but the reports of the Commissioners have of late years been most interesting and encouraging.* In 1816, they affirmed that the time was not far distant, when the character of the British Fishery, would stand as high as that of any nation in Europe. The report of the fishing for the year 1817, stated an increase in herrings caught of $29,691\frac{3}{4}$ barrels, and of these there was an increase of $23,582\frac{1}{2}$ branded for bounty; and although a repeal of two shillings and eight-pence per barrel took place, yet it had no effect in diminishing the quantity exported; on the contrary, there was an increase in the quantity exported, equal to $80,940\frac{1}{2}$ barrels, and considering the competition which herrings sent from this country have to sustain on the continent with Dutch herrings, these facts appear to be the most convincing proofs that can be given of the improvements that have taken place in the character of the British herring fishery. The Commissioners added that, *there was every reason to think that this new branch of trade, if properly attended to, might be successfully pro-*

	Total number of Herrings caught.	Barrels entitled to Bounty.	Barrels exported.
* 1809.....	$90,185\frac{1}{2}$ barrels	.....	35,584
1813.....	$153,488\frac{1}{4}$ „	.... $70,027\frac{1}{2}$	$109,725\frac{1}{2}$
1814.....	$160,139\frac{1}{2}$ „	.... 83,376	$141,305\frac{1}{2}$
1815.....	$162,651\frac{3}{4}$ „	.... 116,436*	$12,606\frac{1}{2}$
1816.....	$192,843\frac{1}{2}$ „	.... $138,623\frac{1}{2}$	$140,018\frac{1}{2}$

* In 1815 there was an increase of gutted herrings exported amounting to $12,606\frac{1}{2}$ barrels, as compared with the exports of the preceding year.

secuted to an immense extent, and be productive of the most beneficial consequences to the nation at large. The succeeding year there was an increase in the quantity caught of 35,317½ barrels, an increase in the quantity branded for bounty of 43,071, likewise an increase in those exported of 23,711 barrels. The Commissioners conceived that these facts proved that the British Fisheries were rising at home and abroad, *although they were far from receiving that extension and encouragement, which their immense advantages would so abundantly repay.* Whilst all the old markets increased, A NEW MARKET was opened in the *East Indies*. Shipments by way of experiment were made from Greenock and London. From the former of these places, upwards of 1,300 firkins were exported to Calcutta, and it is known to be the intention of the exporter, in consequence of the encouragement he met with in that market, to ship a larger quantity next season. The result of the adventures from London, which were more considerable, is not stated, but there is every reason to believe that they were equally successful; and the Commissioners express their confidence *that India will soon become a permanent and valuable market for the consumption of British herrings.* A memorial from Hamburgh, signed by a number of herring merchants at that port, bears testimony also to the improvement that has taken place in the quality of British herrings. The demand has fully kept pace with the increased supply, and at the end of the season few herrings remained on the hands of the curers. The fishermen have in many cases been enabled by the produce of their industry, to replace the small boats formerly used, by new boats of much larger dimensions, and to provide themselves with fishing materials of

superior value; the number of boats and of fishermen has been greatly increased; while by the general introduction of the practice of gutting, a valuable source of employment has been opened to thousands of poor people, who now annually resort to the coast during the continuance of the fishing season, and there earn a decent livelihood in the operations of gutting and packing. New dwellings and buildings on a superior construction for the curing and storing of the herring are erecting at almost every station along the coast, while the demand for home wood for the manufacture of barrels, affords a source of profit and employment to numbers of people in the most inland part of the country. The spirit of enterprise thus diffused, the improvement in the size of the boats and in the material for fishing, together with the increase in the number of fishermen afforded the Commissioners good grounds for predicting a still further extension of the fishery; and although their report for the fishing of 1819 has not yet appeared, sufficient is nevertheless already known of that season, to verify their predictions. In addition to these facts the discovery of the Shetland cod bank, in the summer of 1818, led last year to a most unprecedented season of successful fishing.* The average weight of fish caught by each vessel previous to this period, was from eight to nine tons, by vessels of from ten to thirty-five tons burthen. In 1818 the average amounted to twelve tons each, and the number of vessels was increased to thirteen. In 1819 the num-

* This Bank stretches 140 miles in length, from the western side of the island of Westray, in a direction north by west, to 20 miles north of Shetland. It has been suggested as advisable to take formal possession of it. See Art. 26, in No. 3 of the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*, by Dr. Hibbert, containing an account of the discovery of the Shetland Cod-Bank.

ber of vessels on the bank was increased to twenty-five of various sizes, from ten to sixty tons burthen, manned with from six to twelve hands each, boys included; the average weight of fish taken by each vessel was fifteen tons, and the Dutch who for some years have not ventured to approach these shores are again reappearing in crowds, as formerly they did. A fleet of doggers was last year fishing off Dunnotar Castle; at Fraserburg, on the coast of Aberdeen, were 120 boats, manned by five men each; other fleets of busses were also collected in numbers off the Orkney and Shetland islands.*

Thus, while we stand amazed and helpless, to see a torrent of woes fall upon the commerce of our country, while the factious countenance seditious discontent, and men of almost all degrees, giving up the thoughts of improving our condition, sink into despondency, and suffer their spirit to languish away in dependance on the government,—an active and enterprising people, out of the wonderful affluence and abundance of our seas, provide for their poor, pre-occupy our markets, enrich their nation, and add to their security by strengthening the sinews of war. While the Dutch have above 100 leagues to sail before they reach the British fisheries, and when there must be at the mercy of the winds for want of a port, and in case of unlading have as far back again, we have the fish so near our shores, that we have only to stretch forth our hands and take the rich blessing which Providence, as it were, courts us to receive, but which, with more than Spanish sloth, we neglect to do. Their wealth is increased through

* See Art. 23 of the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*, respecting the state of the Scottish fisheries, in August, 1819, by Robert Stevenson, Esq. F.R.S.E. civil engineer.

our indifference; they have learned to supply the barrenness of their own country, take pastures from the ocean, and fatten their land by the abundance of our seas. They levy a tax upon our lazy discontent, who having the same, and far better means to supply all our wants, are yet, as their rivals in this branch of commerce, the object of their derision and contempt.—Ages have passed away, but they remember the days of Van Tromp and De Ruyter;—they need no pilots to navigate our seas and our harbours,—their doggers, and small busses ride in our waters, and run up into our rivers,—and though our seamen reject with indignation, the insulting idea of *Dutch* superiority, yet our indifference invites them again to the struggle, for Naval Dominion.—EVENTS ARE HURRYING US FORWARD WITH AN AWFUL RAPIDITY, TO THE ACCUMULATION OF EVILS OF MOST MOMENTOUS MAGNITUDE;—THEY CALL IMPERATIVELY UPON US TO AWAKE FROM OUR SLUMBERS:—THE PUBLIC HONOUR, WEALTH, AND SAFETY OF THE REALM, DEMAND IT.

THE END.

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