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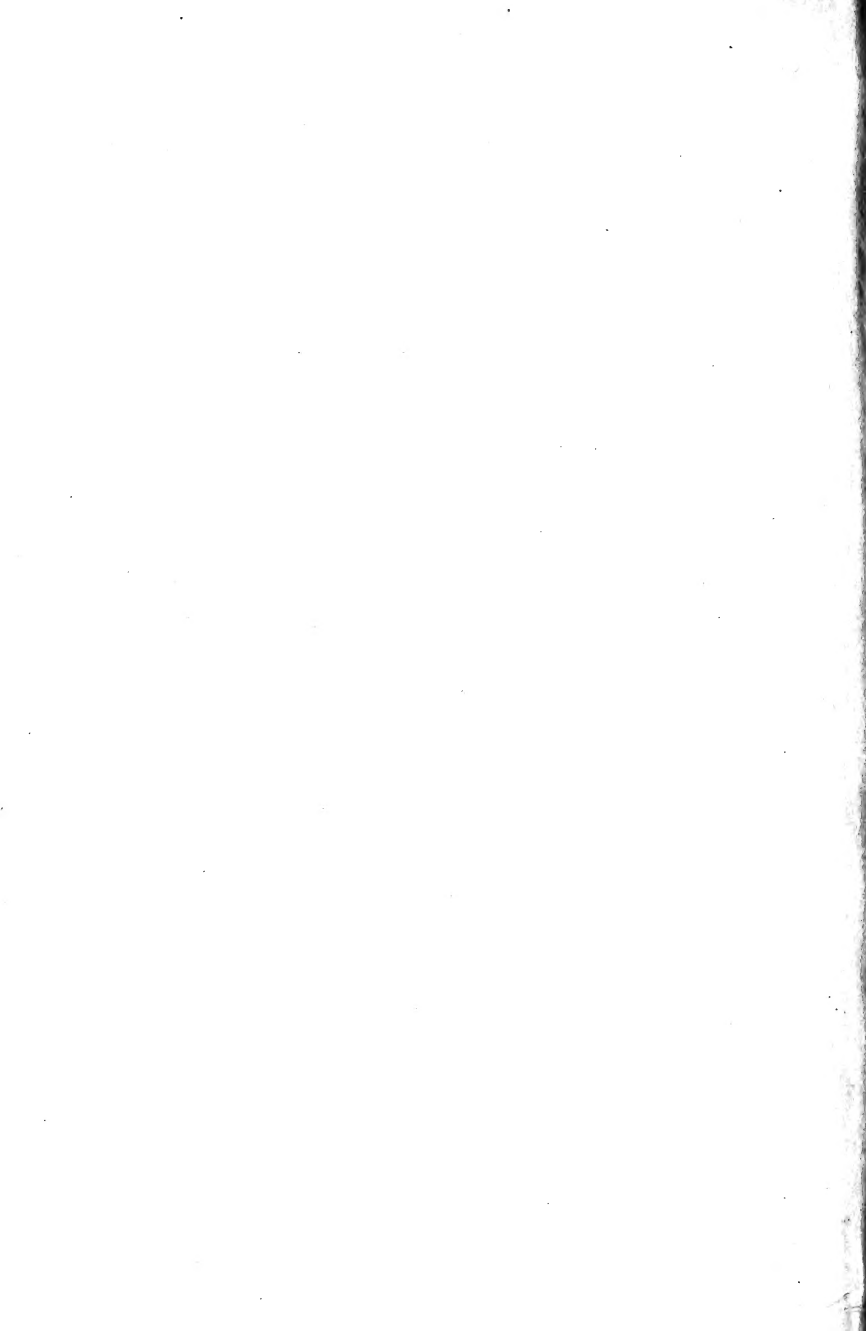


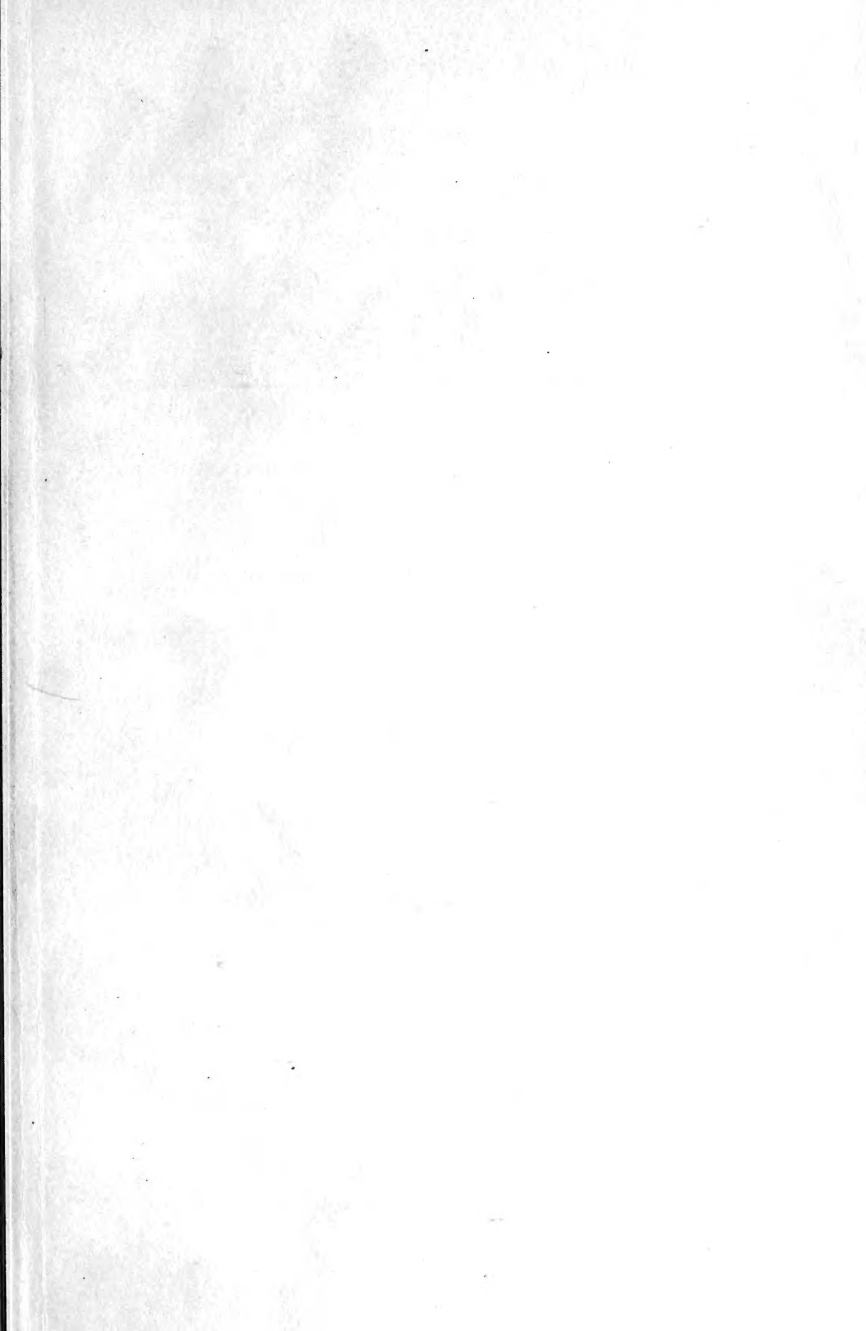
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# CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE OF THE DIFFERENT CLASSES

OF THE

## LANDED INTEREST;

ON THE

CAUSES OF THE DISTRESS WHICH EXISTS AMONG THE  
FARMERS AND LABOURERS;

AND ON THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS DISTRESS MAY BE MITIGATED  
AND REMOVED:

ALSO, ON THE EFFECTS WHICH

### A GENERAL FREE TRADE IN CORN,

OR A NEARER APPROACH TO IT, WOULD PRODUCE ON THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF THE LANDED INTEREST;

And on the Effects which

A FREE TRADE IN CORN WITH OUR OWN COLONIES,

OR SUCH A NEAR APPROACH TO IT,

AS IS PERMITTED UNDER THE EXISTING CORN LAWS, WILL PRODUCE ON  
THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF THE LANDED INTEREST.

BY

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A TENANT FARMER.

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# CONTENTS.

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## PART THE FIRST.

	Page.
<i>On the distressed condition of the occupiers of the soil, and on the causes which have induced it</i> .....	1
<i>On the present and probable future average price of grain. The inadequacy of this price to the cost of production...</i>	3
<i>On the necessity of reducing the outgoings of the farmer to enable him to meet the probable average price of grain under the present Corn Laws. The reduction of his outgoings the only means by which his distress can be relieved, and his circumstances improved. On the nature of the outgoings which the law imposes, and how far they may be reduced</i> .....	6
<i>On the nature of the outgoings which are placed beyond the controul of the legislature, and "are private bargains, open from time to time and regulated by competition" ..</i>	13
<i>On the condition of the labourers in husbandry, and on the expediency of reducing their wages</i> .....	15
<i>On the reduction of rent, and the extent to which it will be necessary, in most cases, to reduce it, on the different qualities of farming land, to meet the probable future average price of corn under the present Corn Laws, after Government have reduced the outgoings which the law imposes</i> .....	18
<i>On the effects which a nearer approximation to free trade would have on landlords, and not only on landlords, but also on tenants, and labourers in husbandry—such an approximation as would substitute for the existing protection, a fixed duty of 10s. a quarter</i> .....	26

<i>On the importance, advantage, and necessity of having a moderate price, to preserve the fair balance between the great interests of the country; and what is meant by a moderate price</i> .....	42
<i>The present Corn Laws not inoperative, and their protecting power should not be impaired, although the future average price of wheat be not likely to exceed 54s. a quarter</i> .....	44
<i>The labourers in husbandry would be sufferers by a low price of corn occasioned by an increased supply from foreign independent nations, but not by an increased quantity produced from our own territories</i> .....	48
<i>The difference between the circumstance of the agricultural interests and the manufacturing and commercial interests. A free trade system of policy, though it may be beneficial to the manufacturing and commercial interests, may not be so to the agricultural interests</i> .....	58
<i>The various arguments which are used by the advocates of free trade in support of their system. Their inconsistency</i> .....	62
<i>The effects of an extension of trade without a corresponding extension of home agriculture</i> .....	78
<i>There is a wide field for the profitable employment of capital and labour in improving the agriculture of England, and extending it over the half cultivated territory of Ireland. There is a wide field, too, for the profitable employment of capital and labour in extending our trade with the vast Empires of the East, which does not involve a free trade in corn</i> .....	85
<i>To depend on independent nations for a considerable supply of food, a "fearful element of insecurity and weakness"</i>	88
<i>The best interests and true glory of Great Britain can never be independent of the comfort and prosperity of the agricultural classes</i> .....	92



PART THE SECOND.

	Page.
<i>As the present Corn Laws, which the landed interests do not seek to have altered, admit the introduction of corn from our colonies at a very low duty, with improvements in the art of colonization, which will take place, corn will be sold in our markets at so low a price as would have the most disastrous effects on every class of the landed interest, if such cheap corn were not produced from the fertile field of our own colonies by the united means of British and Irish capital and labour. But as this cheap corn would be produced by the employment of British and Irish capital and labour, the effects on the different classes of the landed interest would be infinitely less injurious than if corn were made cheap by the competition of corn the growth of foreign independent countries—produced by the means of foreign capital and labour. The present Corn Laws do not interfere with “the raising of cheaper corn than ever yet has been raised,” nor with the people of this country obtaining it from a market not likely to be closed against us from national jealousy, from the caprice of a government, or from the “whim of a tyrant.” The present Corn Laws do not retard or interfere with the most extensive commerce that ever existed in the world. Under a wise government, with the present protection afforded to agriculture, all classes of His Majesty’s subjects at home and in our colonies may flourish</i>	95
<i>Concluding remarks</i> .....	112



## PREFACE.

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The distress of the occupiers of the soil being universal—not confined either to those on titheable, or to those on tithe free land, and as this universal distress can only be relieved by reductions in their outgoings, the reductions must come from those outgoings which fall upon the tenantry generally—not by the reduction of outgoings which fall partially. Therefore, in considering the general distress of farmers, and the means of mitigating it, no allusion has been particularly made to partial outgoings; they are not taken into the account as the means by which relief may be obtained. The charges on landed property which are not considered of universal applicability, as applying to the general argument, are tithes and land tax. These outgoings, which do not affect the occupiers of land universally, though heavy and exclusive charges on land are involved in the consideration of rent, they, of course, increase the cost of pro-

duction, and therefore entitle the landed interests, in addition to the outgoings which bear generally upon the occupiers of the soil, to adequate protection.

No allusion has been made to the protection which some branches of manufactures receive. The object of the author of these pages has been to argue the question on higher grounds—to show the importance of protecting the agricultural interests of this country from the competition of nations independent of Great Britain, and the paramount necessity of doing so under the present circumstances of the different classes of the landed interest.

## CONSIDERATIONS,

§c. §c.

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AFTER a careful examination of a numerous body of witnesses, “ few of them not practically experienced in the details of the matters to which they deposed,” the Committee, appointed to inquire into the state of agriculture, admit that the farming interest is in a very depressed state ; and, that, the low price of the produce of the soil, since 1819, occasioned mainly by the restoration of a metallic currency, which has altered the standard of value without a contemporaneous and accompanying reduction in parochial, highway, and county rates, and in rent, labour, and the other expenses of production, have been the causes of this depression. The prices of the produce of the soil may now, however, be considered as adjusted, or nearly so, to the increased value of money which the bill of 1819 established ; and these prices are not likely to be raised by any parliamentary enactment ; or are they likely to be interfered with by “ fresh experiments in the

value of money," after the suffering which the industrious interests of the country have endured by these experiments. It follows, therefore, that, as these prices are inadequate to the present cost of production, which is not an arbitrary sum, the cost of production must be reduced, to restore the balance, and to enable farming capital once again to receive its "fair return." For as the Report of the Committee states "the average price of wheat for 1821 was 54*s.* 5*d.* per quarter. The average price of the present year, to April, 1833, is 53*s.* 1*d.*; and although some of the charges connected with general taxation, have been reduced since 1821, yet the local burdens, such as poor rate, and county rate have been grievously augmented." The Committee of 1821 arrived at the conclusion, that the returns of farming capital were considerably below the ordinary rate of profit; "and no evidence adduced before your Committee of diminished outgoings, contrasted with the change of price in the interval, would warrant at this moment a different conclusion." "Your Committee have already glanced at the increase of certain outgoings borne by the farmer, which it is clearly established in evidence have not been compensated by a corresponding reduction of his fixed money payments; on the contrary, while the profitable returns from land have generally decreased, the burdens to which it is subject have been augmented. The poor rate is heavier, the highway rate has increased, and the evidence would lead to

the conclusion, that the outgoings of the farmer are generally larger than he can afford to pay during the present price of agricultural produce, without a sacrifice of the profit of his capital which he is entitled to realize."

The average price of wheat, from the 5th of April, 1832, to the 5th of April, 1833, was 53*s.* 1*d.*; and when Mr. Sanders, of Liverpool, a person possessing very extensive practical knowledge on the subject of the corn trade of the country, is asked to what rate he thinks a succession of good crops might reduce the price of corn under the present Corn Law,—he replies, "I think a succession of good crops, under the present Corn Law, would, in the course of one or two years, give an average of 44*s.* to 46*s.* a quarter." "You think, that wheat would not fetch 50*s.* but in a scarce season?" "If there are fair crops, wheat will be 48*s.* to 50*s.* a quarter." And in answer to the question 4678, whether 63*s.* a quarter would not be a scarcity price, he says, "yes." These, Mr. Sanders thinks, will be the future prices of wheat exclusively, the produce of our own territories at home; not prices reduced by foreign competition. His reasons for thinking that the price of wheat will continue at this low level are, that prices have now adjusted themselves to the altered value of money, and that Ireland's capability of production, and of yielding far more abundantly, at a much less expense of cultivation than the soil of England, "will lower the markets of this country."

“ If the present Corn Bill is continued,” he says, “ Ireland has the power, and will reduce not only the rents, but the price of the produce of this country ; for there is no reason why a country possessing a large tract of land, into which a spade or a plough has never been put, with labourers who subsist on *1d.* or  $1\frac{1}{2}d.$  a day, cannot grow corn as cheap as either France or Holland.\*” Indeed there is little doubt that if the land now in cultivation, in the United Kingdom, were generally well cultivated, it would yield such an increase as would supply the wants of the present population, independent of those extensive reserves into which neither “ plough nor spade” have entered. And if it were in good condition, every intelligent practical man knows, that the quantity of produce would be much more independent of seasons ; that the produce of land in good condition varies comparatively little. If the season be very favourable for a bulky crop, on such land, a bulky crop generally falls, and does not produce more grain than a good crop which stands up well, though it be not so bulky, and such a crop, in spite of almost any season, may be obtained from land in good condition. I recollect that it was a remark of an

\* “ The great bulk of persons in Ireland who till the land, live upon potatoes, the average price may be stated at *2d.* to *4d.* the stone of 14lbs ; a labouring man can hardly eat more than half a stone of potatoes a day ; the cost of his labour, therefore, is a miserably low sum, not more than a *1d.* or  $1\frac{1}{2}d.$  a day.”



eminent agriculturist, that he could secure good crops in spite of the seasons, and, I believe, this remark requires very little limitation. I am not inclined to think that the price of the produce of the soil of our own islands will be quite so low as Mr. Sanders anticipates, if the protecting power of the present Corn Laws be not interfered with; because, I think, if it were understood there would be no change—if Ministers were openly and boldly to declare that they would oppose any further changes in the Corn Laws, while the same amount of local and general taxation presses upon the landed interest, the price of corn would then rise, probably, 2*s.* or 3*s.* a quarter—would fluctuate from 48*s.* to 63*s.* a quarter according to the seasons,—in seasons of abundance the price would, most likely, be about 48*s.* to 50*s.*, in average seasons about 54*s.*, in seasons of scarcity 63*s.* a quarter, and above the price of 63*s.* a quarter corn will be prevented from rising, even in a season of scarcity, by the introduction of foreign corn under the operation of the present Corn Laws. With the present standard of value, and even with the present Corn Laws, which admits Colonial Corn into our markets, paying a duty of 5*s.* a quarter, higher prices than these we have no good reason to expect; consequently the cultivator's outgoings must fall to meet these low prices, in order, to use the words of the Committee's Report, that "farming capital may again receive its fair return."

The matters for consideration now are, not what reductions may be made hereafter, at some remote and uncertain period, in the elements of production ; to alter the Corn Laws, to settle the question on such a contingency, would be about as wise as to build upon sand.

Before Ministers enter upon the consideration of this question, with a view to an alteration in the spirit of the Corn Laws, they must first remove from the landed interests a part of those incumbrances which bear so unequally upon it. To make any change in the laws which would have the effect of lowering the price of corn still more, without first reducing the outgoings on land, would be precipitate and unsafe. The primary inquiries now should be, the nature and extent of the reductions which can be *immediately* made in the outgoings of the tenant. We will consider the matter, first, in reference to those outgoings which the law imposes.

With respect to the highway rate, this may admit of some reduction, but whether a reduction will be any advantage to the farmer, will depend upon how far the labour withdrawn from the highways can be, beneficially, employed in other directions. The expense of maintaining the roads presses unfairly severe on the occupiers of land ; as they are for general use and convenience they ought not to be supported so exclusively at their expense.

With respect to the county rate, this is an out-

going which has increased very greatly during the last thirty years, and though levied for purposes of general benefit, is paid principally out of the value of the produce of the soil, and falls too exclusively upon the landed interest. Well may the Committee say that this subject requires the early and deliberate attention of the Legislature.

In the county in which I live the county rate has increased nearly five-fold in the last thirty-five years. The increase of crime has occasioned in a considerable degree the increase of the county expenditure. This increase of crime may perhaps be considered somewhat in proportion to the increase of population, and the increase of poverty ; —in the agricultural districts, I am inclined to think that, it has not increased in proportion to this increase, but in manufacturing districts, unhappily, its increase has been in a greater ratio. It is a fact that of the number of prisoners who fill our gaol, far the greater part come from the manufacturing districts. Manufactures greatly encourage the augmentation and concentration of numbers, and the spirit of evil is inflamed by the friction which the contact of a great mass of active and conflicting beings occasion. It is not that there is any natural difference between these two classes of the population, the spirit of evil has been alike at work, but the one portion is more acted upon and restrained by a salutary counter-acting agency.

Another very serious outgoing is the mainte-

nance of the poor. In the southern counties the oppression is almost intolerable, the application of the labour rate has produced a degree of temporary relief, but it must be a long time before the real evils of pauperism, which have been induced by the want of employment and inadequate wages, and from a long course of mistreatment, can, in any great degree, be mitigated, much less eradicated. In the midland and northern counties though the poor rate is higher than formerly, and forms a heavy outgoing, it is far less onerous than in the southern counties. There appears no *immediate* likelihood of any extensive and general reduction taking place, even if a better system of administration be adopted, and a somewhat greater demand for labour arise; with an increasing population, and, consequently, a greater number requiring assistance as widows and orphans, and from bodily infirmity;—and it is these incapacitating natural causes which in the midland and northern counties absorb the greater portion of the fund levied for the maintenance of the poor, and the poor, in such unhappy circumstances, are constrained to seek the aid of a provision not supplied by the warm sympathies of charity, but by the cold restraint of law. In these counties the agricultural population is not more than might be employed, beneficially to the farmer if farming capital received its “fair return.” The introduction of an improved system of road mending and making, at a time when the supply of

labour was much beyond the demand for it, absorbed a great part of this redundant labour; and as the roads are now, generally, in a much better state of repair than formerly, a part of that labour which has of late years been occupied upon them, will be set at liberty; and unless the circumstances of the tenants enable them to employ this labour, or it can be made use of in other directions, the labourers must be supported by a compulsory provision, and the poor rate be thereby augmented. Writers on political economy, and speculative reasoners, seem to see and admit no difficulty in the balance between the demand and supply of labour in a country being soon regulated,—that if there be an excess of labourers in one branch of industry and a deficiency in another, the balance would be soon adjusted. They reason, indeed they assert, that if there be a redundancy of agricultural labourers, with a flourishing trade, they would be speedily employed in handicraft work—but this is a doctrine of theory. They are not aware of, at least they forget to estimate, the difficulty of the transmission of labourers from dissimilar employments. In parts of the kingdom where at present the poor rate is moderate, the best management and most vigilant superintendence will be necessary to prevent its increase; and nothing but a more extended field of employment which will raise wages, or at all events keep them from falling, and give the labourer a greater command over the necessaries and comforts of life, united

with a moral discipline, which will bring about a moral elevation among the poor, will preserve the distinction between tumult and liberty, between pauperism and independence. Important as it is to improve the tone of feeling among the lower orders, the accomplishment of so desirable an object is rendered much more difficult, nay, is almost hopeless, while the temptations, which the beer houses afford, exist; for, if the wages of labour be higher in reference to the price of provisions, it will profit them nothing while they are induced, by such allurements to improvidence and vice, to spend them. That unfortunate piece of legislation, the Beer Bill, has done more to demoralize the population than can well be conceived;—and the only mode now of giving force to the intention of the Bill, which was good, and remedying its widespread abuses, is to repeal the Malt Tax, and to do away with the retail trade in beer, except at the old public houses, which should be kept open for the accommodation of travellers, and other convenient purposes; but which should be subject to stricter regulations, and required to pay a higher license duty. Houses should still be open for the wholesale trade in beer, but not for the retail trade; and no consumption on the premises should be allowed. By such regulations, the poor may be supplied with a cheap, grateful, and wholesome beverage, if taken in moderation. The license duty being increased upon the old public houses, where alone beer could be retailed, would raise the

retail price above the wholesale price so much as to discourage the retail trade, and operate as a check upon the poor associating at public houses for the purpose of drunkenness. By such regulations the poor man, in towns, may be induced to purchase a small barrel at a time for consumption at home, and then his family would participate. How much better than taking his earnings to the beer houses,—the resorts of depravity,—and spending them in selfish, brutish, and vicious indulgence, leaving his family pining for the necessaries of life. Thus restricting the retail trade in beer, the husbandry labourers and their families might be supplied by buying it in wholesale quantities, or by brewing their own malt as they used to do 50 years ago, when they were much more orderly and respectable. No doubt we farmers should get a better price for our barley if the Malt Tax were repealed, and the same facilities and temptations to drunkenness existed, but no man who wishes for the good of his fellow creatures can desire, for the sake of a little temporary gain, that this should be the case;—indeed such a man would take a very short-sighted view of his own real interest;—even apart from graver considerations,—as a question of mere pounds, shillings, and pence, he would ultimately be a loser; for such a state of things would immediately lead to more universal habits of intemperance, wantonness, and disorder; and at length to general pauperism;—so, that, though, with the one hand he might

receive a better price for his barley, he would with the other soon have to pay an increased amount of poor rate. The trifling alterations which are proposed to be made in the Beer Bill will never arrest the mischief which it daily occasions, and no extensive improvement can be made in the character and condition of the poor, until these temptations, to which they are exposed in every direction, are removed.

With respect to the Assessed Taxes, none press exclusively upon the occupier of land: but the Malt Tax, though it does not press exclusively upon him bears directly and indirectly, because in addition to the wages of labour, the farmer gives a certain quantity of beer. If this tax were removed it would be a relief to the farmer.

The expenses already particularized are all, of any consequence, which are imposed by law, and how far they can be lightened is at present doubtful. There is very little probability of the poor rate being lessened, though the poor laws may be amended and better administered, unless the field for the employment of agricultural labour be extended, or unless the poor rate be levied generally and more equally on property. The highway rate may be reduced, but this will be no advantage to the farmer, unless the labour withdrawn from the highways can be employed in other ways, or unless the land be relieved from an additional portion of the expense of maintaining the roads. The County Rate most certainly may be considerably lessened,



and more fairly levied. And the removal of the Malt Tax would be a certain relief, to a certain extent. But the relief which would be afforded by the greatest reductions which can possibly be made, under existing circumstances, in these outgoings, would fall far short of compensating the farmer for the reduction in the price of corn.

Tithe as an outgoing from land, as a part of the cost of production, we do not dwell on, because in a commutation an equivalent will be given for them, and the occupiers of land will receive no pecuniary relief: still it is very desirable, for the economic, political, and moral interests of the country, that tithes should be commuted.

I will now enumerate the chief outgoings of the farmer which the law does not impose, and which are placed beyond the controul of the Legislature, and “are private bargains, open from time to time, and regulated by competition.” These consist of tradesmen’s charges, the wages of labour, and rent. The charges of the blacksmith, the wheelwright, and harness-maker should be regulated by the value of the materials they use, and the wages of labour; and it must be admitted that the charges of these tradesmen have not fallen so low as they might have fallen, provided their custom had not diminished, and their losses from bad debts had not increased; but it so happens that their custom has diminished, and their losses have increased, which are the consequences of the reduced expenditure and embarrassment of farmers on the one

hand, and the increased competition of tradesmen on the other. Taking these facts into consideration they probably receive less profit than formerly, and where the custom is as limited as it is in rural districts, they most likely cannot live with less. Therefore the relief that the farmer will receive under this head of expense will be but trifling.

With respect to the wages of labour, which, next to rent, are the greatest outgoing to which the farmer is subject,—indeed on inferior soils, well cultivated, they are a heavier outgoing; but when I remark that they are the second great outgoing, I speak of their general position. Wages are a matter of “private bargain, open from time to time and regulated by competition,” and, in some measure, by the prices of the necessaries of life. “The general condition of the agricultural labourer in full employment,” as the Committee remark, “is better now than at any former period, his money wages giving him a greater command over the necessaries and conveniences of life.” And why is it that his money wages are higher in proportion to the prices of the necessaries of life than at any anterior period? Is it because the demand for labour is great? Is it because the circumstances of his employer are so unembarrassed and easy as to enable him to place the labourer in this condition? Certainly not! it is because the evils arising from wages insufficient for a poor man to support his family decently and comfortably upon have been so apparent; it is because farmers began to see

that if they did not enable their labourers to support themselves and their families in this state, they would soon pay more dearly by pauperising the industrious, and destroying the motive to energy and efficiency: it is, too, because they knew that the leaven of dissatisfaction was at work among the mass of them, and they feared to do otherwise, lest their property should be destroyed by the incendiary. Rent and labour, except in some of the southern counties, where the poor rate is so enormous, are far the heaviest outgoings to which the occupiers of the soil is liable; and the present price of agricultural labour is higher than can be maintained, unless the occupier be greatly relieved in some other directions.

I fear, however, after considering the subject carefully, we shall find, that in addition to the greatest reductions which can be made in the charges on land which the law imposes, considerable reductions must be made in the two great outgoings—wages and rent. One, or other, or both these expenses of production must be reduced to meet the present prices of agricultural produce is certain. And who with a true patriotic and philanthropic spirit does not wish that the hard lot of poverty should be mitigated as much as possible, and would lament that the earnings of the peasant, which now enable him to maintain himself and family with barely a comfortable supply of the necessaries of existence, should be reduced. The Committee rightly consider it a subject of

congratulation and consolation to find “ that amidst the numerous difficulties to which agriculture in this country is exposed, and amidst the distress which unhappily exists, that the general condition of the agricultural labourer in full employment is better now than at any former period, his money wages giving him a greater command over the necessaries and conveniences of life:” but it is only the labourer in full employment. It will be well, indeed, if the labourers in full employment are enabled to continue in this improved condition, and if those not fully employed could be brought into this happier state; that the whole body of the peasantry might gradually emerge from that depth of poverty and pauperism into which they had been precipitated. Furnish them with employment—give them such wages as will enable them to live decently and comfortably,—afford them the means for the improvement not only of their physical, but also of their moral state, and then, and not till then, they will be brought back to the more respectful, provident, and industrious habits of their forefathers; and though by the progress of society in wealth, luxury, and knowledge the simplicity of character, which once belonged to the peasantry, is destroyed, we ardently hope that their conduct may be regulated by higher principles, which will lead them to endeavour to perform their duty to themselves, to their families, to their country, to their King, and to their God.

Still, we may cheapen provisions and raise

wages, and thus improve the physical condition of the poor, by supplying them more bountifully with the necessaries and comforts of life ; but such improvement will be only temporary, unless by the application of a general system of religious education, and a vigilant ministerial superintendence in every parish, and a more sympathizing and benevolent intercourse on the part of the rich towards the poor, they are brought under greater moral restraint. But, then, if the present low prices of agricultural produce continue, and a more extensive field for the employment of agricultural labour is not opened, the present money wages of the labourer, which are higher in proportion to the cost of the necessaries of life than at any antecedent period, must be reduced ; and his means of support in reference to the price of the necessaries of life being diminished, his condition will be deteriorated. Efforts and sacrifices should be made by the middle and higher ranks of life to prevent this. It is established by evidence, and admitted by the Committee, that the outgoings of the farmer must be considerably lessened ; and if the only outgoings which admit of any extensive reduction—of reduction to any saving and effective purpose, are the two great outgoings, namely, labour and rent, it follows, that if wages are not reduced, the reduction of rent must be greater ; which would operate unfairly severe on landlords, that they exclusively should make a sacrifice to enable the labourers to continue their present scanty comforts. But

for the sake of the interests of the poor, and, indeed, of society generally, (for the peace, harmony, and prosperity of the community depend very much on the conduct of the lower orders,) the price of labour should be kept up, even at this sacrifice.

Let us suppose, then, for the sake of argument, that the only relief which will arise, is a reduction of rent;—what proportion of rent must be taken off? I maintain, and I feel confident that every practical man will agree with me, that rents generally have not yet fallen in proportion to the fall in the price of grain,—in proportion to the fall from 80*s.* a quarter, the Parliamentary standard of 1815, to 63*s.* a quarter, the Parliamentary standard of 1828. The distresses of a large portion of the tenantry subsequent to 1821, 1822, and 1823, years of extreme low prices, even from 1824 to 1832, during which time wheat averaged 62*s.* a quarter, prove that something or other has operated against them; either rents have been too high, or the seasons during this period have been unusually unfavourable and unpropitious; or, as is the truth, both have interfered to prevent farming capital receiving its “fair return.” Grant then, what is very probable—what is all but certain, that wheat, with the present Corn Laws, and without any increased importation of colonial corn, would not average more than 54*s.* a quarter—say 15 per cent. lower than the protecting price of the existing law; we may ascertain, by a few exam-

ples, the effect that this fall would have upon the incomes of landowners generally. My observations refer, of course, to the general amount of rents, in reference to the price of produce. I know, that, on some estates, landlords have given such encouragement to tenants, by making them various allowances to effect permanent improvements, which have increased the value of the land by the aid of the landlord's capital ; yet the nominal rent remains as it was before the improvement took place, though the real rental value would be much more, if the same price of produce had continued. But, still, the improved value of the land may be, or, in some measure, may be, a compensation to the tenant for the reduction in the price of produce ; but, what I wish to show, is, what would be the effect on the incomes of landlords generally. Suppose a farmer has hired a farm of good land, the value of the produce of which, wheat being at 63s. a quarter, is £1000. He agrees to pay £450 a year for it. If, then, a fall in the value of the produce of 15 per cent. occur, the value of the produce of the farm would be reduced £150, and this would ultimately reduce the rent from £450 to £300, or about 33 per cent.

As a second example—suppose the soil of a farm to be of second rate quality, and the value of the produce is £900, and the farmer has agreed to pay one-third of this value, or £300 as rent ; if, then, a fall take place of 15 per cent., the value of the produce would be reduced £135, and this

would reduce the rent from £300 to £165, or 45 per cent.

As a third example—a farm is of an inferior quality of soil, and the produce is of the value of £800, and the farmer has agreed to pay £200 a year, or one-fourth of this value; if, then, a fall take place in the value of agricultural produce of 15 per cent., which is £120, this would reduce the rent from £200 to £80, or 60 per cent.

As a fourth example—suppose a farmer hires a farm of poor land, the value of the produce of which is worth £700, and he agrees to pay £140 a year for it, or one-fifth of the value of the produce, and its value is afterwards reduced 15 per cent., which would be £105, leaving the rent only £35.

It may, however, be said, that I am confusing the price of all agricultural produce with the price of wheat. It is true that I suppose the price of produce generally, on the average of a certain number of years, to be governed by the price of wheat—it is admitted to be so; all calculations on this subject are made on this supposition. We have no averages to show the varying price of all the different produce of the soil; and, therefore, we have no means of ascertaining the exact proportions.

It is reasonably supposed that interest will lead individuals (when there is an opportunity, as there is in the variety of the soil of Great Britain and Ireland) to cultivate that produce which yields the



best return. If barley one year be the most beneficial crop, farmers, where the nature of the soil permits, will cultivate more of it; thus the supply of that particular grain is increased, and the proportions restored. Perhaps it will be said, that the price of meat and cheese, &c., is not influenced by the price of wheat, and that, therefore, the rent of grass land will not fall in proportion to the fall in the value of wheat;—that it is not correct to state, because the price of grain may fall 15 per cent., that the price of all agricultural produce would fall in proportion. During the last year, the price of meat has not been in proportion to the price of wheat; but this has arisen from an accidental cause. I will admit, however, that it may not be quite right to state that the price of meat and cheese are governed by the price of wheat, but that they are influenced by it, there cannot be a doubt; and would be governed by it, if the importation of corn were prohibited, both from our own Colonies, and from other countries. But, as this is not the case, in estimating the reduction in the rental value of land, I will not proceed on the supposition, that, because grain is reduced 15 per cent., that produce generally will be affected to the same extent. Conceding this point, and assuming that the general depreciation would not be more than 10 per cent., what effect would this have upon the rental value of land varying in fertility?

As in the first example, the general fall in

produce being 10 instead of 15 per cent., would make the reduction of rent about 22, instead of 33 per cent.

As in the second example, the reduction would be 30, instead of 45 per cent.

As in the third example, the reduction would be 40, instead of 60 per cent.

As in the fourth example, the rent of £140, would be reduced £70, instead of £105, making the reduction 50 per cent.

These examples show the reduction of rent which would take place on the different qualities of land on which there are no incumbrances.

Let us now consider how the owners of encumbered estates would be circumstanced.

Suppose an estate to produce £30,000, value of produce, and it is let at ..... £11,000

And the landlord has to pay in annuities.. £2,000

Interest on £50,000 borrowed, at  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , which has been until lately the general rate of interest, 2,250

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4,250

Interest reduced  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 per cent., which is .....

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250

Available income at this time .....

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7,000

The reduction of 10 per cent. on the value of the produce of the estate is .....

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3,000

Present available income.....

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£4,000

A second example, suppose an estate, of inferior quality of soil, yielding £30,000 value of produce, is let at  $\frac{1}{2}$  of this value, or at ..... £7,500

The landlord has to pay in annuities ..... £1,500  
 Interest on £40,000 borrowed ..... 1,800  


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 3,300

Available income at this time..... 4,200  
 Interest reduced  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. .... 200  


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 4,400

The reduction of 10 per cent. in the value of the produce..... 3,000

Present available income..... £1,400

A third example, landed income as above..... £7,500

The landlord has also £30,000 in money, the interest of which is..... 1,350

Total income ..... £8,850

He then added to his property, by the purchase of an estate, for which he gave £60,000, or 30 years' purchase, on the rental of £2,000 at the time, and he borrowed £30,000 to enable him to effect the purchase, for which he paid  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest.

Former net landed income..... £7,500  
 Income from property purchased .. £2,000  
 Allowance for repairs, &c. .... 200  


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 1,800  


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 £9,300

A reduction of 10 per cent. in the value of the produce of the unpurchased estate ..... 3,000

Ditto ditto of the purchased, namely, on £8,000 ..... 800

Interest on £30,000 borrowed, which was at  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , and is now at 4 per cent. .... 1,200

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 5,000

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 £4,300

A fourth example, suppose an estate of cold, strong land	
produces £30,000, and is let at 1-5th of this value, or	£6,000
The landlord has to pay in interest, in annuities, &c...	3,000
	<hr/>
Available income at this time.....	3,000
A reduction of 10 per cent. in the value of the produce is	3,000
	<hr/>
Present available income .....	£0,000
	<hr/>

It is conceded, that though the fall in the price of wheat would be 15 per cent., the fall in the price of agricultural produce generally would not exceed 10 per cent. Considering the reduction at 10 per cent., the examples adduced show, that a reduction to this extent, below the present protecting price of 63s. a quarter, would deprive the proprietors of good land, who have no other incumbrances than those universally incident to landed property, of about 22 per cent. of their incomes, and the proprietors of second rate land of 30 per cent., and the proprietors of inferior land of 40 per cent., and the proprietors of poor strong land of 50 per cent. But where there are heavy incumbrances upon the property, the proprietor of good land would have little more than half his gross income to spend, the proprietor of inferior land little more than one-fifth, and the proprietor of poor, cold strong land would be left without income. These reductions of rent and of income, specified in the foregoing examples, must follow a fall in the price of corn from 63s. to 54s. a quarter, or a fall in the price of agricultural produce generally of 10 per cent., unless the taxes on landed property are

materially diminished. These opinions are not merely speculative—these calculations are not got up to serve a particular purpose, but they are supported and established by facts and experience, and by the testimony of intelligent and practical men. Now, these reductions of rent and of income, great as they are, must ultimately be submitted to by landlords, hard and unfair as it may be, unless farmers are relieved from some other portions of expenditure. The necessity of this is so evident, to prevent the general embarrassment of the landowners, that the immediate attention of Government ought to be directed to accomplish so important an object. Those imposts which bear too exclusively on land, and by which property at large is benefited and protected, ought to be equalized. Even suppose by the reduction of the poor rate, county rate, and highway rate, and the removal of the malt tax, the farmer can be relieved to the amount of 10 per cent. upon his rent, which, estimating the average rental of farming land throughout England at 25s. an acre, would be 2s. 6d. an acre. Then, if the reduction of 10 per cent. on rent of the outgoings specified above were effected, the reduction which the landlords would be required to make, would be 10 per cent less, to meet the fall of price from 63s. to 54s. a quarter: on good lands they would have to reduce their rents 12 per cent., on second rate lands 20 per cent., on inferior lands 30 per cent., and on poor, strong land 40 per cent.

Any system of Corn Laws ought to secure to the British grower a remunerating price in unpropitious seasons; and though the present Corn Laws, the best that were ever enacted, and which have preserved steady and moderate prices during the unfavourable seasons which have happened from 1828 to 1832, have not, this has not been the fault of the Corn Laws, but the consequence of unpropitious seasons and of the outgoings of the occupier not falling in proportion with the fall in the price of produce.

We see what effect the present prices of corn, or rather the price of 54*s.* a quarter,—the probable future average price of corn produced within our own territories at home, will have upon the incomes of landed proprietors;—and if there be a free trade in corn, or a nearer approximation to it, which would reduce the price still lower, it would not only affect landlords in a greater degree, but it would reach to all persons connected with agriculture. It is clear from the evidence of Mr. Sanders that such would be the case, even with a duty of 10*s.* a quarter. When he is asked “do you think the present system is adapted to give the best chance of steadiness?” His reply is,\* (1) “I consider a fixed duty wholly impracticable. I have known fine Baltic wheats equal to English, sold at 20*s.* to 22*s.* a quarter for five or six years in succession: I have known purchases there at 15*s.* and 18*s.* a quarter. A succession of good crops here and in Europe would again probably

\* See Sanders's Evidence, Question <sup>1</sup>4552.

give us these prices, and with a duty of 10*s.* a quarter we should see an *average* price then of 36*s.* to 38*s.* a quarter, so that a fixed duty would, under these circumstances, prove ruinous to the farmer; and then a succession of bad crops (both here and in Europe) would give us so high a price that, in the present state of the public mind, the duty never could be exacted, and the Corn Laws might be swept away altogether, so that a fixed duty scheme would fail at both ends.”\* (2) “If in good harvests corn is to fall to 44*s.* or 46*s.* do you think that a favourable state for the English farmer? No, but a good crop is always more productive than a bad one.” “Suppose corn should fall to 44*s.* or 46*s.* a quarter, what would then be the state of the farmer?” (3) “I think the farmers would be reduced to very much the same state that they were between 1780 and 1790, when they lived amongst their servants, and all the habits acquired since that time must be thrown aside.” “You think the farmer must go lower in the station he now fills?” (4) “I think many must; I think many persons who have been farmers have become labourers, or will become so.” “Many persons have been ruined?” (5) “Yes; and more will be ruined still.” “The farmer is rather retrograding, the manufacturer rising?” (6) “Yes.” “Do you think that the farmer is living beyond his station?” (7) “I have no doubt if wheat

\* See Mr. Sanders's Evidence—see Questions <sup>2</sup>4561, <sup>3</sup>4600, <sup>4</sup>4616, <sup>5</sup>4619, <sup>6</sup>4620, <sup>7</sup>4621.

falls to 44*s.* or 46*s.* a quarter, there will be many farmers divested of all capital." "You are not a farmer yourself, and therefore not aware of the effect of a reduction of price to 44*s.* or 46*s.* a quarter?"\* (1) "I have no doubt at the present moment there is some land that will not pay for cultivating, but then of course these are lands situate under very diadvantageous circumstances; some perhaps will go out of cultivation soon, and if the price of wheat come to 45*s.* a quarter there will be perhaps another class of land which will go out of cultivation, but still the effect of land going out of cultivation in that way would be to produce a diminished supply, and a reaction of price under protection." "You said you looked forward to agriculture being again productive when things are arranged?" (2) "I cannot see why it should not be so." "Do you think so with reference to the present Corn Laws being kept up?" (3) "Certainly." "You think that if the present Corn Laws were not kept up, which you think there is but little chance of, agriculture will never rise?" (4) "No, not for a time." You stated that you thought the manufacturers have got over their crisis, though they have been ruined by hundreds, and now they are flourishing?" (5) "Yes." "You think that crisis must come to land?" (6) "That is of course a general observation, but capable of explanation: there are large landed

\* See Mr. Sanders's Evidence, see Question 14632, 24634, 34635, 44636, 54637, 64638.



proprietors who can bear almost any reduction of rent, but if you come to look at the fictitious state of things which has existed for the last eighteen years, during which much land has repeatedly changed hands, whether by will or contract, charged with certain outgoings, it is perfectly clear and manifest that those persons subject to those charges must suffer the greatest inconvenience, and many of them be ruined. I know estates now which produce scarcely any rent at all, and which estates are so circumstanced that they cannot be sold without the sanction of a particular Act of Parliament.”

I have introduced this evidence of Mr. Sanders to strengthen the opinions I have offered and to corroborate the declarations I have made, that supposing we do not receive an increased supply of cheaper corn from our Colonies the future prices of corn under the existing protection, and which too I have supposed may be higher, for the reasons I have given, than Mr. Sanders anticipates, will considerably reduce the incomes of landed proprietors, even if a reduction of 10 per cent take place in the other outgoings of the tenantry. This distress Mr. Sanders admits would take place under the present Corn Laws, but if there be not a free trade with nations independent of us—but such an approximation to it as would still leave a duty of 10s. a quarter, “we should see an average price then of 36s. to 38s. a quarter,” such

prices, under such circumstances, would occasion the cultivation of the poor and inferior soils to be abandoned, and would greatly reduce the rent also of pasture land, and the best arable land. Though the present Corn Laws admit the introduction of Colonial Corn at a very low duty, the art of colonization must, notwithstanding, be improved to encourage British and Irish capital and labour to enter upon the cultivation of the extensive and fertile field of our Colonies, and thereby enable us to procure from thence an abundant supply of cheap corn for the Mother Country. This improvement cannot be effected in a moment,—it must be the work of years of steady perseverance in a wise system of colonial policy ;—and the improvement should first be accomplished before any laws which promote it are rescinded. The immediate alteration of the existing Corn Laws, such an alteration as would admit the competition of foreign corn the growth of foreign independent countries at a duty of 10s. a quarter, would not only retard, but, probably, prevent any extensive employment of British and Irish capital and labour in colonial agriculture ;—and such an alteration would also throw out of cultivation as much inferior land as would produce twice as much value of produce as the amount of the value of the corn imported ; and the loss sustained thereby would extend to all persons connected with landed property of this description.

Some estates are entirely composed of this quality of soil, and there are few that have not some portion of it. To throw out of cultivation the inferior soils, would impoverish, and in most cases absolutely ruin, the tenants of them, as well as the labourers who are employed upon them. Then, as there would be a greater number of tenants without homes, and without occupations, the demand for those farms which would yield a profitable return for the capital employed would increase;—the demand though it would not keep the rent of the better land from falling, would keep it from falling in proportion to the depreciation in the value of produce. This would act in favour of the proprietors of this land, but unfavourably to the occupiers,—for the increased competition for land of this nature would lessen the rate of their profits. Thus, such an approximation to free trade would not only impoverish, but, in many instances, entirely ruin the occupiers of inferior land, but injure also the occupiers of good soils, by reducing their capitals, and lowering the rate of their profits.

I know Lord Fitzwilliam and those who think like him on this subject say that the tenantry will not suffer. It would be some consolation if there were reasonable ground for believing such would be the case. They say the landlords would be the only sufferers;—but the plain common sense and practical observation of the farmer have supplied him with more correct information,—and he

knows better than this. Such assertions are mere popular baits to draw all parties against the landlords,—and thereby to acquire numerical strength in favour of the cause they advocate, and to gain their object by clamour and importunity. Lord Fitzwilliam may afford to make such sacrifices, but very few can, and he may think the popularity he has gained by the course he has taken, an adequate compensation. In my opinion, his lordship has, in his address to the landowners, been as unsuccessful in showing that the Corn Laws of 1815 were injurious to the occupiers of land,—as he has been in showing that they brought suffering upon the labourers in husbandry, and reduced them from a condition of comfort, to a state of destitute poverty. Though it is clear the Corn Law of 1815 did not produce these evils, I admit that it did not accomplish the purposes of its enactment. Parliament feeling this to be the case, repealed the law in 1828, and passed another which is now in operation; the object of which was to afford a moderate and regular protecting price to the grower, and a moderate and regular price to the consumer, and it has accomplished the purposes of its enactment. Lord Fitzwilliam uses the terms dear bread as applied to the price of wheat at the time he published his address: these terms when so applied could only be used as catch terms to inflame the passions, and excite the prejudices of the multitude; and surely it would excite surprise that a person of Lord Fitzwilliam's rank, station,

property, and character, should contribute to support this popular delusion;—that he should proclaim a free, unrestricted trade in corn, to be the grand specific to appease the outcries of discontent, to remove the distempers of faction and the sufferings of poverty, and to restore health and vigour to the industrious classes of the community. It is rather strange that Lord Fitzwilliam should not allude to the defence which the existing Corn Laws afford, but should level his attack against the ruined walls of former protection. His arguments are entirely directed against high prices, and the Corn Bill of 1815. He seems to have forgotten that any alteration had taken place in 1828; and it was an alteration, too, which appeared to the enlightened mind of Mr. Canning, and even to the liberal views of Mr. Huskisson, as extensive as was expedient and safe under the circumstances in which the landed interest were placed; and no alterations in their circumstances have taken place since that time to justify a further change.

During the last forty years there have been nearly 4,000,000 acres of land inclosed and cultivated, and this for the most part inferior land. There is also a great extent of poor old inclosed land, which would no longer answer to cultivate. The injury arising from this retrocession of home agriculture cannot be calculated. The immense capital expended by the owners and the occupiers in the cultivation and improvement of this land

would be annihilated. The landlords and clergymen without incomes. The tenantry without homes and without capital. The labourers without employment, and the means of obtaining it, in poor land districts, extinguished. And the introduction into our markets for two or three years of of £6,000,000 worth of foreign corn would occasion this distressing state of things;—would throw out of cultivation 4,000,000 acres of land, employing a capital of £20,000,000, and yielding produce which would be worth annually £12,000,000; of which £3,000,000 would be paid to the landlords for rent,—£6,000,000 to the labourers for wages, for parliamentary, and parochial outgoings, and to wheelrights, carpenters, blacksmiths, and other tradesmen,—and £3,000,000 to the occupiers for interest on their capitals, which includes wear and tear, and time of superintendence.

For example, 4,000,000 acres of inferior land, which produces £3 an acre on the average, or £12,000,000 a year, cultivated according to the five course system of husbandry, there would be

800,000 acres of wheat, average value £6 an acre	£.	
	produces	4,800,000
800,000 . . . . of turnips . . . . .	£2 . . . . .	1,600,000
800,000 . . . . of spring corn . . . . .	£4 . . . . .	3,200,000
800,000 . . . . of first year's seeds	} £1 10 0 . .	2,400,000
800,000 . . . . of second year's seeds		
<hr/> 4,000,000		<hr/> £12,000,000

This example is sufficiently near the truth, without instancing others from different characters of inferior land, to show that if £6,000,000 worth of foreign corn were brought into our markets and sold for 25 per cent. less than 54*s.* a quarter, the price which we have supposed may be the future average of corn produced at home; 25 per cent. less would be rather more than 40*s.* a quarter, which is from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* higher than the price at which Mr. Sanders says the foreign grower can afford to sell at in good seasons, after paying a duty of 10*s.* a quarter; and this £6,000,000 worth of foreign corn would prevent the production of £8,000,000 of corn from our own soil. And this £8,000,000 worth, though only the produce of 1,600,000 acres cannot be grown without 4,000,000 acres are kept in cultivation under a system of alternate husbandry;—and which 4,000,000 acres yield £12,000,000 annually. And practical men know, though the political theorists do not, that inferior land is only fit for a system of alternate husbandry;—that it is not adapted for permanent pasture;—that the poor strong land would be half the allotted period of life before it acquired a good turf;—and that the poor weak land, if laid down for pasturage, would not, to use a common agricultural phrase, keep a sheep an acre, but would soon revert to its original sterility.

To produce £8,000,000 worth of corn 4,000,000 acres are kept in cultivation by a rotation of grain

and vegetable crops; and this quantity of land employs a capital of £20,000,000 and yields £12,000,000 value of produce annually,—which is divided amongst the agricultural classes, the manufacturers' best customers, and then circulates through every vein of British industry. Put, for a moment, the importance of supporting our own agriculture out of sight, and then I would ask, are foreigners who have £6,000,000 to lay out with our manufacturers, more desirable customers than the agricultural classes who have nearly £12,000,000 to expend in articles of consumption,—for though a great portion of £3,000,000 be paid in parliamentary and parochial outgoings, in supporting the poor, the public establishments, the public officers, and the public creditor, yet a part of this portion goes to maintain consumers of our manufactures:—so that, as I have before stated, 4,000,000 acres of land, which employs a capital of £20,000,000, and yields produce of the value of £12,000,000 a year, which is diffused throughout every branch of national industry, are to be thrown out of cultivation. A happy commencement of the political theorists predicted period of national prosperity!

In confirmation of the assertion that a reduced price of corn to 40s., a quarter in consequence of the competition of corn from countries independent of us,—corn not produced by British and Irish capital and labour, would throw out of cultivation all the poor, inferior, and second rate strong



land of the country, or what is called the wheat and bean land,—land which cannot be properly or profitably cultivated except it be fallowed occasionally; the poor strong land every third year, and the second rate strong land not less than every other course of cropping, or once in seven years. I will instance this by an example which will show the value of the produce on second rate strong land, and the expense of obtaining it under the following system of farming; fallow, wheat, oats, first seeds, second seeds, wheat, beans; a system which is adopted now corn is so low, in order not to have more than one dead year in seven.

The value of the produce under this course of cropping will be—

	£.	s.	d.
Fallow .....	0	0	0
Wheat crop after fallow, 28 bush. an acre, at 40s. a qr.	7	0	0
Oat crop ditto, 30 ditto, at 22s. do.	4	2	6
Seeds uncertain .....	3	0	0
Second year's seeds ditto .....	1	10	0
Wheat after ditto, 20 bush. an acre, at 40s. a qr.	5	0	0
Beans ditto, 25 ditto, at 32s. do.	5	0	0
	<hr/>		
Total value of produce .....	£25	12	6
	<hr/>		

The expenses of production, independent of the landlord's rent, will be—first year's fallow—

Four ploughings .....	£2	0	0
Five harrowings, and 2 rollings ....	0	10	0

Carried forward .... £2 10 0

Brought forward . . . . £2 10 0

Half the value of the manure, supposing  
the farm furnishes half the manure  
which is required for the fallows, and  
the other half is purchased . . . . . £1 15 0

Turning the manure, and carting it on 0 12 0

Filling and spreading . . . . . 0 4 3

Seed, 2½ bushels an acre, at 5s., is  
12s. 6d., sowing 3d. . . . . 0 12 9

Parochial and Parliamentary Rates .. 0 5 0

3 9 0

The second year's expenses during the growth of the  
crop—

Weeding . . . . . 0 2 0

Reaping, &c., and harvesting . . . . 1 0 0

Threshing 28 bushels, and winnowing  
it, including beer, 6d. . . . . 0 14 0

Taking to market . . . . . 0 2 6

Parochial and Parliamentary Rates .. 0 5 0

2 3 6

The third year—Oats—

Two ploughings . . . . . 1 0 0

Three harrowings and rollings . . . . 0 6 0

Seed, 5 bushels, at 2s. 9d. . . . . 0 13 9

Weeding . . . . . 0 2 0

Harvesting, 12s.—threshing, 9s. 3d.—  
winnowing, 2s.—taking to market,  
2s. 6d. . . . . 1 5 9

Rates . . . . . 0 5 0

3 12 6

Fourth year—first year's seeds—

Seed, 12lb. of Clover, and 1 peck of  
Rye Grass . . . . . 0 12 0

Sowing and harrowing with light harrows 0 1 3

Parliamentary and Parochial Rates .. 0 5 0

0 18 3

Carried forward . . . . 12 13 3

Brought forward . . . . £12 13 3

## Fifth year—second year's seeds—

Parliamentary and Parochial Rates . . . . . 0 5 0

## Sixth year—Wheat—

One ploughing of 2 years' seeds . . . . £0 12 0

Three harrowings and rollings . . . . . 0 6 0

Three bushels of seed, at 5s. . . . . 0 15 0

Weeding . . . . . 0 2 0

Reaping, harvesting, &amp;c., including beer 1 0 0

Threshing &amp; winnowing 20 bushels, do. 0 10 0

Taking to market . . . . . 0 2 0

Parliamentary and Parochial Rates . . 0 5 0

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3 12 0

## Seventh year—Beans—

Two ploughings . . . . . 1 0 0

Three harrowings and rollings . . . . 0 6 0

Hoeings . . . . . 0 8 0

Reaping and harvesting, 12s.—threshing and winnowing, 7s. 6d.—taking to market, 2s. 6d. . . . . 1 2 0

Seed, 3 bushels, at 4s. . . . . 0 12 0

Parochial and Parliamentary Rates . . 0 5 0

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3 13 0

## Expenses of cultivation for 7 years, exclusive of rent

and tenant's profit . . . . . 20 3 3

## And if 15s. an acre on 7 acres, or £5. 5s. 0d., is

added for tenant's profit, which includes common

interest on capital, wear and tear, and remunera-

tion for time of superintendance, (and this is

a moderate profit,) nothing remains for rent . . 5 5 0

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£25 8 3

The items of the expense of production in this example, practical strong land farmers will perceive, are less than they have heretofore been. I have reduced them to the extent that, I conceive, they might be, if wheat were to fall to 40s. a quarter,—and then, even on second rate strong land, there remains no surplus for rent, after the ordinary expenses of production, and the occupier's profit are paid. It is needless, therefore, to multiply examples to show, that, if such be the case upon strong land, of second rate quality, what would be the effect on poor land, and especially on poor strong land; in the latter case, there would be not only no rent to the landlord, but, also, no profit to the tenant. But if the protection which the present Corn Laws afford be not weakened, and the future average price of wheat be 54s. a quarter, and other grain in proportion, instead of the second rate quality of strong arable land yielding no rent, it would then yield a moderate rent—about 18s. an acre; as we may see, by raising the prices of the produce to the probable average prices.

	£.	s.	d.
Fallow .....	0	0	0
Wheat after fallow, 28 bushels an acre, at 54s. a qr.	9	9	0
Oats 30 ditto, at 25s. ..	5	0	0
Seeds uncertain .....	3	10	0
Second year's seeds ditto .....	1	15	0
Wheat after seeds, 20 bushels an acre, at 54s. a qr.	6	10	0
Beans 25 ditto, at 36s. ..	5	12	6
	<hr/>		
	£31	16	6
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Which gives a surplus over the expenses of production, as exemplified before, of £6. 4s. 6d., or nearly 18s. an acre. Yet, with the average price of 54s. a quarter, the poor strong clay lands, which cannot be cultivated without a fallow every third year, will yield scarcely any rent. For though the expenses of producing the fallow wheat crop, and the succeeding bean or oat crop, would be less in consequence of the produce being less, and, therefore, less threshing, &c., yet the expenses could not, under ordinary management, be less than £9. ; and the produce of the wheat crop, at 22 bushels an acre, at 54s. a quarter, and the bean crop 20 bushels an acre, at 36s. a quarter, would be worth £11. 18s. 6d., or £2. 18s. 6d. beyond the expenses, which would be 19s. 6d. an acre ; the surplus to be divided between landlord and tenant. Farms of this poor quality of land keep little stock beyond the horses employed to till them, and which consume a considerable share of the produce ; there is, therefore, less capital employed upon them and, consequently, less profit per acre for the cultivator than upon farms of a better quality, which require more capital. This surplus beyond the expenses of cultivation may be fairly divided between landlord and tenant, which would give 9s. 9d. an acre to the tenant as profit, and 9s. 9d. an acre to the landlord as rent ; and this would be a reduction of about 50 per cent. on the average rental of this kind of land. These last examples, though they have particular reference to strong

land, establish the correctness of those previously brought forward;—indeed, one example strengthens and confirms the other. They also establish the truth of the assertion, that, under the existing circumstances of the agricultural classes, the general rental of the kingdom must be reduced, to meet the present prices, or an average price of 54*s.* a quarter for wheat; and they show to what extent it is too high on the different qualities of land. They also show, that though at 54*s.* a quarter, under the existing circumstances of the agricultural classes, landlords generally will have to make reductions of rent, yet, that the difference between 40*s.* a quarter for wheat, and 54*s.* a quarter, makes all the difference in the world to the landlord and tenant of the description of land we have been referring to. ¶ With the price at 40*s.* a quarter, even on the second rate quality of strong land, the landlord would receive no rent; with the price at 54*s.* a quarter, he would receive a moderate rent: and as this would be the case on the second rate quality of strong land, of course it would be the case with all land of the same value. On poor strong land, with the price at 40*s.* a quarter, the tenant would receive no profit, and the landlord no rent; while, with the price at 54*s.* a quarter, the tenant would receive a moderate profit, and the landlord about half his former rent. Thus, low prices, occasioned by the introduction into the market of this country of corn, not produced by the employment of British and Irish capital

and labour, destroy both rent and profit, and moderate prices secure moderate rents, and moderate profit. The price of 54*s.* a quarter ought not to be called moderate,—it is, in fact, a very low price; it is only about 2*s.* 6*d.* a quarter more than the average price of 150 years antecedent to 1790, when the amount of parliamentary and parochial taxation, and the general expenses of production, were nothing in comparison with their present amount; but I apply the expression moderate to the price of 54*s.*, as contrasted with the still lower price of 40*s.* a quarter.

Under the present circumstances of the country, a high price of the chief articles of human subsistence would benefit the landed interest at the expense of other interests. A low price, not induced by the employment of British and Irish capital and labour, would be a greater evil,—it is doubtful whether any interest would benefit by it; and even if the manufacturing and commercial interests did, it would be by a sacrifice far greater than their exclusive advantage. Either high prices, the result of entire prohibition, or low prices, the result of permitting the introduction of corn into our market, not produced in English territories, or by the means of British and Irish capital and labour, would be injurious to the best interest of the country at large; but moderate prices are what are to be desired, to preserve the fair balance between the great interests of the country, and to insure the prosperity of all. Our pilots must take

care to steer the vessel of the State between Scylla and Charybdis, that, in avoiding one, she does not strike upon the other.

Let not landlords deceive themselves. This will be their condition if the price of wheat fall to 40s. a quarter in consequence of the introduction of cheap corn not produced by the capital and labour of own countrymen, and the only way by which this will be prevented, will be by the abandonment of the cultivation of a great extent of land at home,—an extensive limitation of agricultural productions within our own territory. The effects of this wretched alternative would be disastrous. No re-action will take place until the calamity has occurred. Landlords will not feel the entire evils at once, and they will most unwillingly conceive that there exists a necessity for the great reduction of rent which they will be called upon to make. A collision between them and their tenants will ensue. The tenants will be the first sufferers,—and, I speak advisedly when I say, their present circumstances are such, that there is but a step between them and ruin,—they are now on the very brink of the precipice. The landlords will soon however feel the full effects of prices so reduced;—for the rent of farming land is merely that part of the value of the produce which remains after all the necessary expenses of production, and the farmers' profit are paid; the portion of the value of the produce which the farmer receives as profit will depend on the competition for land. If the



competition be great, he will receive a less portion, and the landlord a greater, but still he will not go on farming without profit, though he obtain but a small one. If then, there is no surplus, there is no rent. This will be the case ultimately; though, before this does take place, rents will be paid, as they have heretofore been, out of the tenant's capital, until his capital is still more diminished,—and the present race of tenants, for the most part, ruined. I maintain, and I know that reflecting practical men concerned in the superintendence and management of landed property,—men who know the circumstances of the classes comprising what is called the landed interest, will agree, and the Report of the Committee admits the fact, that farmers, with wheat at 63s. a quarter, which was the average price within one penny from 1828 to 1832, have been unable to pay their present rents, and to live in that unparsonious and hospitable, yet frugal and provident manner, in which the yeomanry of England were once accustomed to do, and in which they ought to be able to do:—for those who employ time and capital in any branch of useful industry have a right to expect to accumulate something:—this is the great inducement to its employment, and there is somewhat radically wrong in the state of affairs in a country when such is not the result. Mr. Sanders says, “the farmer is retrograding, the manufacturer is rising;”—that the manufacturers enjoy more of the comforts of life than the farmer;—that the

manufacturers of Lancashire and Cheshire live as well as ever they did ;—that the manufacturer with a moderate capital has his country house and horse and gig if he likes.” The present protecting price ought not to be reduced. This protecting price, under any revision of the Corn Laws, ought to be secured. The Corn Laws ought to protect the farmer in unpropitious seasons, with a deficient crop ;—for the average price of average seasons only admits a moderate profit upon his capital, and scarcely enables him to accumulate anything for the requirements of his family, and for the necessities of declining years. If, then, he is prevented obtaining, by the want of protection from foreign competition, a higher price when he most needs it, when his produce fails, he must sustain a considerable loss ;—a loss probably equal to the small gains of former years ; and if three or four unfavourable seasons happen, he may not only lose his accumulations, but he may be obliged to entrench upon his capital. Thus, the agriculturalists might be prevented, by the liberal policy of political speculators, by the selfish requirements, and by the ignorant clamour of a portion of the public, not merely from gaining anything, while other interests are acquiring wealth, but kept in a state of jeopardy lest the profit of one year should be destroyed by the next. If the agriculture of our own country, and the increased produce of our own territories occasion a reduction in the price of corn, every person ought to say, with Mr. Huskisson,

“ I for one rejoice at it,” even though it be much below 72*s.* a quarter, the price at which Mr. Huskisson considered it cheap ; for there is a very wide difference in the effects upon the agricultural classes between cheapness occasioned by the productiveness of our own territories, and cheapness occasioned by the supplies of foreign countries independent of us. The difference is, the one arises from the employment of British capital and British industry,—the other does not. I have already shown the reduction which must be made in rents, and other outgoings to meet the probable average price of 54*s.* a quarter. But, if wheat should fall to 40*s.* a quarter in consequence of the supplies of corn not produced by means of the industry and capital of our own countrymen, then, is it likely that taxes, poor rates, county rates, church rates, highway rates, and the expenses of production could fall sufficiently low to meet this reduced price of corn ? Surely it is most unlikely, it is almost demonstratively certain, with wheat at 40*s.* a quarter, from such circumstances, that poor rates, church rates, highway rates, county rates, (all of which expenses fall too exclusively on the land) taxes, interest on capital, and the expenses of production, will consume the larger portion of that fund from which rent should be paid to the landlord. To preserve the landed interest, and to secure to the landlord a certain, though a less rent, and to the tenant a certain compensation, no

change should be made to weaken the protecting influence of the present Corn Laws.

No alteration of circumstances has taken place since 1828, when the present measure was devised, after long and anxious consideration, to justify any departure from the spirit of that policy. To tamper with them would be folly and madness. It never can be for the permanent prosperity and power of this country to require the owner and occupier of the soil to sacrifice their goods upon the altar of the Idol Goddess of Trade. Yet, Lord Fitzwilliam, and that part of the public press which support the same opinions, assert that landlords only would suffer, and they far less than they imagine. Already, in the course of these pages, I have endeavoured to explain the effects that a nearer approximation to a free trade with independent nations would have upon landlords and tenants. I shall now attempt to prove that the labourers in husbandry would be sufferers by it, notwithstanding Lord Fitzwilliam says, that "when we look at their habits and circumstances, and consider how large a portion of their slender incomes is expended in the purchase of bread and flour, can any of you arrive at the conclusion that they are benefited by enhancing the price of corn? So far is this from being the case, that, probably, there is hardly a class of labourers more interested in having corn cheap, than those who are engaged in husbandry; because there is none that spend so much, compa-

ratively, upon the necessaries, and so little upon the comforts, or the luxuries of life." The labourer in husbandry is interested in having corn as cheap as a free trade would make it, if, when corn is so cheapened, there would be the same demand for his labour, and he can obtain employment on as good terms as before. But would there be the same demand for agricultural labour when corn is partly supplied from foreign independent countries, and not from our own soil? And would the husbandman be able to obtain the same wages as before? Certainly not. If the demand for corn of home growth falls off, and the price of it falls too, which would be the case under a system of free trade, the demand for this labour falls off, and the value of it falls too, because the rate of the wages of the agricultural labourer is influenced by the demand for corn; because it is both the chief commodity which his labour produces, and the chief article of his subsistence. And not only would the rate of the wages of the employed labourer be lower, but thousands of labourers would be entirely thrown out of employment, in consequence of the poorer soils being, as almost all the advocates for the abolition of the Corn Laws admit, thrown out of cultivation, and the field for the employment of labour abridged. Therefore, the labourers in husbandry would be severe sufferers by a free trade in corn.

The effects on the labourers in husbandry would be very different if corn were cheaper, from an in-

creased supply of it produced at home, or produced even within our own territories abroad ; this cheapness would arise, not from the displacing of agricultural labour and agricultural capital, by the introduction of corn, produced by the capital and labour of foreigners,—but from an enlarged employment of British capital,—from the super-addition of the labour of the British peasantry. Abundance and cheapness thus created, created by the employment of the industry of the agricultural and pastoral population, might be a blessing to the country. And if encouragement were given to our own agriculture,—if the expectation of a free importation did not retard improvement, and drive capital from the soil, with the moderate protecting price of the present Corn Laws, and with rents somewhat more moderate, but not ruinously depressed, additional capital and labour would be employed upon land now in cultivation, and in bringing into cultivation those extensive bogs and plains into which “neither spade nor plough have entered,” so that our own territories would yield a much greater produce, and we should have both abundance and cheapness.

We do not mean to contend that the labourer in husbandry is benefited by a high price of corn ;—but we do maintain that he is in a much better condition when corn is dear, than if it were cheap, such cheapness being the result of the introduction of corn into our markets not produced by the labour of our own population.

Lord Fitzwilliam states, that when the wages of labour increased during the war, the increase was not occasioned by the high price of corn; and he goes on to say, "a very small share of reflection will be requisite to convince us, that though the prosperity of the labourers and a high price of corn may have been contemporaneous, the latter was not the cause of the former, except with the aid, and through the intervention of concomitant causes, which cannot again be brought into operation." That, during the war, Lord Fitzwilliam says, the higher rate of wages was occasioned by the increased demand for labour, and not by the increased price of corn. But what was the cause of the increased demand for labour? Why the great increased demand for home grown corn, which raised the price, and induced the improvement and extension of agriculture. Yet his lordship's main proposition is, that the price of all labour is governed by the price of corn. This he seems to consider an admitted truth; for he unqualifiedly states that high wages are the result of dear corn. Yet in his zeal to prove that the Corn Laws create unmixed evil,—that they inflict an injury upon the agricultural labourer,—he affirms that the high price of corn did not occasion the high rate of wages which the labourer received during the war. Surely such reasoning is conflicting and inconsistent. The price of corn generally governs the rate of wages of the labourer in husbandry, or it does not. The price of the necessaries of life originally governed the

price of labour, and if the demand and supply were always equal, would continue to govern it;—but in every civilized country, especially in a country overflowing with capital, there will be, as Mr. Malthus observes, “ many causes which in practice operating like friction in mechanics, prevent the price of labour from rising and falling in proportion to the price of its component parts,”—the price of the necessaries of life—the competition of labourers—the competition of capitalists—are the governing principles of the price of labour, and as they act sometimes in one direction, and sometimes in opposite directions, they prevent any regular and settled price of labour. This is especially the case with the wages of the manufacturing operatives. The price of the necessaries of life, of which bread is only a part, is far from influencing in an uniform manner, much less of governing, the price of this labour. If the competition of labour be very great, and the competition of capital, or the demand for labour, small, the price of labour will be low, though the price of the articles of subsistence be high: in this case the labourers are wretched. If the competition of capital be great, and there be little competition of labour, or a small supply of labour, wages will be high, though the price of the articles of subsistence be ever so low: in this case the labourers would be unusually prosperous. If the competition of capital, and the competition of labour be in proportion, and there is a field for the employment of both, wages will



be moderate. If the field of employment be large in proportion to capital, wages will be high. If the field of employment be small in proportion to capital, as it is, at this moment, in this country, wages will be low. But the price of labour is high, moderate, or low, in reference to the cost of the usual articles of the labourer's subsistence. We see that it is not the cost which governs the price of labour, though it is the standard to which the price is referred, and has some influence in adjusting the price. But still there is a difference in the operations of these principles in governing the wages of the labourer in agriculture, and the labourer in manufactures. In the one instance, in governing the rate of the wages of the labourer in husbandry, these principles commonly act in harmony, and therefore produce an uniform and regular result. In the other instance, in governing the rate of the wages of the artisan, they are continually conflicting, and therefore produce an irregular and uncertain result. The original and determining principle of the price of labour, namely, the prices of the necessaries of life, has more influence on the wages of the labourers in husbandry, than on the wages of the labourers in manufactures; because bread is not only a chief article of the subsistence of the labourers in husbandry, but also the chief commodity which their labour produces. If the demand for home-grown corn, the commodity which this labour produces, fall off, which it would do under a free trade system, the

field of employment is contracted,—the demand for labour is reduced, and the rate of wages decline ; on the contrary, if the demand be increased, the field of employment is enlarged,—there is a fresh demand for labour to produce an increased supply of corn to meet the increased demand for it, and the rate of wages advance. Thus the increased demand for corn grown within our own territories occasions extra capital, and extra labour to be employed, and raises the rate of wages. It is, therefore, of great importance to the agricultural labourers that the demand for the produce of the soil should increase, and that it should be supplied by the employment of their own labour.

Lord Fitzwilliam says, “ that the boasted period of agricultural prosperity was to the labourer a season of distress—and the one in which he began to fall from his former station to that lower condition to which we now see him reduced.” This is the first time I ever heard it asserted, that, during the war, the agricultural labourers were distressed ; the universal belief is that they were then fully employed, and tolerably well paid ; and though, I agree with Lord Fitzwilliam, that the labourer in husbandry “ has fallen from his former station ;” I do not agree with his lordship in the causes which have occasioned this fall. Lord Fitzwilliam dates the declension from the time that bread became dearer,—with the high price of corn which obtained during the war ; because it left him a small surplus, after the purchase of the first necessary of

existence, to lay out in the conveniences and comforts of life. Yet his lordship is not borne out in this conclusion by the data which he himself has furnished. According to the table inserted in his address, the average surplus, after purchasing the first necessary of life, of the three years preceding 1800, the time when corn suddenly rose in price, was 2*s.* 4½*d.* The average surplus of the seven years, from 1808 to 1814,—years of the highest war prices, was 3*s.* 10½*d.*; nearly 2-3*ds.* as much more as the average of the year preceding the date of high prices. And, if he had stated the average rate of wages of those seven years at 14*s.* a week, the documentary evidence would have been nearer the truth. In this case the surplus would have been greater during the time of high prices than his documentary evidence admits. The surplus, then, instead of being 3*s.* 10½*d.*, would have been about 4*s.* 8½*d.*, which is about as much again as it was the three years antecedent to the year at which high prices commenced. From the same table it appears that the labourer never was so well off as since the price of corn has been moderate, or about 8*s.* a bushel. This is an important admission. If the criterion of the labourer's prosperity be the surplus which remains to expend on the luxuries and comforts of life, he must have been far less prosperous for 150 years preceding 1797, when the average price was about 6*s.* 4*d.* a bushel, and the rate of wages about 6*s.* and 7*s.* a week, than during the time of high prices, as the

average surplus was considerably less. Consequently, the labourers in husbandry, according to Lord Fitzwilliam's own estimate of prosperity, and according to his own showing, were more prosperous during the time of high prices than anterior to it, which is contrary to the assertion "that the boasted period of agricultural prosperity was to the labourer a season of distress."

At the time of high prices there was a wide field for the employment of labour in the cultivation of waste land and in general improvements in agriculture, and every labourer in husbandry was employed;—this, unfortunately, has not been the case of late years. "Mark," as Sir J. Graham says, "the evidence of Mr. Hanning before the Agricultural Committee of 1822." "He was speaking of the county of Somerset, the garden of England, and describing the condition of the lower orders in that district, at that particular time; and his account is in unison with the evidence given from other quarters with regard to the condition generally of the labouring poor. In better times they were in the habit of consuming a certain quantity of animal food, of bacon, or of cheese, which they do not eat now; unquestionably within the last two years their condition is deteriorated." At that time, in 1822, the labour of the agricultural poor, and we are confining the remark to the agricultural poor, was less in demand, in consequence of the sudden and extensive change in the value of the produce of the soil;

—which occasioned a great sacrifice of farming capital, and unprecedented distress amongst the agricultural population. Thousands of labourers were thrown out of employment, and were driven to the hateful necessity (for hitherto a spirit of honest independence animated the breast of the British peasantry) of applying for parochial relief to support themselves and their families from starvation; and for relief, too, which they knew was reluctantly and grudgingly supplied—supplied from constraint, and not from the sympathies of charity. Thus reduced, not by their own misconduct, “to eat the bitter bread of poverty;”—thus fallen from circumstances of steady industry reaping its just reward, to a condition of ill-paid and precarious occupation;—is it to be wondered at when we consider their low moral condition, that the numbers of half employed labourers are become indolent, dissatisfied, disorderly and reckless, and that their habits should have a pernicious influence upon the whole class. The small degree of improvement which took place in the state of agriculture after 1823, enabled the farmer to employ more labourers and to give them better wages;—in addition to this, he began to find out, that if he did not employ them, he must support them, and that they were become so dissatisfied with their condition that he feared to do otherwise lest his property should be sacrificed. These are some of the causes which have occasioned the improved state of the agricultural poor. But with

the present prices of corn, and especially with reduced prices, labour will become less in demand and wages will decline, unless the other outgoings of farmers are sufficiently reduced to enable them to keep up the demand and wages of labour. If they be not, the next Agricultural Committee instead of having the satisfaction of congratulating the Members of the House of Commons on the improved condition of the peasantry, will have the discomfort of condoling with them, that by their own policy they have been the cause of the deteriorated state of the British peasantry; for it is very evident that the labourers in husbandry are benefited by a law which prevents foreign competition restricting our own agriculture, and throwing the poor and inferior land of the kingdom out of cultivation, and the labourers upon it out of employment.

To preserve the landed interest from embarrassment, and still to secure to consumers a steady and moderate price of the first necessary of life, which was the intention of the present Corn Laws, cannot be a restriction upon the productive labour of other classes; especially, when we consider that the embarrassments of the agricultural portion of the population, which would inevitably follow unprotected and unremunerated industry, would be a far greater check to the prosperity of the rest of the community than a moderate price of corn. For, as Dr. Chalmers says, "agriculture is the aliment of all trade." The advocates of free trade

seem to think that the application of its principles may be adapted to the circumstances of every interest. But they may as well say that the same power which moves a steam engine along a plain, will, with the same facility, propel it up a mountain. If all interests were on a level, this might be the case,—if, there were no inequalities, or if all inequalities were regulated, the engine of free trade would meet with the same resistance over the whole surface of national industry. But this is not the case ;—it may go freely over the rail roads of trade,—yet there are great difficulties to be overcome,—there are great inequalities to be removed, before it can move safely over the land of Britain. Supposing the theory of universal free trade to be founded upon correct general principles,—and that perfect freedom of interchange between nations of the produce of their land and labour to be for their mutual advantage ;—is the present state of this kingdom,—is the present state of Europe,—is the present state of the world, adapted, or favourable to the universal operation of these principles? Is there a general agreement between nations to pursue this course of policy? Is there a general coincidence of opinion that its adoption would be for their mutual benefit? Even if other nations could be brought to agree to act upon these principles, under a feeling that such a course would be for their common interest, the moral constitution of mankind must undergo a great change before there

would be any security for the continuance and permanency of such a system of universal policy; the arts of peace must be universally cultivated,—the jealousies of nations must cease,—knowledge and religion must civilize and christianize the world,—must triumph over the ignorance, prejudice, caprice, selfishness, and depravity of mankind,—swords must be turned into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, before this theory, which seems to anticipate a millenium age, can be safely reduced to practice. It is very clear, however, that neither the present state of humanity, nor the present circumstances and condition of our own country, are suited to the general operation of these principles.

We may, without risk, advocate a free exchange amongst nations of manufactured productions. Because, taking all the circumstances in which the manufacturer and commercialist are placed into consideration, we may perceive that the amount of national burthens which they bear, are light in comparison with those which fall upon the landed interest; and there is a much greater facility of reducing them. When we consider, too, our mineral resources,—the maritime situation of Great Britain,—the credit which our merchants have obtained in most parts of the world,—the skill, industry, capital, and enterprise of our countrymen,—these advantages, amongst others, which we share in some respects equally, and in most far above any other nation, insure the commercial



greatness and pre-eminence of Britain. “ Her peculiar facilities for manufacture, will always secure for her this independence ; and her only danger is, lest her overpassing facilities should make her independence a precarious one, by landing her in an excrescent population,”\*—a population which cannot be supported from her own soil. The manufacturers enter the field of competition with many peculiar advantages,—they have not to engage in an unequal contest with so burthensome a baggage on their backs as the agriculturalists have. The Vice President of the Board of Trade, in his speeches to the Electoral Body of Manchester, advocated the entire system of universal free trade, and asserted the more unshackled trade had been, the more complete had been its success,—and that the manufacturers would have nothing to fear from a free trade in the products of their industry ;—that the relaxation of prohibition has tended to the augmentation of our prosperity and the increase of our wealth. He mentions the cotton manufacture as a proof of this ; —“ in the instance of this manufacture we have the history of the advantages of free trade.” Yet, this great manufacture, be it remembered, has arisen to its “ giant strength” notwithstanding the price of corn which has obtained for the last thirty years ; and I would ask, was it not more prosperous,—were not the profits greater during the first twenty years, when corn was nearly double

\* Dr. Chalmers, page 230.

the value of the last twelve years,—were not the immense fortunes, which have been made in this great branch of trade, made during that period? Is this any proof that a high price of corn, not that I am an advocate for a high price, but is it any proof that it prevents the prosperity of the manufacturers?

Lord Fitzwilliam, and other advocates for a free trade in corn, say, that the Corn Laws keep up the price of labour; they reason as if it were a truth fully established, that the price of the necessaries of life entirely governs the rate of wages;—indeed that the price of wheat, one article only of necessity, does so;—and therefore, the lower the price of corn, the lower the price of all labour,—and the lower the price of labour, the lower the price of manufactured goods. But, neither the premises nor the inferences are correct. And the evidence which the advocates of a free corn trade bring forward to prove that the price of corn entirely controuls the price of labour is always drawn from its effects on the price of agricultural labour,—and yet they assert that it affects and governs the value of all labour. They seem to consider this a proposition admitted and established. That it affects the wages of the labourer in husbandry we have conceded, for the reasons before given; but we cannot admit that it governs the wages of the artisan, for though it is a chief article of his consumption, he does not spend so large a portion of his earnings in bread as the labourer in husbandry;

and, after all, it is not the commodity which the labour of the manufacturing operative produces. That it has a trifling influence, we are aware ; but the competition of labour, and the competition of capital, influence in a much greater degree the price of manufacturing labour, than the value of the articles of subsistence,—of which corn is only a part. These principles which regulate and influence the price of labour are frequently acting in different directions, and therefore producing uncertain results. In 1825 the price of corn was moderate, and the wages of the manufacturing operatives were as high as they were during the war, when the value of corn was nearly as much again. This was occasioned by the great and increased demand for labour at that time. If the cost of the necessaries of life governed the demand for labour—if as the price of corn rose and fell, the demand for labour increased and diminished—if the one element of the value of labour, namely, the value of the necessaries of life, controuled and directed the other elements, namely, the competition of labour and the competition of capital, then it would be true that the price of the necessaries of life controul the price of labour. This is the case in some degree in respect to the labour of the husbandman, but it is not so with the labour of the artisan.

If the hopes of the manufacturers and commercialists were realized, and the field of employment were enlarged, and the price of corn were very

low, the wages of their operatives would be high, as high or higher than they were in 1825. The author of the *Wealth of Nations*, says, "that upon examining the accounts which had been published of the annual produce of the manufacture of linen in Scotland, and that of coarse woollens in the West Riding of Yorkshire, he had not been able to observe that its variations had had any sensible connection with the dearness or cheapness of the seasons."\* Yet, as I have repeated before, we admit that the cost of the necessaries of life influences, but in a very small degree, the price of the labour of the manufacturing operative;—but still, even the cost of the necessaries of life is far from governing it;—much less can this be said of the price of one article of his consumption, namely, corn. Consider the variety of articles on which his earnings are expended—bread, cheese, bacon, potatoes, cloathing, fuel, house rent, tea, malt, sugar, soap, candles, &c., and surely, then, it is a complete mistake to assert that the price of corn governs the remuneration of his labour. Even supposing, what is not the case, that the value of these articles together did uniformly do so, how much would the difference of 1*s.* 9*d.* a bushel in the price of wheat reduce his earnings? Suppose, that with our ports open to foreign corn, at a duty of 10*s.* a quarter, corn would be sold in our markets on the average, at 40*s.* a quarter, or 14*s.* a quarter lower than the probable average price.

\* *Wealth of Nations*, vol. ii, page 129.

Lord Fitzwilliam considers two-thirds of a bushel to be about the consumption of the family of an agricultural labourer, and he remarks that there are no labourers who spend so much upon the article of bread as those engaged in husbandry. The consumption of the manufacturing labourer and his family would, on the average, be about half a bushel a week. In a manufacturing workman's family there will, on an average, perhaps, be three persons who though partaking of this half bushel, are nevertheless earning wages which go towards the payment of it. Now the wages of these three operatives, other things remaining as before, would only be reduced three-pence halfpenny a week from the fall of 1s. 9d. a bushel in the price of wheat. But, even, suppose they consume two-thirds of a bushel of wheat, the reduction would only be about  $4\frac{3}{4}d.$  And this reduction would only be effected by the price of corn ruling entirely the price of labour,—which, it is evident, it does not do. And would this small reduction in the price of labour lower the price of manufactured articles, even if manual labour were the only labour employed, and this entirely influenced by the price of corn? When we consider, that in almost all branches of trade, machinery is the great operating power, and manual labour only a smaller component part of the value of the commodity, we affirm, that the trifling effect upon wages, even if they were governed by the price of corn, which it is evident they are not, between the price of wheat at

54s. a quarter, and the price at 40s. a quarter, would scarcely affect the price of wrought goods,—would not prevent, or interfere with the successful competition of our manufacturers with foreigners,—would not lower, much less undermine, the prosperity of our commercial population.

I am not contending for the advantage of dear corn, but for the advantage of a moderate price of corn; and it is very clear that the difference between a moderate price of corn, and a low price, would scarcely, if at all, affect the wages of the artisan, or the price of the manufactured commodity. It is a complete fallacy to maintain that the present Corn Laws raise the price of manufactured articles, and prevent the successful competition of our manufacturers with foreigners. The present Corn Laws may have restricted the demand for manufactured goods from those independent foreign nations which would have supplied us with cheap corn, if the corn trade had been free; but they have not been the means of raising the price of manufactured goods, but rather of keeping down the price, by limiting the demand for them, while the competition of capital and labour has been so great as to produce supplies beyond the demand, and thereby to glut the markets.

Other arguments in favour of a free trade in corn are brought forward, as in the recent speech of the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, to his manufacturing constituents at Manchester,

who, although he talks of a fixed duty, evidently, from the whole tenour of his sentiments, wants another change in the Corn Laws. He is aware that if the wedge of clamour and importunity make another opening in the protecting barrier, it will be driven home, and the barrier speedily thrown down. The first advantage which he mentions that would result from a change, " would be a more equal price of bread, instead of fluctuating to the extent which we see it at present, we should see an equal range of prices." To say that " we should see an equal range of prices," is opposed to reason and experience; he may as well say that legislative enactments can controul the seasons. It is the opinion of a very intelligent and extensive Liverpool corn merchant, that the price of wheat never was steadier than it has been of late years, since the present system of Corn Laws has been in operation. Again—the Vice-President of the Board of Trade says, " above all, the benefit that I anticipate, is this—that, whereas, at present, we draw the large supplies we receive at uncertain times, from the countries which afford them, as there can be no certainty whatever that those supplies will be demanded, or that they will receive the form of a fair and remunerating price, not only is a large amount of the price which we eventually claim, actually lost by charges of every description,—by charges of interest—by charges of warehouse-rent, and of uncertain freights, raised too much at one time, or depressed too low

at another; but the foreigner who produces that which we take from him, uncertain how it is to be paid for, and paid for at last, as it probably is,—as it must be, in the various produce of this country, does not acquire that taste for the products of our own industry, which, under a fixed and regular demand he would do; that whilst thus, perhaps, we do not receive less supplies than we should do under a different system, they not only arrive here at a dearer rate when they are wanted; but instead of producing that regular and advantageous exchange of commodities which leads to increased habits of consumption of our commodities,—selling only in uncertain quantities and at uncertain times, all these advantages are lost to us without the slightest corresponding benefit to any portion of the community.” If the protection which the present Corn Laws afford is not to be impaired, and the change is only to be a fixed duty for a variable one,—then the amount of duty instead of being 10s. a quarter, which has been declared to be sufficient, should be 23s. a quarter, to afford the same protection, and to keep the corn of foreign independent countries from reducing our home grown corn below 63s. a quarter. And if a fixed duty, giving an equal protection can be maintained, which I think, with \*Mr. Sanders, could not, it would be of little consequence to the grower whether the duty be a fixed or a variable one.

\* Mr. Sanders's Evidence in answer to questions 4379, 4380.



The Vice President of the Board of Trade says, it is the constant and certain supplies of corn, and the certain and constant demand for our manufactured goods which we should obtain by having a fixed duty, which would benefit the community ;—and not the cheap corn, for corn would not be cheaper, and those who expect it will be disappointed. “ My notion is, that cheap bread, in the sense in which it is understood by those who proclaim it, and, above all, by those to whom it is proclaimed, would not be the result of such a change as you desire. I believe that the benefit from a change would be a more equal price of bread,—instead of fluctuating to the extent we see it at present, we should see a more equal range of prices.”

To have a constant and certain supply of foreign corn not produced in our own colonies, the duty must be reduced. Unless the duty be lower, this foreign corn cannot be brought here in constant and certain quantities. But if the duty be reduced to the foreign grower, he can afford to sell his corn in the markets of this country at less, and yet the Vice President of the Board of Trade says, that the effect of the change will not be a reduction of price. If there be no reduction of duty, there will be no reduction of price from the competition of nations independent of us, and if there be no reduction of price, there will be no constant and certain quantities of foreign corn beyond what can be introduced under the present system.

It appears, therefore, that one or other of the pro-

positions of the Vice President of the Board of Trade is wrong. He admits that there is a great disunion of sentiment between persons of all political parties, and he ventures to call those who do not affirm his own opinions, as ignorant, and yet his own reasoning is not very clear and consistent; and certainly the opinions of the supporters of free trade are very contradictory. The Vice President of the Board of Trade does not venture to hint at an unrestricted trade, but says, "he looks upon the substitution of a fixed and certain duty, in the place of the present fluctuating one, as likely to conduce more than any other measure whatever to the prosperity and comfort of his fellow citizens," not because he says "it would produce cheap bread for that would not be the result, but because it would produce constant and certain supplies of corn from abroad, and constant and certain demand for manufactured goods." The author of the work entitled "England and America" goes much further, he declares that an instantaneous free trade, not a trade hampered by a duty, but a *free* trade would be a means of enlarging the field of employment for English capital and labour, and would benefit all classes. He is not for any fixed duty, he is not for any gradual repeal, he argues that it would be of no ultimate benefit. "An important question remains, whether, the Corn Laws ought to be repealed suddenly, or by slow degrees. Now the object of what follows is to show, and principally, by correcting an error into which English economists have been led by their ignorance of

America, that the repeal of the Corn Laws, if gradual, would, for a time, be injurious to farmers and landlords, without being very useful to any class of labourers; but if sudden, would be beneficial to all these classes, and to landlords in particular." He says, "if the field of production were enlarged by slow degrees, capital and labour might increase at the same rate; in which case there would be no change of proportion amongst the three elements of production. In that case, the wealth and population of England would increase, far more rapidly, perhaps, than since the war; there would be more capitalists and more labourers, more factories, warehouses, ships, roads, and houses, more signs of wealth; but no improvement in the condition of either capitalists or labourers. Whereas, a sudden enlargement of the means of employing capital with profit, so great an enlargement suddenly that capital and labour should for some time bear a lower proportion to the field of production must raise profits and wages both together. For the sake, then, of the industrious classes generally, bread cannot be made too cheap, or made cheap too soon. Whereas, with respect to the lower orders, their wages will not be raised, if they should increase in numbers as fast as bread becomes cheaper. The object is to make the staff of life very cheap to them, without a fall, if possible, with a rise of wages; and this can be accomplished, if at all, only by a great and sudden fall in the price of bread. For the sake of all classes and on every account, therefore, it appears that rather

than get rid of restrictions on the corn trade by a slow process, which should begin to-morrow and end twenty years hence, the English would do far better if they had sufficient patience, to leave the Corn Laws untouched for twenty years, and then repeal them at a blow."

The author shows that there is now an enlarged field of employment for British capital and labour in a trade with China, and that the Chinese Government, if it has the will, has not the power to prevent it, and the dollars or silver bullion which we should receive in exchange for our manufactures "would purchase cheap corn the produce of Virginian labour." That, thus, an immediate free trade in corn would raise the standard of wages and profit, by enlarging the field of employment, and would enable the people to obtain bread at half its present price; then, as the labouring population would not increase suddenly, "the bulk of the people must be able to purchase a great deal more than twice as much animal food as they now purchase. At present, they buy very little animal food." "By giving to the bulk of the people the power to buy animal food, the present demand for animal food, might be immediately doubled, trebled, or even quadrupled; and thus the transition from corn growing to the production of other kinds of food might not have to wait upon the increase of population; whereas if the sudden process of repeal were adopted, the power of the whole labouring class to buy animal food being thus suddenly and greatly increased, then the increase of demand for animal

food would more or less correspond with the decrease of demand for home grown corn. In this way the transition from one kind to another kind of production might take place without even passing loss to the owners of land. If, then, bread is to be made cheap, the cheaper the better, and the sooner the better for the landlords." Yet it is asserted by the author whose opinions I have just quoted, that when this land is appropriated to the production of grass and other things, not corn, the labour employed upon it will not be diminished ;—that though the production of corn, which has employed the great mass of agricultural labourers, is to be exchanged for the production of animal food, milk, butter, cheese, the production of vegetables and other perishing commodities, yet still as many labourers will be required in the production of these as in the production of corn ;—so that none of the peasantry will be thrown out of employment by the transition ; but that there will be an enlarged field of employment and higher wages ;—that the tenants would not suffer, if bread were made suddenly cheap ; for the demand for farm produce, not corn, would at once equal if not exceed the present demand for corn and other things together. Therefore, none of the classes comprising the landed interest would suffer by the transition. If it were certain that by this change the circumstances of the lower orders would be so improved that they would be enabled to consume all the animal food and other productions of the land which now grows corn, which sober-minded men, I think, will not

believe ; the best mixed soil arable land would be ten years before it could be converted into productive pasture land, good strong land would be twenty years, poor strong land would be half the allotted period of human life, and poor light land, when laid down for permanent pasture, would soon revert to its original sterility, and that all descriptions of land, during nearly the whole of these respective periods, in its progress to this state, would yield much less value of produce ; therefore, tenant-farmers, unless the rents, during this progress, were exceedingly reduced to compensate them for the decreased productiveness of the land, would not undertake to lay down arable land to grass, for they would be ruined if they did. Yet the author, whose opinions I have been alluding to, says, that the immediate demand for other produce, not corn, would make up for the loss of the demand of corn ; but, even if it did, which is not very probable, and can only be proved by experience, and a bitter experience it might be ; but, even if it did, the land would not be in a state for years to furnish the supply—even if the nature of the soil were generally adapted to the production of grass and esculent vegetables ; the productiveness of the land would be so reduced, that landlords, during the interval, might receive little or no rent, and tenants very low profits, and the capital employed in the cultivation of grain—as horses, implements, &c. would be in a great measure destroyed, and both landlords and tenants would be severe sufferers. I am inclined, too, to think that such will be the case with the agricultu-

ral labourers ;—for as the cultivation of the arable land gives employment to two-thirds of them at least, if this land were chiefly converted into pasture land, half the peasantry would not have employment in the cultivation of the soil.

Thus we see what discrepancies there are in the opinions of the advocates of free trade as to its effects. Lord Fitzwilliam says, that it will reduce the price of corn, and thereby reduce the price of labour, and thereby reduce the price of manufactured articles, and thereby enable our manufacturers to compete more successfully with foreigners, and thereby encourage the trade of the country: that it will be an advantage to all classes except the landlords. The author of “ England and America ” says, that an instantaneous free trade will reduce the price of corn one-half,—that it will enlarge the field of employment ;—that it will raise the wages of labour and the profits of capital,—and therefore raise the price of manufactured goods,—that all portions of the community will partake of the benefit, landlords as well as others. The Vice President of the Board of Trade says, that a repeal of the Corn Laws—for when he alludes to the change which “ they,” the people of Manchester, “ would desire,” I suppose he alludes to a repeal of the Corn Laws, that such a change would not produce cheap bread, but a more equal price of bread,—a constant and regular supply of corn from abroad, and a constant and regular demand for manufactured articles, and which would conduce to the prosperity and mutual comforts of the people. Thus,

one authority says, labour would be cheaper, and manufactured goods cheaper, another that labour would be dearer and profits would be greater, therefore, that manufactured goods would be higher. Two of the authorities alluded to above, think that the price of bread would be greatly reduced, that the object of a free trade in corn is to effect this,—the third, that a free corn trade would not effect the object. Some of the advocates of free trade contend that there would be so little difference in the price of grain, that the growth of grain would only be discontinued on the very worst soils,—soils, by the bye, which would soon become sterile if not cultivated according to a system of alternate husbandry: some, that not only the worst land, but all inferior land would be thrown out of cultivation: some, that if it were, it would be laid down to grass—to grass for which it is not adapted, and in which state it would soon become unproductive; perhaps not yielding sufficient to pay the parochial rates to which it would be liable while occupied, and yielding no employment for labour,—no profit,—no rent: some, as the author of “England and America,” that we should obtain corn so cheap from abroad—corn from Virginia, the production of slave labour—that it would not answer to grow it at home,—but still that the cultivation of no land would be abandoned, but that it would be appropriated to other productions, for which there would be an instantaneous demand, and which would yield full employment to the labourer at higher wages; more profit to the farmer, and more rent to the landlord: some,



as the author just referred to, that free trade, (1) "if gradual, would be injurious to farmers and landlords," and (2) "would not improve the condition of either capitalists or labourers;" some, and the greater number, that an immediate and instantaneous free trade would be fraught with the greatest mischief,—would occasion the transfer of landed property,—would ruin the present race of landlords and tenants,—throw the great mass of agricultural labourers out of employment, change the relations of society, and convulse the whole country. Thus, as we see, that the advocates of a free corn trade differ so widely in their opinions as to the effects it would produce, we had better adopt one part of the advice of the author of "England and America," and (3) "leave the Corn Laws untouched for twenty years;" and then, if the circumstances of the country should be different, and it should be more evident, than it now is, "that it is the reformation that draweth on the change and not the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation," let them be repealed "at one blow." But it is said, too, that any restriction upon a free trade in corn is inconsistent with our present rule of commercial policy: but restriction in this case, under existing circumstances, is a necessary exception.

To the manufacturer the markets of the world would be opened, and he can successfully contend against foreign competition, and triumph over it. To the agriculturist only the home market would be accessible, and in which he would not be able to stand

against the competition of corn, the production of which had not given employment to British and Irish capital and labour, but raised on the unexhausted and fertile land of other countries, with scarcely any expense save the labour of husbandmen. The circumstances, therefore, of the landed interest and the manufacturing interest are very different. And it does not follow that the same line of policy that is adapted to the one, is necessarily suited to the other: indeed, this is emphatically the case in respect to these interests in this country.

If there should be a free trade in corn, or a near approach to it, and the rent of land considerably reduced, and on a considerable portion of land annihilated, the proprietors would have less to expend,—they would employ fewer labourers, fewer servants, keep fewer horses and carriages, in short, they would have much less to lay out on the comforts and luxuries of life. The landlords, the farmers, the labourers in husbandry, the inhabitants of country towns and villages, who are chiefly dependent upon the agricultural classes, form a large portion of the home consumers of manufactured articles; it surely, therefore, is of importance to the manufacturers whether these classes of their customers are in a flourishing or suffering condition! Mr. Stanley, in his speech at the hustings, at Lancaster, says, “my friend who did me the favour to propose me, coming from a manufacturing district, and being himself no corn grower, and having therefore a strong interest in procuring corn as cheap as possible, has told you, that his opinion,

founded on experience, is, that he never knew agricultural distress which was not followed by manufacturing and commercial embarrassment.

As Dr. Chalmers says, in his work on political economy, “ the *terminus ad quem* of foreign trade is consumption at home. The maintenance of all those engaged in it—the wages of the labourers—the profits of the capitalist—the tax laid on foreign articles—these emanate *not from trade*, but from the antecedent ability of consumers, who may be regarded as the real fountain-heads of all trade. It should be accredited with no more than with the commodities which it brings to the door of our inland purchasers. This it does, but it does no more than this.” “ To whatever extent a foreign trade is superinduced, to that extent the home trade will be diminished. And, in like manner, when a new market is opened up, the imagination is, that all the business created by it is a clear accession to the country. And hence the congratulations that we hear, both in and out of Parliament, when the market of South America, or the free market of the East Indies, or any other ample or accessible field, is presented to us for the egress of British commodities. But the truth is, that an egress can only be supported by means of an ingress; nor will exports continue to be carried out with advantage any longer than the imports which come back in return for them can be purchased at home. The only advantage of a new market is, that the wares which it offers may chance to be more agreeable to the taste and the fancy of certain of our inland consumers, than those

of any other markets which previously lay open to them. In which case there would be a transference of expenditure from old to new articles of demand—the formation of a new foreign trade, we admit, but at the expense either of the home trade, or of another foreign trade that had been formerly in existence. The extent of our foreign trade is, in fact, limited by the means, or by the extent of human maintenance in the hands of our inland consumers. The opening of a new market can do no more for the general wealth of our country, than the setting up of a new stall can add to the wealth of consumers at a fair. It may present new commodities more agreeable to the taste of purchasers, or even old commodities at a cheaper rate than before. Either of these is an undoubted advantage to customers. But it cannot add to the amount of purchase money; so that if a new stall be resorted to, it must be by a partial forsaking of the old ones.

The same is true of the world at large, where each new country that is opened for commercial enterprise may add to the number and variety of our nation's markets, yet not add to the general amount of its marketing. There is thus a natural, and, for the time, an insuperable barrier in the way of the extension of foreign trade. It is necessarily limited by the wealth of consumers at home. And hence the mockery of those splendid anticipations which dazzle the fond eye of speculators, when either by political changes, or by the abolition of monopoly, a new country is laid open to their enterprises. The dream

is speedily broken up, and in the spectacle of glutted markets, both at home and abroad, may we learn that there is a limit to the extension of foreign trade, which no country can overpass. \* “ It is conceivable, that there might be a demand in a foreign country, and, but for the obstacle we now insist upon, (the extension of agriculture,) effective demand too, for British exports; the preparation of which would require the industry of a million of people, over and above the numbers already subsisted by the agricultural produce of the island. And could the agriculture be so enlarged as to afford this additional subsistence, there would be no difficulty in meeting this demand from abroad. For the larger imports necessary to meet the larger exports, could then be all absorbed. Let the maintenance be stretched out to the support of an additional million of human beings, and the wealth of the holders of this maintenance is thereby stretched out to a capacity for purchasing, either the immediate products of their industry, or the equivalents given in exchange for these products. The additional maintenance given in return for the new imports, goes to the support of the people, who labour in preparing the new or additional exports. It is thus that in every stretch in the agriculture of a country, there is room for a corresponding stretch in the foreign trade. But should the population of that country have access to no other agricultural produce than that which is raised within our own territory, then, with the difficulty, or impossibility of extending

\* Dr. Chalmers, page 199, and 200.

the agriculture, will there be found a like difficulty or impossibility of extending its trade." "The commerce which is pushed beyond the agricultural basis to the extent of employing an excrescent ten thousand men, that is ten thousand men more than can be maintained by the produce of our own territory; does not effectuate the same addition to a country's resources, as if the agricultural basis were itself extended by means of reclaimed lands, or if an improved husbandry, so far as to afford the additional subsistence of ten thousand men." "The advantages of having a population beyond this, beyond the means of our own soil to support, is far too problematical to be worthy of the contention and the keenness, by which the rivalry of merchants is characterised." \* "The great dread of our mercantile statesmen is that of being undersold by foreigners; while yet the chief effect of the commercial superiority they are so anxious to preserve, is just to enlarge the sale of British exports beyond the possibility of their being paid for, either by the luxuries or the goods not agricultural, that came in return for them from other lands. In which case there is a surplus of exports that must be paid for in agricultural produce. The population is thereby enlarged beyond the power of the country to feed them from her own stores; or, which is the same thing, the trade is increased beyond the limits of our agricultural basis. These are additions made by this to the weight or dimensions of the superstructure; but without addition either to the strength or ampli-

\* Dr. Chalmers, page 231.

tude of the foundation. The only effect is, to foster an excrescence, which, if not mortal to us as to other commercial states, is just, because with the uttermost of our false and foolish ambition, we cannot overstretch the foreign trade so far as they did beyond the limits of the home agriculture. By thus seeking to enlarge our pedestal, we make it greatly more tottering and precarious than before. The fabric bulges, as it were, into greater dimensions than before, but while its native and original foundation is of rock, the projecting parts are propped upon quicksand; for the sake of lodging a few more additional inmates, in which we would lay the pain of a felt insecurity, if not an actual hazard, upon all the family. We rejoice in the luxuriance of a rank and unwholesome overgrowth, and mistaking bulk for solidity, do we congratulate ourselves on the formation of an excrescence which should rather be viewed as the blotch and distemper of our nation." Trade has been encouraged and stimulated until its products have glutted the accessible markets of the world, and until the profits of capital have been so small that the manufacturer and commercialist were barely compensated for the ordinary risk of mercantile speculation. The capital employed was sufficient to produce manufactured articles to overstock the foreign markets then open, and did not give room for the profitable employment of more:—for there is a limit to the employment of capital, which is profit. Let us call to mind the lessons of experience, reasoning may fail, but experience cannot, and "one fact is worth

a thousand arguments." Mr. Huskisson, Lord Goderich, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, and other authorities on political economy, held out to the people that there was almost an indefinite capability of promoting our wealth, and enlarging our resources by means of our commerce;—that overproduction was not known in the nomenclature of the improved science of political economy;—and that if we would disregard the hampering and over scrupulous cautions of experience, and be directed by the new lights of this science, our prosperity would increase, and be perpetual. These splendid visions, however, were not realized. These high expectations were soon disappointed. Unfortunately, however, declarations emanating from such authority were believed and acted upon by the people. Additional capital, and fictitious capital too, flowed into the great channel of commerce, and every accessible market in every part of the globe was glutted with British merchandize. And the faith which the people placed in the knowledge of these statesmen and political economists, who made these declarations, and propounded these doctrines, led to this state of things. The panic of 1825 and 1826, which followed this overtrading, will never be forgotten. And we may learn, if the lessons of experience are to be regarded, that "there is a limit to the extension of trade which we cannot overpass." "Foreign trade," says Dr. Chalmers, "is but the exchange of the articles of our manufactures for foreign articles, and the importation of these foreign articles must be



limited by the means of customers at home to purchase." "Home and foreign trade are promoted, encouraged, and influenced, by the wealth of customers at home." What then, are we to do,—have we nearly arrived at the limit of our resources,—is there no untried, and unexhausted field for the employment of capital and labour? Yes, there is room for its employment in improving the agriculture of England, and extending it over the half cultivated territory of Ireland, and thus enabling our own Islands to supply abundantly, at a moderate price, the wants of an enlarged population. There is room, too, now for extending our trade in the eastern hemisphere, and thereby furnishing means for the profitable employment of additional capital and labour in trade and commerce without taking corn in exchange for the articles thus supplied. The trade with the vast empire of China, which, from the evidence delivered before the House of Commons, in reference to the affairs of the East India Company, appears accessible, and will not depend at all upon a free corn trade. We shall receive from the Chinese in exchange for our commodities such articles as may be disposed of at home, or we shall receive silver with which we may purchase such articles.

It is true that the manufacturing capitalist and the manufacturing labourer would be benefited by having a free trade in corn, or a trade less restricted, if the field of employment for their capital and labour were extended abroad, much beyond what the home field would be reduced. And it so happens, that it can be

extended abroad even without being reduced at home. Indeed, contemporaneously with the field of employment being enlarged for our manufactures, may it be enlarged for our agriculture,—and the prosperity of both interests be simultaneously promoted, without any free trade in corn, or a nearer approximation to it. Thus, by extending and improving the agriculture of our own islands, there is still a wide field for the employment of agricultural capital and labour; and in the vast empires of the East there will be, now the monopoly of the East India Company has ceased and the trade is thrown open, a great demand for British merchandise, and a new and extensive field for the employment of manufacturing capital and labour. Here are resources, independent of any alteration of the Corn Laws; independent, too, of the great resources which can scarcely be said to be entered upon, and which the English have in their colonial possessions. And though, notwithstanding, the field is before us in which capital and labour may be beneficially engaged in extending our agriculture and increasing the produce of our own territories, it is not likely to be so engaged, until the public mind is satisfied that the advantages of a free corn trade have been very much overrated, and it feels mistrust whether the change would be for the general benefit of the people; until the delusion is dispelled which has been created by agitators, by theoretical and experimental politicians, by men whose opinions are formed, too exclusively, upon general principles, and I may add, also, by men of political experience, who, yet, are not

possessed of really correct information of the particular circumstances and condition of the agricultural classes,—and who have in common with the others, though each acting from different motives, assisted to create this delusion, and to impress the public with the belief that a free trade in corn would be for the benefit of the many, though against the interests of the few. Not to Great Britain alone, but to Ireland also, a free trade in corn would be a grievous evil;—it would operate as a great discouragement to her agriculture; this is the opinion of all the witnesses examined before the Agricultural Committee connected with Ireland. If the protecting power of the Corn Laws be not interfered with, the wild bogs and half cultivated fields of Ireland will afford employment for capital and labour. The large surplus produce which we should receive from thence would make the price of corn in this country still lower, and would render it even less necessary than it now is to have a free trade in corn with other nations. Great Britain and Ireland might reciprocate advantages and blessings;—and the agricultural and commercial interests of the United Kingdom be thereby mutually encouraged and improved. Happily, we have not yet reached the extent of our economic resources, and there is a wide field for British enterprise for ages to come, and the means of advancing our industry and opulence. “Britain,” says the late American Ambassador, Mr. Rush, “still exists all over the world in her colonies. These alone give her the means of advancing her industry and opulence

for ages to come. They are portions of her territory more valuable than if joined to her island. The sense of distance is destroyed by her command of ships; whilst that very distance serves as the feeder of her commerce and marine. Situated on every continent, lying in every latitude, these, her out dominions, make her the centre of a trade already vast and perpetually augmenting,—a home trade and a foreign trade,—for it yields the riches of both as she controuls it at her will. They take off her redundant population, yet make her more populous; and are destined under the policy already commenced towards them, and which in time she will more extensively pursue, to expand her empire, commercial, manufacturing, and maritime, to dimensions to which it would not be easy to fix limits.” And, even, if we were nearer the limit of our resources, there is this consolation, that the wealth of the country is abundant; and that though, in this old and thickly peopled land, we may have but few more facilities for adding to our riches, we have many, if we will but take advantage of them, of adding to national comfort and national happiness.

Difficulties we have, most certainly, to contend with, still there are, no doubt, various means by which our national difficulties may be lightened, the discontent of the people appeased, and their sufferings relieved. We will not now stop to inquire, for it will avail nothing, how far the evils which have for some length of time, unhappily, afflicted the country, have been induced by misgovernment;—by not

originating measures of reform when it was evident that reformation was necessary,—by not making timely concession to reasonable demands,—or by making undue concessions to unreasonable demands,—or by vascillating and experimental policy ;—or how far the evils have proceeded from causes, in part perhaps remote, over which human policy could exert no influence ;—from circumstances which no human wisdom could foresee, no political sagacity avert, no power of Government controul. The aim and object of real patriots, in these momentous times, will be, to desist from party squabbles, to merge all minor differences of political sentiment, and to unite their forces in the grand object of promoting their country's good. Never was there a period when such a union was more needed. In every section of the kingdom, in every town, in every village, dissatisfied, turbulent, and mischievous spirits are to be found ; and the retail Beer Houses have encouraged and increased poverty, profligacy, intemperance, recklessness, insubordination, and other crimes of various characters. And I hope and believe it is the intention of Ministers to do all in their power to remove the causes over which they have a controul, which have led to the existing state of things. There will be different opinions as to the expediency and propriety of some of the plans of amelioration which may be originated, but all unprejudiced persons will give government credit for an anxious and sincere desire to improve the condition of the people, not merely from motives of popularity, but from motives of patriotism.

The question of the Corn Laws should be set at rest; it should be considered and announced by Government as a settled measure,—settled so long as the landed interest continues under similar circumstances. When these circumstances are improved by an extensive removal of incumbrances will be the time to consider whether any change ought to be made. This is the line of policy which Government ought to pursue with respect to the Corn Trade. Then the apprehensions of the owners and occupiers of the soil would cease;—the light of hope would dispel the gloomy forebodings of fear;—confidence would be restored;—and capital and labour would be employed in the work of improved cultivation. But if the growth of grain be discouraged at home, and we are supplied from independent foreign countries, and war, unpropitious seasons, or any other causes, prevent us obtaining those supplies on which we depend, and the bread of the people be withheld from them, we should be driven to an extremity of suffering. Notwithstanding the author of “England and America,” a work devoted to the consideration of free trade and colonization, says that it is idle to anticipate such an occurrence,—that it is a fallacy which has been thoroughly exposed. Yet the danger has been apprehended by higher authorities than those who have attempted to expose the opinion—and by authorities who will not be accused of being friends to restriction. \* “To depend,” says Dr. Chalmers, “in part on other countries for enjoyment, is but a

\* Dr. Chalmers, page 224.

small matter, when compared with depending on other countries for our existence. The effect of a disruption in the one case, is not to be compared, in point of vast and fearful importance, with the effect of a disruption in the other.” \* “ A population dis-severed from their maintenance, are thrown adrift on the wide world ; and with their dispersion there is a corresponding decline of national strength and national greatness. There is all the greatest difference in the world between that commerce, the annihilation of which would involve the loss, or rather, the change of luxuries, and that commerce, the annihilation of which would involve the loss of the first necessaries of existence.” . . . † “ If we depend for a large supply of our food from other lands, we should at times be exposed to a fearful calamity—a calamity that might be alleviated, but would not be averted, by the stored and accumulated grain of former years, of which the advocates on the side of liberty conceive that it might ever be in readiness for such an emergency.” . . . . .

“ The evil of this dependence we hold to be far more serious than most of the advocates for a free trade in corn seem to allow. The dependence of a country, to any great extent, for the subsistence of its population on other and distant lands, we hold to be a fearful element of insecurity and weakness.” We should depend upon other countries much more for their food than they would do upon us for our manufactures ;—the dependence would not be reciprocal ;—“ they could do without our handiwork, but we could not do without their food.” Can it be wise policy then to

\* Dr. Chalmers, page 586. † Ditto, page 587.

put the country to such danger? I will answer in the words of Mr. Huskisson, \* “ the history of the country for the last one hundred and seventy years clearly proves, on the one hand, that cheapness produced by foreign import is the sure forerunner of scarcity, and on the other, that steady home supply is the only foundation of steady and moderate prices.” And Mr. Jacob states in his evidence, “ that if we were to diminish the growth of English wheat by one-tenth part of that now produced, we should be in an unsafe state in case of a deficient harvest, for all the world could not make up the deficiency.” If this opinion be correct, or if it approximate to correctness, how very necessary it is to encourage our own agriculture, that we may not be placed in this state of fearful dependence.

Trade and commerce it is true, have been a means of stimulating our agriculture, increasing our wealth, adding to our enjoyments, extending our intercourse and our power. Though it is true that they have been a means of developing the productive powers of the country, of extending our resources, and adding to our glory ; yet trade and commerce are not sure foundations for the power and wealth of a great State to rest upon. They are ephemeral, but agriculture is enduring. Which should policy most regard ? Which should Legislators most care for, that which is permanent, or that which is precarious ? It is not for the interest of this kingdom that the exotic and weaker plant should usurp the place of the British oak ;—that huge mis-shapen manufacturing piles

\* Mr. Huskisson's Letter, page 9.



should occupy the ground where the rich harvest lately smiled, or the monarch of the forest stood. It would be far better that the restless and impatient desire of the commercialist for gain should be checked, and that luxury should be abridged, than that the owners of the soil, who have a deeply vested interest in the well-being of their country, should lose their preponderance,—and that the yeomanry of the kingdom, whose interests are, notwithstanding the assertions of political economists, identified with the interests of the owners of the soil, and who are perhaps the most loyal subjects in the King's dominions, and who are even ready to defend the interests of property from popular violence,—that this class too should be ruined ;—that the peasantry also, who unfortunately have in a great measure lost those elements of character which made them “ their country's pride,” should be entirely pauperised. Can it be expedient, or right, that the interests of these important portions of the community should be still farther impaired,—these classes which have hitherto opposed a bold front to faction,—which have stood as a breakwater to resist the storms and boisterous waves of factious discontent, and have preserved in safety the vessel of the state. “ Trade indeed,” says Lord Chatham, “ increases the wealth and glory of a country ; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the soil ; in their simplicity of life is found the simpleness of virtue, the integrity and courage of freedom. These true genuine sons of earth are invincible ; and they surround

and hem in the mercantile bodies, even if these bodies could be supposed to be disaffected." It would be well for the interests of society now, if the manufacturing bodies were as peaceable and loyal as in the days of Lord Chatham, but unhappily such is not the case.

But there are other means besides legislative ones, which though Government cannot directly controul, yet which the great moral power of a British Government may influence, and which should be called into co-operation and contemporaneous action with legislative means, in order to produce the full measure of relief and benefit to the country.

If landlords generally, would, during a longer residence in the country, encourage agricultural, and other natural improvements, which would benefit and adorn their estates;—if they would stimulate, by their approbation and rewards, the good conduct and industry of the cottager, they would soon perceive that these acts of kindness were not bestowed in vain;—that they had a salutary influence;—that they reciprocated good offices;—that they connected the now disconnected links of the chain of society, and restored that respect and attachment which the tenant used to bear to his landlord, and the poor were accustomed to feel to the rich. Then, habits of temperance, prudence, and industry, would more generally prevail. If, in addition to this influence, there were a general system of religious education put in operation throughout the kingdom,—and a vigilant moral and religious superintendence in every parish;—if religion were taken

to the fire side of every man, it would have a more extensive influence on the concerns and conduct of men, and we should speedily witness a great improvement in the moral and physical condition of the people. Without the application of these moral and religious restoratives no internal changes will do more than insure a temporary benefit. "The whole effect," says Dr. Chalmers, "of other expedients when once put in operation will speedily be exhausted, The favourable opportunity which they afford last but for a season only. They are opportunities which cannot be recalled; and if not improved, they will leave the state of the population more irrecoverable than before."

Having considered the present state of the different classes of the landed interest; the causes of the distress which exists among the farmers and labourers; the means by which this distress may be relieved and removed; the effects which a free trade in corn, or a near approach to it with other countries not dependent upon our own, would produce on the different classes of the landed interest. We will now consider the effects which a trade in corn with our own colonies—a trade which, under the existing Corn Laws, is all but free, the duty being so low, may have upon the different classes of the landed interest.

In the work entitled "England and America," but which would have been more properly entitled free trade and colonization; a work in which, though it abounds in truth, information, and talent, there is mixed up democratical opinions and doctrines, an

over-statement of facts, uncharitable, and, probably, false constructions of the motives of public men. The author, in his love for a demòcratical form of government, towards which he says we are approaching, and in his desire to adopt a course of policy which would promote it, and to do away with any institution which opposes it, loses no opportunity of holding up the nobility to public contumely and reproach,—men who have ennobled their country:—born to distinction and power, enjoying exclusive privileges by birth, it is not to be wondered at in these levelling days that they should be regarded with the jaundiced eye of envy. But the English nobility have not been more distinguished for their palaces and territorial possessions, than for their generosity, kindness to their dependents, benevolence to their poor neighbours, courage, independence—for that native gentlemanly, independent, and refined feeling which belongs to and characterize the great and high born. They are associated with the great events of English history, in which they have almost uniformly acted a leading, noble, and important part. And though the conduct of the Peers, during the discussion of the reform question, was not marked by that prudent and wise conduct which has generally distinguished them, and which, on this great occasion, eminently distinguished a certain portion, still, it is hard to believe, though it would be merely in conformity with the general course of human action, that they should wish to retain those privileges which the march of events had placed within their power for selfish considera-

tions alone ; there is little doubt that the opposition of the greater number was a conscientious one, they did not believe that they exercised their power injuriously to the public interests, for men are slow to see their own errors, to admit them, and to condemn themselves, and they thought that the evil would be greater by throwing more power into the hands of the people ; that the best interests of the country would be in jeopardy by doing so ;—this was a matter of opinion ; the nation generally thought otherwise ;—the power was transferred ; and time will show whether the people will use it for purposes of good or evil. In the existence of the House of Peers the best interests of the country are involved ; and so long as the privileges belonging to it are used with moderation, discretion, and wisdom, which has been the case almost in a greater degree than could be expected from a human institution ; so long will this order of the British Constitution remain to support and adorn the glorious structure which has been raised, established and renovated by the wisdom of successive ages, and which has been the boast of Britons and the envy and admiration of the world.

The author of the work alluded to, says, in treating on the art of colonization, an article which deserves the most attentive consideration, that “ the English Corn Laws will be repealed.” “ When that shall happen, the English will hunt over the world in search of cheap bread. But where will they find it, not in countries situated like England ; not in any country where land is dear. They will find cheap

corn only in countries where land is cheap, in countries where the proportion which land bears to people is so great as, first, to render unnecessary the cultivation of inferior land, and secondly, to encourage a large portion of the people to occupy themselves with the growth of corn. Poland is such a country ; as was England when the bulk of Englishmen were serfs. But there are three reasons why such a country as England was then, is not the most fit to provide cheap corn for such a country as England is now ; first, because in the then barbarous and despotic state of the English Government, no dependence could have been placed on English industry for a regular supply of corn ; secondly, because in the then barbarous condition of the English people, capital and labour were not applied to the growth of corn with that skill which renders the produce great in proportion to the hands employed ; thirdly, because the savage ancestors of the English would not have cared to buy such objects as these, with which alone the English of this day could buy foreign corn. The market would have been very insecure ; the corn brought to it not very cheap ; and of that corn whether cheap or dear, but a small quantity would have been brought to market. This is precisely the case of Poland, where the market is liable to be shut up by the whim of a tyrant ; where the produce of agricultural capital and labour, though, by means of slavery, greater than it would be if the capital and labour were cut up into fractions as numerous as the cultivators, is much less than it would

be if the same number of Poles should cultivate the same land with English skill ; and where demand for English goods is by no means equal to the supply which could be afforded, nor likely to become so. Whereas in a colony planted by Englishmen, civilized and well-governed, the highest skill in the application of capital and labour to the growth of corn, might conspire with great cheapness of land, to the raising of cheaper corn than has ever yet been raised ; while so cheap a market for the purchase of corn would not only be as secure as any distant market ever was, but might be extended continually with the progress of colonization. Why such very cheap corn has not been raised in any English colony, is a different question, slightly noticed before ; and the means of raising very cheap corn in a colony, without slavery, will be carefully examined amongst the means of colonization. Here my object has been to show, that for such a country as England, a chief end of colonization is to obtain secure markets for the purchase of cheap corn ; a steady supply of bread, liable to be increased with an increasing demand." " The trade which the English should conduct for obtaining cheap bread from their colonies might be of two kinds ; direct and indirect. Supposing that very cheap corn were raised in Canada, the English might buy such corn with the manufactured goods of Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham ; this would be a direct trade. But it might very well happen, that the Canadians should be able to raise, not more corn than the English would be able to buy

with manufactured goods. In other words the demand of the Canadians for English goods might be much less than the demand of the English for Canadian corn. But the Canadians would require many things besides English goods, which are not producible in Canada; they would require tea and silver for instance. The English, then, might first buy tea and silver from the Chinese with manufactured goods, and then buy corn of the Canadians with tea and silver. But the demand, again, of the Chinese for English goods might not be sufficient to supply in this way the demand of the English for Canadian corn. For one thing, however, the demand of the Chinese is very urgent and would be without limit, for food in every shape, for the means of life. Here, then, is the ground-work of the most extensive commerce that ever existed in the world. Supposing that cheap food were raised in the English Colonies of Australia, which, though far from England, are near to China, the English might buy such food with manufactured goods; with that food buy tea and silver of the Chinese; and with that tea and silver buy cheap corn of the Canadians. In this case combination of capital and labour for division of employment amongst four different nations, would be of the greatest service to all of them; to the Chinese, the Australian Colonists, the Canadian Colonists, and the English. A great number of cases like this might be reasonably supposed. From this case, which, though supposed, is very likely to occur, it will be seen that a colony, at the antipodes of the Mother



Country, might help to supply that Mother Country with cheap corn; and by the means of the cheapness of land which is an attribute of colonies."

Now all this commerce, "the most extensive which ever existed in the world may be commenced and carried on with service to these four different nations without any alteration whatever in the Corn Laws; nay with much greater advantage to our own country and our Canadian Colony than if the Corn Laws were repealed, and the trade in corn were universally free. The effects of this freedom on the landed interest of Britain and Ireland have been described, and the effects with respect to our Canadian possessions we will consider. The author, of England and America, says at the commencement of the first paragraph, that the market of Poland is not the most fit to provide cheap corn, it would be insecure and uncertain and "liable to be shut up by the whim of a tyrant." However, it is very probable, if the English market were open to receive corn from all countries without any restriction, that Poland, from her circumstances and position, would be able to sell her corn in it at a lower price than the United States and Canada; if so, she would command the English market, and the circumstance of the English market being open to the United States and Canada would not induce the employment of additional capital and labour in the production of corn in the United States and Canada if the Americans and Canadians found they should be undersold by Poland, or any other country. But as supplies from Poland, or any

country in a similar condition, would be insecure, and might be stopped by the "whim of a tyrant," we might be placed in jeopardy, and it would not, therefore, be our interest to be supplied from Poland, or any other country in such a condition, even if we could obtain such supplies a fraction cheaper. Yet, though the supplies from the United States would be more certain and secure, and the demand for English goods greater, we could not, with any propriety and consistency, make exceptions in favour of any country independent of us. The only countries in favour of which we could, with consistency and propriety make exceptions, are those dependent upon us—our own colonies. But suppose corn could not be purchased as cheap in the ports of the Baltic, and the Mediterranean, as in the United States and Canada, and from which it could be purchased on equal terms, and the demand divided between them,—divided over so large a surface that it would be too limited to encourage any extensive and combined employment of agricultural capital and labour in our Canadian Colonies. The more limited our demand for Canadian corn, the more limited the demand of the Canadians for English manufactures, or for the tea and silver of China, and the slower will be the advance of this colony to wealth and prosperity. Of all our colonial possessions Canada is the most fit, from its position, to supply the Mother Country with the corn which she may want. "In a colony planted with Englishmen," says the author of *England and America* "in the passage before introduced, civilized

and well-governed, the highest skill in the application of capital and labour to the growth of corn, might conspire with great cheapness of land, to the raising of cheaper corn than has ever yet been raised ; while so cheap a market for the purchase of corn would not only be as secure as any distant market ever was, but might be extended continually with the progress of colonization." The author admits that we may from our own colonies have cheaper corn than has ever been raised,—from our Canadian Colony we may obtain it ; but there must first be a demand for the corn before it will be grown ; and the quantity of capital and labour employed in its production will depend upon the extent of the demand, and the greater this demand the more rapid will be the advance of the territory to wealth and prosperity. The limited demand which would arise for Canadian corn if the trade were without restriction, even if corn at the ports of the Baltic and Meditterreanean could not be purchased so cheap as corn from the United States—still the demand divided between the United States and Canada, from which it could be purchased on equal terms, would not be sufficiently large to promote any very great improvement in the condition of our Canadian fellow subjects. To produce the full measure of benefit to the colony and to the Mother Country—to promote the most extensive employment of British capital and labour, the corn of countries independent of us ought to be restricted from coming into competition with Colonial and home grown corn. The present Corn Laws provide.

for this, and therefore the prosperity of our own country and Canadian Colony would be promoted more by the Corn Laws remaining as they are, than if they were repealed. The commerce with China and our Australian Colony would not be retarded, nor the "most extensive commerce that ever existed in the world" checked or interfered with by the present Corn Laws. Why, then, repeal or meddle with them? They do not restrict the growth of corn in our colonies;—they allow its importation here at a low duty of 5s. a quarter, which is a very trifling compensation for the difference in the expense of production;—they protect colonial agriculture and encourage thereby the employment of British capital and labour in the production "of cheaper corn than ever has been raised by means of the cheapness of land, which is an attribute of colonies." The advocates for a free corn trade may be assured that the Corn Laws will not prevent them having corn "as cheap as ever has been raised," nor will they interfere with the commencement and progress of "the most extensive commerce that ever existed;" and will not this satisfy them? If Canada does not supply our population with cheap corn, it is not the fault of the Corn Laws. If, hitherto, British capital and labour have not been employed so largely as they might have been, if this has been the fault of colonial mis-government, it has not been the fault of the Corn Laws, which place no restriction upon the introduction of Colonial corn. The art of colo-

nization is now better understood ; and under the government of the talented, industrious, high-principled Colonial Minister, our colonies will, if the present Corn Laws be continued, gradually rise to wealth and prosperity.

The low price at which abundance of corn may be produced, will give to the colonies a command of the market of the Mother Country, and lower the price of corn grown at home ; to what extent time alone will show. But still there would be a wide difference in the effects produced upon British interests by cheapness thus created and cheapness created by the introduction of corn from countries independent of us. Cheapness created by the introduction of corn from countries independent of us—corn not produced from British ground, nor by British capital and labour would not merely prevent the employment of capital and labour in extending and improving our agriculture at home, but it would drive away and destroy a great mass already employed on land now in cultivation, and the effects of which, upon the agricultural classes, have been before described. Cheapness created by the introduction of corn from our own colonies,—created by the employment of British capital and labour,—though it will affect the rent of all farming arable land in a greater or less degree, except that in certain situations where there will be a demand for it for the purposes of accommodation, will not affect it anything like to the same extent, as it has been stated would be

the case, if the corn trade were open to nations independent of us ; for though it would affect the rent of arable land generally, still, in a very prosperous state of things the revenue may be so much increased as to afford Government the means of removing and reducing the heavy expenses which the law imposes on landed property ;—and in a very prosperous state of things, with a new and extensive field open for the employment of British capital and labour,—for the full development of British energy, enterprise, and skill, within our own territories at home and abroad, there will be a greater demand for land in certain situations for the purposes of accommodation, which would of course increase its selling and letting value ; and there would be a greater demand for animal food, cheese, butter, &c., therefore the rental value of grass land would, probably, not be reduced, but most likely not increased, because such arable land as is suitable for conversion into permanent pasture, and to the growth of vegetables for the food of cattle, would produce an increased supply of animal food, cheese, butter, &c., to meet the increased demand for these articles, and the rent of the arable land, adapted to these productions, would not be reduced. But the rent of the land not naturally adapted to these productions would be greatly reduced, until there were such an increase of population as to require a much larger supply, and therefore the appropriation of more land for the growth of these articles. But to suppose, as

the author of England and America does, that if corn imported were so cheap that no corn would be grown in England, that the condition of the people would be so much improved that the consumption of vegetables, animal food, cheese, butter, milk, &c., would be immediately as great as could be supplied from all the land now in cultivation in Great Britain and Ireland, even supposing all the land adapted to the growth of such produce, is stating far too much. If such an immediate effect were to take place, the skies must pour down human beings with larger physical capacities of consumption. The credulity in the regenerating effects of a free corn trade, with some of its advocates, is such, that no assertions are too extravagant for them to make. The reduction in the whole rental of the kingdom would not be so great in consequence of the importation of cheap corn produced entirely by British capital and labour, directed by British skill, and employed on land in British possession, because all the industrious classes of the population, agricultural as well as others, may be then actively engaged, and the state of things may be so far prosperous, that the demand for building and accommodation land may increase, and also the demand for some particular articles of produce which cannot be as cheaply supplied from other parts of the world, and therefore the value of land adapted by natural and artificial circumstances for such purposes might not be reduced,—but still the general rental of the

kingdom must be affected by the general depreciation in the value of the produce of the soil. If the field for the employment of labour be enlarged, the condition of the labourers would be improved, and the poor rates would be reduced, and the country would be relieved from excess of numbers, and from the distress and dissatisfaction incident thereto. And when the labouring population are again placed in circumstances in which they will have a surplus of wages, after purchasing the common necessaries of life, then will be the time, then will be the opportunity, for putting into more extensive operation those plans which have been devised and promoted, and will be devised and promoted, for permanently improving their moral and physical condition; for then they will receive with more gratitude, embrace with more cheerfulness, and co-operate with more interest and assiduity in these plans. The labouring classes may be placed once again in circumstances above want,—in circumstances in which they are no longer obliged to eat the bitter bread of poverty,—in circumstances in which they may enjoy the comforts of sufficiency. Yet, in the ignorant and depraved condition of the great majority of them, they would not anticipate, they would not shrink from, and therefore they would not adopt means to prevent, when means are in their power, a recurrence of that miserable poverty from which they had lately emerged. Every man, who has closely observed the habits and characters of the working classes,



must have been struck by continual exhibitions of improvidence; the want of cottage economy, the voluntary relinquishment of certain employment, by which they were able to support themselves and their families decently and comfortably, for uncertain employment and lower wages, and consequently privations, which prudence and reflection would have warned them to avoid,—such an observer must continually have witnessed the expenditure of earnings in dissipation which would have placed them, not only above want, but in a condition of comfort; and though with the certainty before them that the continuance of such habits, in their order of life, would lead to a workhouse or a gaol, they were not prudent enough to forsake. During periods in which the manufacturing workmen were receiving high wages, it is notorious that they consumed one-third of their time, and a greater proportion of their wages, in intemperance. Therefore, though “the bulk of the people be miserable,” as the author of *England and America* states, it is misery, though this author would not admit such to be the case, in a great measure voluntarily induced,—a consequence of ignorance and depravity. Desirable and important as it is to enlarge the field for their employment, and thus enable them to obtain a larger share of the necessaries and comforts of life, whereby their present physical condition may be improved, and all reasonable grounds for dissatisfaction done away. But, when they are in more

easy circumstances,—when the physical cause of their suffering and distress, so far as it is independent of the moral cause, is overcome, the difficulty of overcoming the moral cause will not be so great; still the moral cause, the depravity of man remains, and this must be subdued before any great and permanent physical improvement can take place. And, though, the present physical condition of the poor may be improved, which will be a step to their permanent improvement, still no lasting benefit will take place until the moral cause of their suffering and misery is subdued. Remedies, partially applied for the cure of a general and inveterate disorder, as is the case at present, and must be so long as the government of the country and the mass of the educated population do not see the magnitude and danger and inveteracy of the disorder, must fall short of reaching the general evil and effecting the general benefit. Remedies to be universally salutary must be universally applied—and there are two remedies which may be universally applied, which would reach the universal evils, and which would accomplish an universal benefit,—the universal religious education of the people, and a wise, vigilant, and benevolent ministerial superintendence in every parish. To instruct them in various branches of knowledge and science is all very well, as, in these days, the human mind will not be unoccupied; but education that stops here, will not reach the great cause of individual and national suffering and

misery. This great cause,—human depravity, will not be subdued and conquered by mere head knowledge, the seat of this is the heart, which can only be reached by the divine principles of christianity. A system of national education must be built upon the broad foundation of our holy religion to accomplish the great end desired—making a virtuous, contented, happy, and christian people. When such means are used for subverting the causes of distress and misery, we have good reason to believe they will be successful, and that the condition of the working classes will be lastingly improved.

The condition of the farmers, too, would be very much better if the corn trade were not universally free, for there would not be the same limitation of home agriculture, and there would be a field for the employment of farming capital in British territories beyond our own shores. It will be much better not only for the colonies, but for the landed interest of this country, that the corn trade should not be extended beyond our colonies in a greater measure than the Corn Laws now allow, not only for the reasons already given, but, also, as the supply of this cheap corn would be gradual, it would afford time for the circumstances of the great interest which is more immediately affected to be accommodated, in some measure, at last, to the change. And if the landed interest be content that the present Corn Laws,—Corn Laws which do not interfere with “the

raising of cheaper corn than ever yet has been raised," nor with the selling it in the English market—if the landed interest, the only interest which could be injured, be content with the protecting power which the Corn Laws now afford, a protection for the British and Irish grower against the competition of independent nations, but not against the competition of our own colonies,—if the landed interest be satisfied with the Corn Laws as they are, the manufacturing and commercial interests, and the country generally, have no good reason to complain of those laws which give them the opportunity of obtaining "cheaper corn than has ever yet been raised" from a colonial market, and a market "as secure as any distant market ever was," and which market "might be extended continually with the progress of colonization."

I have endeavoured to show in these pages, that as the probable average price of wheat of home growth, even if we have no more corn for years to come from our colonies than we have had for the last two years, is not likely to exceed 54s. a quarter; and that to meet this price the outgoings of the farmer must be reduced to enable farming capital to receive "its fair return"—the outgoings which admit of reduction, and the extent to which the reduction can be carried.

That the outgoings which the law imposes, though they admit of such reductions as would afford relief, yet the greatest reductions which can

be made in these outgoings would be inadequate to meet the present and the probable price of corn under the present Corn Laws.

That rent and labour are the great outgoings of the farmer.

That the price of labour should not be lowered, and therefore the reduction of rent must be greater.

The extent to which it will be generally necessary to reduce rent in this case, on the different qualities of land, to meet 54*s.* a quarter, the probable average price of corn under the present Corn Laws so long as we have no greater supply of colonial corn, after Government have reduced the outgoings which the law imposes to the extent of 10 per cent. on the general rental of the kingdom.

That to meet this average price of 54*s.* a quarter, the reduction of rent must be considerable, notwithstanding the reductions which may take place in the outgoings on land which are imposed by law.

That it is only by the reduction of the outgoings on land that the farmer can meet the present and the probable price of corn—it is only by these reductions that his condition can be improved.

That though the reduction of rent must be considerable notwithstanding, yet a moderate rent will remain to the landlords;—a “fair profit” to the tenants;—and a field of employment for the agricultural labourers;—and the amount of this reduction of rent would go out of the pockets of the landlords into the pockets of the farmers and the labourers.

That with a free trade with countries independent of us, or a much nearer approach to it, such an approach as would bring down the price of wheat to 40s. a quarter, rent would be annihilated on all but the best land, and very much reduced on land of the highest fertility:—that this loss and reduction would go out of the pockets of landlords at home into the pockets of landlords abroad;—that such a price would occasion the transfer of landed property,—the ruin of the great mass of landlords and tenants; and the distress of the agricultural labourers, by lessening the field of agricultural production, and thereby throwing a considerable portion of them out of employment.

That a moderate price of corn, such a price as 54s. a quarter, after the outgoings of the farmer have been reduced, produces a moderate rent for the landlords, a fair profit for the farmers, a field of employment and good wages for the agricultural labourers;—but that a low price of corn, such a price as 40s. a quarter, occasioned by the competition of nations independent of England, destroys the income of the landlords on all farming land but that of the highest fertility,—the profit of the tenants on all poor farming land,—and contracts the field of employment for the labourers, and reduces their wages.

That the vast Empires of the East afford a new field for the profitable employment of capital and labour in trade and commerce, which does not involve a free trade in corn, for they have no corn to

give,—but in exchange for our merchandize we should receive such commodities as would be in demand at home, or we should receive silver, with which we could purchase them.

That in improving the cultivation of the land of Britain, and in improving the agriculture of the cultivated parts of Ireland, and extending it over the wild bogs of that country, there is a wide field for the profitable employment of capital and labour, from which we might have abundant supplies of corn, at a moderate price ; and therefore there is no necessity for making ourselves dependent on foreign independent countries for support.

That such dependence is a “ fearful element of insecurity and weakness.”

That as the present Corn Laws, which the landed interest do not seek to have altered, admit the introduction of corn from our colonies at a very low duty, with improvements in the art of colonization, which will take place, corn will be sold in our market at a price so low as would have the most disastrous effects upon every class of the landed interest, if such cheap corn were not produced from the fertile field of our own colonies by the united means of British and Irish capital and labour. But, as this cheap corn would be produced by the employment of British and Irish capital and labour, the effects on the different classes of the landed interest would be infinitely less injurious than if corn were made cheap by the competition of corn the growth of foreign inde-

pendent countries—produced by the means of foreign capital and labour.

That the present Corn Laws do not interfere with “the raising of cheaper corn than ever yet has been raised,” nor with the people of this country obtaining it from a market not likely to be closed against us from national jealousy, from the caprice of a government, or “from the whim of a tyrant.”

That the present Corn Laws do not retard or interfere with the most extensive commerce that ever existed in the world.

That the general prosperity of Great Britain and Ireland, and the prosperity of our colonies will be much better promoted by the continuance of the existing Corn Laws, than by their abolition, or by weakening their protecting power.

The opinions which the writer of the foregoing pages has ventured to offer, unfashionable and unpopular though they may be, are formed from extensive practical information, assiduous inquiry, and serious reflection, by the aid of which he has endeavoured to disentangle the subject from the perplexities of refined speculation and theory, and to place it in its true practical position. He has endeavoured to show the injurious effects that such a change, as is desired, would have on landlords, farmers, and labourers—that other classes of the community would receive no benefit from it, and that it would check the progress of improvement in our colonial possessions. The love of experi-



ment and change, is a characteristic of the temper of the present times. It is a mark of the irregular movement of the public mind, which has been so much under the influence of political excitement, —so roused by political conflict,—so perniciously affected by the influence of mischievous agitators, and by evil and designing men, that the best and dearest interests of society are in danger, and it will be some time before the public mind will be in a state to contemplate things in a rational and right way, even after wise and benevolent measures are more generally put into operation to influence and to guide it. What says the wisdom of Lord Bacon? “that it is good not to try experiments in States, except the necessity be urgent, or the utility evident; and well to be aware that it is the reformation that draweth on the change, and not the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation.”

Now the “necessity” for any change in the Corn Laws, against which the arguments in these pages have been directed, is not “urgent,” or the “utility evident.” Instead of the necessity being urgent, or the utility evident, the evils of change are urgent and evident. The evils have already “cast their shadows before.” The foreboding of change has, long since, in a measure, deadened the energy of exertion, arrested improvements in agriculture, and restricted and prevented the employment of capital and labour in this most important branch of industry. The experiment of a free trade in

the chief article of human subsistence would not be made in consequence of "the reformation that draweth on the change," but in consequence of "the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation."

The unceasing efforts of the manufacturing and commercial class to effect a change which would be certain in its disadvantages to the agricultural classes, demand on the part of the agricultural classes firmness, energy, and unity of purpose, successfully to oppose the unfair requirements of the manufacturing and commercial classes. Surely the landed interest, which has the power in the Houses of Parliament to prevent any change in the Corn Laws which would weaken their protecting influence, will prevent it; for the interests of all classes connected with agriculture are involved, and probably the interests of the whole community.

\* "Politicians and philosophers may talk coldly of the transfer of old family estates, of throwing immense tracts of inferior land out of cultivation, of burying for ever the immense capital expended upon it, and the transfusion of an agricultural into a manufacturing population; but let them remember the ties which must be broken, the villages which must be deserted, the second nature of habits which must be altered, the hearts which must sink, and the hands which may rebel under trials such as these. Let them pause before they commence the experiment let them hearken to the

\* Sir James Graham on Corn and Currency, page, 83.

warning voice of †Mr. Brougham, himself a giant in the ranks, who when contemplating this very change, which had been termed the ruin of the landed interest, with equal truth and eloquence observes, that it is not meant that the proprietors would be destroyed, that the land would become sterile or sink into the sea, and the owners exterminated. No; what is to be understood by the ruin of a great class, and by the destruction of the most commanding interest, is shortly this; a great change of property, much individual misery, the whole relations of the class destroyed, or the relations of that class to the rest of society and its numbers to each other. Such may be called the destruction of a class; when it happens to a community, it becomes the destruction of a state."

*Acton Hill, near Stafford,*

*February, 1834.*

† Now Lord Brougham.

## ERRATA.

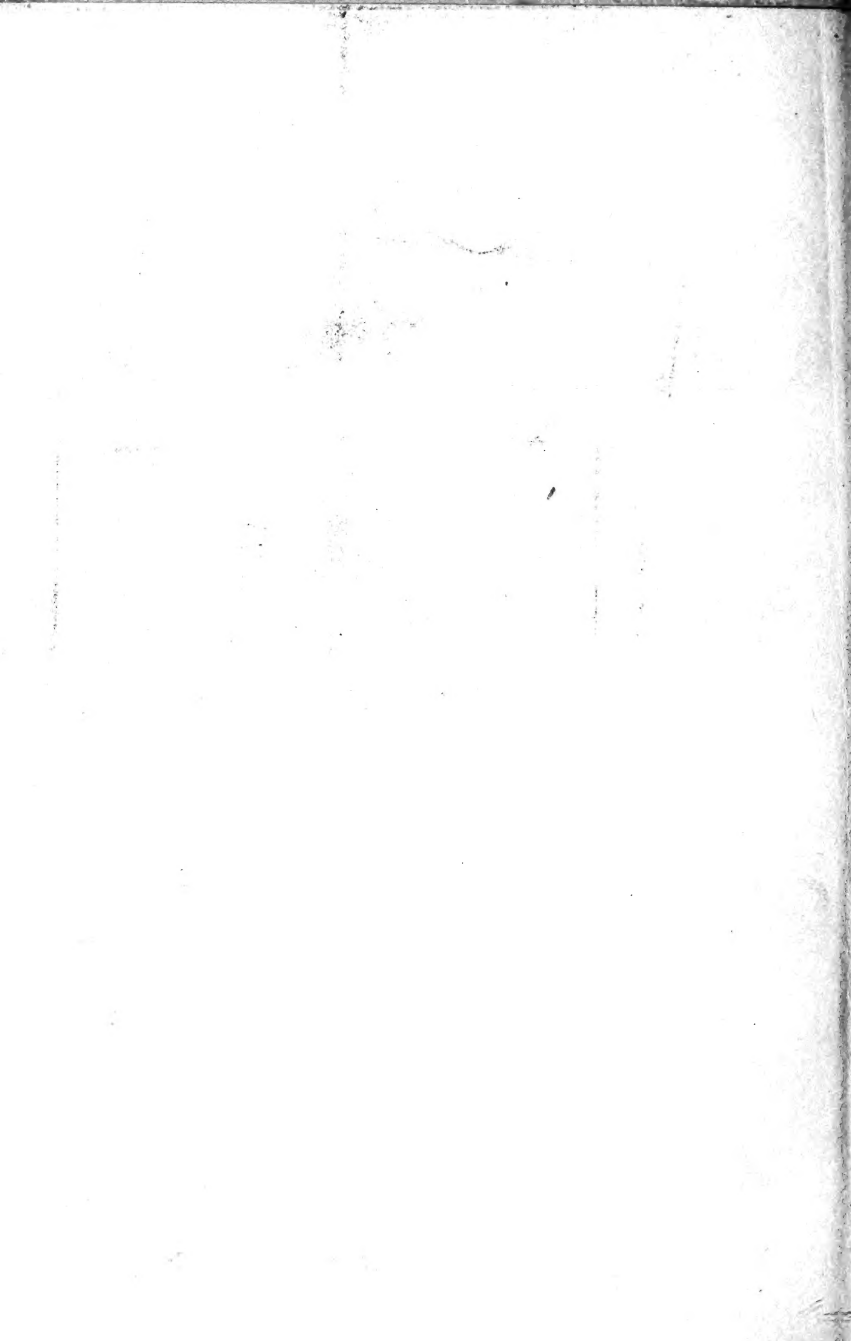
Page 5, line 8 from the bottom, for " admits," *read* " admit."

Page 7, line 7 from the bottom, for " occasion," *read* " occasions."

Page 13, line 8 from the top, for " Tithe," *read* " Tithes."

Page 15, line 12 from the top, for " occupiers," *read* " occupier."





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Considerations on the present  
state of the different classes  
of the landed interest

