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those which are always the same or very nearly the same.

Not only the art of the farmer, the general direction of the operations of husbandry, but many inferior branches of country labour require much more skill and experience than the greater part of mechanick trades. The man who works upon brass and iron, works with instruments and upon materials of which the temper is always the same, or very nearly the same. But the man who ploughs the ground with a team of horses or oxen, works with instruments of which the health, strength, and temper are very different upon different occasions. The condition of the materials which he works upon too is as variable as that of the instruments which he works with, and both require to be managed with much judgment and discretion. The common ploughman, though generally regarded as the pattern of stupidity and ignorance, is seldom defective in this judgment and discretion. He is less accustomed, indeed, to social intercourse than the mechanick who lives in a town. His voice and language are more uncouth and more difficult to be understood by those who are not used to them. His understanding, however, being accustomed to consider a greater variety of objects, is generally much superior to that of the other, whose whole attention from morning till night is commonly occupied in performing one or two very simple operations. How much the lower ranks of people in the country are really superior to those of the town, is well known to every man whom either

buſineſs or curioſity has led to converſe much with both. In China and Indoſtan accordingly both the rank and the wages of country labourers are ſaid to be ſuperior to thoſe of the greater part of artificers and manufacturers. They would probably be ſo every where, if corporation laws and the corporation ſpirit did not prevent it.

THE ſuperiority which the induſtry of the towns has every where in Europe over that of the country, is not altogether owing to corporations and corporation laws. It is ſupported by many other regulations. The high duties upon foreign manufactures and upon all goods imported by alien merchants, all tend to the ſame purpoſe. Corporation laws enable the inhabitants of towns to raiſe their prices, without fearing to be under-ſold by the free competition of their own countrymen. Thoſe other regulations ſecure them equally againſt that of foreigners. The enhancement of price occaſioned by both is every where finally paid by the landlords, farmers, and labourers of the country, who have ſeldom oppoſed the eſtabliſhment of ſuch monopolies. They have commonly neither inclination nor fitneſs to enter into combinations; and the clamour and ſophiſtry of merchants and manufacturers eaſily perſuade them that the private intereſt of a part, and of a ſubordinate part of the ſociety, is the general intereſt of the whole.

IN Great Britain the ſuperiority of the induſtry of the towns over that of the country, ſeems to have been greater formerly than in the preſent times. The wages of country labour approach nearer

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nearer to thoſe of manufacturing labour, and the profits of ſtock employed in agriculture to thoſe of trading and manufacturing ſtock, than they are ſaid to have done in the laſt century, or in the beginning of the preſent. This change may be regarded as the neceſſary, though very late conſequence of the extraordinary encouragement given to the induſtry of the towns. The ſtock accumulated in them comes in time to be ſo great, that it can no longer be employed with the antient profit in that ſpecies of induſtry which is peculiar to them. That induſtry has its limits like every other; and the increaſe of ſtock, by increaſing the competition, neceſſarily reduces the profit. The lowering of profit in the town forces out ſtock to the country, where, by creating a new demand for country labour, it neceſſarily raiſes its wages. It then ſpreads itſelf, if I may ſay ſo, over the face of the land, and by being employed in agriculture is in part reſtored to the country, at the expence of which, in a great meaſure, it had originally been accumulated in the town. That every where in Europe the greateſt improvements of the country have been owing to ſuch overflowings of the ſtock originally accumulated in the towns, I ſhall endeavour to ſhow hereafter; and at the ſame time to demonſtrate, that though ſome countries have by this courſe attained to a conſiderable degree of opulence, it is in itſelf neceſſarily ſlow, uncertain, liable to be diſturbed and interrupted by innumerable accidents, and in every reſpect contrary to the order of nature

and of reaſon. The intereſts, prejudices, laws and cuſtoms which have given occaſion to it, I ſhall endeavour to explain as fully and diſtinctly as I can in the third and fourth books of this enquiry.

PEOPLE of the ſame trade ſeldom meet together, even for merriment and diverſion, but the converſation ends in a conſpiracy againſt the publick, or in ſome contrivance to raiſe prices. It is impoſſible indeed to prevent ſuch meetings, by any law which either could be executed, or would be conſiſtent with liberty and juſtice. But though the law cannot hinder people of the ſame trade from ſometimes aſſembling together, it ought to do nothing to facilitate ſuch aſſemblies; much leſs to render them neceſſary.

A REGULATION which obliges all thoſe of the the ſame trade in a particular town to enter their names and places of abode in a publick regiſter, facilitates ſuch aſſemblies. It connects individuals who might never otherwiſe be known to one another, and gives every man of the trade a direction where to find every other man of it.

A REGULATION which enables thoſe of the ſame trade to tax themſelves in order to provide for their poor, their ſick, their widows and orphans, by giving them a common intereſt to manage, renders ſuch aſſemblies neceſſary.

AN incorporation not only renders them neceſſary, but makes the act of the majority binding upon the whole. In a free trade an effectual combination cannot be eſtabliſhed but by the unanimous conſent of every ſingle trader, and it

cannot

cannot last longer than every single trader continues of the same mind. The majority of a corporation can enact a bye-law with proper penalties, which will limit the competition more effectually and more durably than any voluntary combination whatever.

The pretence that corporations are necessary for the better government of the trade, is without any foundation. The real and effectual discipline which is exercised over a workman, is not that of his corporation, but that of his customers. It is the fear of losing their employment which restrains his frauds and corrects his negligence. An exclusive corporation necessarily weakens the force of this discipline. A particular set of workmen must then be employed, let them behave well or ill. It is upon this account that in many large incorporated towns no tolerable workmen are to be found, even in some of the most necessary trades. If you would have your work tolerably executed, it must be done in the suburbs, where the workmen having no exclusive privilege, have nothing but their character to depend upon, and you must then smuggle it into the town as well as you can.

It is in this manner that the policy of Europe, by restraining the competition in some employments to a smaller number than would otherwise be disposed to enter into them, occasions a very important inequality in the whole of the advantages and disadvantages of the different employments of labour and stock.

Secondly,

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Secondly, The policy of Europe, by increasing the competition in some employments beyond what it naturally would be, occasions another inequality of an opposite kind in the whole of the advantages and disadvantages of the different employments of labour and stock.

It has been considered as of so much importance that a proper number of young people should be educated for certain professions, that, sometimes the publick, and sometimes the piety of private founders have established many pensions, scholarships, exhibitions, bursaries, &c. for this purpose, which draw many more people into those trades than could otherwise pretend to follow them. In all christian countries, I believe, the education of the greater part of churchmen is paid for in this manner. Very few of them are educated altogether at their own expence. The long, tedious and expensive education, therefore, of those who are, will not always procure them a suitable reward, the church being crowded with people who, in order to get employment, are willing to accept of a much smaller recompence than what such an education would otherwise have entitled them to; and in this manner the competition of the poor takes away the reward of the rich. It would be indecent, no doubt, to compare either a curate or a chaplain with a journeyman in any common trade. The pay of a curate or chaplain, however, may very properly be considered as of the same nature with the wages of a journeyman. They are, all three, paid for their work according to the con-

tract which they may happen to make with their reſpective ſuperiors. Till after the middle of the fourteenth century, five merks, containing about as much ſilver as ten pounds of our preſent money, was in England the uſual pay of a curate or ſtipendiary pariſh prieſt, as we find it regulated by the decrees of ſeveral different national councils. At the ſame period four-pence a day, containing the ſame quantity of ſilver as a ſhilling of our preſent money, was declared to be the pay of a maſter maſon, and three-pence a day, equal to nine-pence of our preſent money, that of a journeyman maſon *. The wages of both theſe labourers, therefore, ſuppoſing them to have been conſtantly employed, were much ſuperior to thoſe of the curate. The wages of the maſter maſon, ſuppoſing him to have been without employment one-third of the year, would have fully equalled them. By the 12th of Queen Anne, c. 12, it is declared, "That whereas for "want of ſufficient maintenance and encourage-"ment to curates, the cures have in ſeveral "places been meanly ſupplied, the biſhop is, "therefore, empowered to appoint by writing "under his hand and ſeal a ſufficient certain "ſtipend or allowance, not exceeding fifty and "not leſs than twenty pounds a year." Forty pounds a year is reckoned at preſent very good pay for a curate, and notwithſtanding this act of parliament, there are many curacies under twenty pounds a year. There are

* See the Statute of labourers, 25 Ed. III.

journeymen

journeymen ſhoe-makers in London who earn forty pounds a year, and there is ſcarce an induſtrious workman of any kind in that metropolis who does not earn more than twenty. This laſt ſum indeed does not exceed what is frequently earned by common labourers in many country pariſhes. Whenever the law has attempted to regulate the wages of workmen, it has always been rather to lower them than to raiſe them. But the law has upon many occaſions attempted to raiſe the wages of curates, and for the dignity of the church, to oblige the rectors of pariſhes to give them more than the wretched maintenance which they themſelves might be willing to accept of. And in both caſes the law ſeems to have been equally ineffectual, and has never either been able to raiſe the wages of curates or to ſink thoſe of labourers to the degree that was intended; becauſe it has never been able to hinder either the one from being willing to accept of leſs than the legal allowance, on account of the indigence of their ſituation and the multitude of their competitors; or the other from receiving more, on account of the contrary competition of thoſe who expected to derive either profit or pleaſure from employing them.

The great benefices and other eccleſiaſtical dignities ſupport the honour of the church, notwithſtanding the mean circumſtances of ſome of its inferior members. The reſpect paid to the profeſſion too makes ſome compenſation even to them for the meanneſs of their pecuniary recompence,

pence. In England, and in all Roman Catholick countries, the lottery of the church is in reality much more advantageous than is neceſſary. The example of the churches of Scotland, of Geneva, and of ſeveral other proteſtant churches, may ſatisfy us that in ſo creditable a profeſſion, in which education is ſo eaſily procured, the hopes of much more moderate benefices will draw a ſufficient number of learned, decent, and reſpectable men into holy orders.

In profeſſions in which there are no benefices, ſuch as law and phyſick, if an equal proportion of people were educated at the publick expence, the competition would ſoon be ſo great, as to ſink very much their pecuniary reward. It might then not be worth any man's while to educate his ſon to either of thoſe profeſſions at his own expence. They would be entirely abandoned to ſuch as had been educated by thoſe publick charities, whoſe numbers and neceſſities would oblige them in general to content themſelves with a very miſerable recompence, to the entire degradation of the now reſpectable profeſſions of law and phyſick.

That unproſperous race of men commonly called men of letters, are pretty much in the ſituation which lawyers and phyſicians probably would be in upon the foregoing ſuppoſition. In every part of Europe the greater part of them have been educated for the church, but have been hindered by different reaſons from entering into holy orders. They have generally, therefore, been educated at the publick expence, and their

their numbers are every-where ſo great as commonly to reduce the price of their labour to a very paultry recompence.

Before the invention of the art of printing, the only employment by which a man of letters could make any thing by his talents, was that of a publick or private teacher, or by communicating to other people the curious and uſeful knowledge which he had acquired himſelf: And this is ſtill ſurely a more honourable, a more uſeful, and in general even a more profitable employment than that other of writing for a bookſeller, to which the art of printing has given occaſion. The time and ſtudy, the genius, knowledge, and application requiſite to qualify an eminent teacher of the ſciences, are at leaſt equal to what is neceſſary for the greateſt practitioners in law and phyſick. But the uſual reward of the eminent teacher bears no proportion to that of the lawyer or phyſician; becauſe the trade of the one is crowded with indigent people who have been brought up to it at the publick expence; whereas thoſe of the other two are incumbered with very few who have not been educated at their own. The uſual recompence, however, of publick and private teachers, ſmall as it may appear, would undoubtedly be leſs than it is, if the competition of thoſe yet more indigent men of letters who write for bread was not taken out of the market. Before the invention of the art of printing, a ſcholar and a beggar ſeem to have been terms very nearly ſynonimous. The different governors of the univerſities before that

time

time appear to have often granted licences to their ſcholars to beg.

In antient times, before any charities of this kind had been eſtabliſhed for the education of indigent people to the learned profeſſions, the rewards of eminent teachers appear to have been much more conſiderable. Iſocrates, in what is called his diſcourſe againſt the ſophiſts, reproaches the teachers of his own times with inconſiſtency. "They make the moſt magnificent promiſes to their ſcholars, ſays he, and undertake to teach them to be wiſe, to be happy, and to be juſt, and in return for ſo important a ſervice they ſtipulate the paultry reward of four or five minæ. They who teach wiſdom, continues he, ought certainly to be wiſe themſelves; but if any man was to ſell ſuch a bargain for ſuch a price, he would be convicted of the moſt evident folly." He certainly does not mean here to exaggerate the reward, and we may be aſſured that it was not leſs than he repreſents it. Four minæ were equal to thirteen pounds ſix ſhillings and eight pence: five minæ to ſixteen pounds thirteen ſhillings and four pence. Something not leſs than the largeſt of thoſe two ſums, therefore, muſt at that time have been uſually paid to the moſt eminent teachers at Athens. Iſocrates himſelf demanded ten minæ, or thirty-three pounds ſix ſhillings and eight pence, from each ſcholar. When he taught at Athens, he is ſaid to have had an hundred ſcholars. I underſtand this to be the number whom he taught at one time, or who attended what we would call one

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one course of lectures, a number which will not appear extraordinary from so great a city to so famous a teacher, who taught too what was at that time the most fashionable of all sciences, rhetorick. He must have made, therefore, by each course of lectures, a thousand minæ, or 3,333 *l.* 6 *s.* 8 *d.* A thousand minæ, accordingly, is said by Plutarch in another place, to have been his Didactron, or usual price of teaching. Many other eminent teachers in those times appear to have acquired great fortunes. Gorgias made a present to the temple of Delphi of his own statue in solid gold. We must not, I presume, suppose that it was as large as the life. His way of living, as well as that of Hippias and Protagoras, two other eminent teachers of those times, is represented by Plato as splendid even to ostentation. Plato himself is said to have lived with a good deal of magnificence. Aristotle, after having been tutor to Alexander and most munificently rewarded, as it is universally agreed, both by him and his father Philip, thought it worth while, notwithstanding, to return to Athens, in order to resume the teaching of his school. Teachers of the sciences were probably in those times less common than they came to be in an age or two afterwards, when the competition had probably somewhat reduced both the price of their labour and the admiration for their persons. The most eminent of them, however, appear always to have enjoyed a degree of consideration much superior to any of the like profession in the present times. The Athenians

sent

ſent Carneades the academick, and Diogenes the ſtoick, upon a ſolemn embaſſy to Rome; and though their city had then declined from its former grandeur, it was ſtill an independent and conſiderable republick. Carneades too was a Babylonian by birth, and as there never was a people more jealous of admitting foreigners to publick offices than the Athenians, their conſideration for him muſt have been very great.

THIS inequality is upon the whole, perhaps, rather advantageous than hurtful to the publick. It may ſomewhat degrade the profeſſion of a publick teacher; but the cheapneſs of literary education is ſurely an advantage which greatly over-balances this trifling inconveniency. The publick too might derive ſtill greater benefit from it, if the conſtitution of thoſe ſchools and colleges, in which education is carried on, was more reaſonable than it is at preſent through the greater part of Europe.

THIRDLY, The policy of Europe, by obſtructing the free circulation of labour and ſtock both from employment to employment, and from place to place, occaſions in ſome caſes a very inconvenient inequality in the whole of the advantages and diſadvantages of their different employments.

THE ſtatute of apprenticeſhip obſtructs the free circulation of labour from one employment to another, even in the ſame place. The excluſive privileges of corporations obſtruct it from one place to another, even in the ſame employment.

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It frequently happens that while high wages are given to the workmen in one manufacture, thoſe in another are obliged to content themſelves with bare ſubſiſtence. The one is in an advancing ſtate, and has, therefore, a continual demand for new hands: The other is in a declining ſtate, and the ſuper-abundance of hands is continually increaſing. Thoſe two manufactures may ſometimes be in the ſame town, and ſometimes in the ſame neighbourhood, without being able to lend the leaſt aſſiſtance to one another. The ſtatute of apprenticeſhip may oppoſe it in the one caſe, and both that and an excluſive corporation in the other. In many different manufactures, however, the operations are ſo much alike, that the workmen could eaſily change trades with one another, if thoſe abſurd laws did not hinder them. The arts of weaving plain linen and plain ſilk, for example, are almoſt entirely the ſame. That of weaving plain woollen is ſomewhat different; but the difference is ſo inſignificant, that either a linen or a ſilk weaver might become a tolerable workman in a very few days. If any of thoſe three capital manufactures, therefore, were decaying, the workmen might find a reſource in one of the other two which was in a more proſperous condition; and their wages would neither riſe too high in the thriving, nor ſink too low in the decaying manufacture. The linen manufacture indeed is, in England, by a particular ſtatute, open to every body; but as it is not much cultivated through the greater part of the country,

it can afford no general reſource to the workmen of other decaying manufactures, who, wherever the ſtatute of apprenticeſhip takes place, have no other choice but either to come upon the pariſh, or to work as common labourers, for which, by their habits, they are much worſe qualified than for any ſort of manufacture that bears any reſemblance to their own. They generally, therefore, chuſe to come upon the pariſh.

WHATEVER obſtructs the free circulation of labour from one employment to another, obſtructs that of ſtock likewiſe; the quantity of ſtock which can be employed in any branch of buſineſs depending very much upon that of the labour which can be employed in it. Corporation laws, however, give leſs obſtruction to the free circulation of ſtock from one place to another than to that of labour. It is every-where much eaſier for a wealthy merchant to obtain the privilege of trading in a town corporate, than for a poor artificer to obtain that of working in it.

THE obſtruction which corporation laws give to the free circulation of labour is common, I believe, to every part of Europe. That which is given to it by the poor laws is, ſo far as I know, peculiar to England. It conſiſts in the difficulty which a poor man finds in obtaining a ſettlement, or even in being allowed to exerciſe his induſtry in any pariſh but that to which he belongs. It is the labour of artificers and manufacturers only of which the free circulation is obſtructed by corporation laws. The difficulty

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of obtaining ſettlements obſtructs even that of common labour. It may be worth while to give ſome account of the riſe, progreſs, and preſent ſtate of this diſorder, the greateſt perhaps of any in the police of England.

When by the deſtruction of monaſteries the poor had been deprived of the charity of thoſe religious houſes, after ſome other ineffectual attempts for their relief, it was enacted by the 43d of Elizabeth, c. 2. that every pariſh ſhould be bound to provide for its own poor; and that overſeers of the poor ſhould be annually appointed, who, with the churchwardens, ſhould raiſe by a pariſh rate, competent ſums for this purpoſe.

By this ſtatute the neceſſity of providing for their own poor was indiſpenſably impoſed upon every pariſh. Who were to be conſidered as the poor of each pariſh, became, therefore, a queſtion of ſome importance. This queſtion, after ſome variation, was at laſt determined by the 13th and 14th of Charles II. when it was enacted, that forty days undiſturbed reſidence ſhould gain any perſon a ſettlement in any pariſh; but that within that time it ſhould be lawful for two juſtices of the peace, upon complaint made by the churchwardens or overſeers of the poor, to remove any new inhabitant to the pariſh where he was laſt legally ſettled; unleſs he either rented a tenement of ten pounds a year, or could give ſuch ſecurity for the diſcharge of the pariſh where he was then living, as thoſe juſtices ſhould judge ſufficient.

Some

Some frauds, it is said, were committed in consequence of this statute; parish officers sometimes bribing their own poor to go clandestinely to another parish, and by keeping themselves concealed for forty days to gain a settlement there, to the discharge of that to which they properly belonged. It was enacted, therefore, by the 1st of James II. that the forty days undisturbed residence of any person necessary to gain a settlement, should be accounted only from the time of his delivering notice in writing, of the place of his abode and the number of his family, to one of the churchwardens or overseers of the parish where he came to dwell.

But parish officers, it seems, were not always more honest with regard to their own, than they had been with regard to other parishes, and sometimes connived at such intrusions, receiving the notice, and taking no proper steps in consequence of it. As every person in a parish, therefore, was supposed to have an interest to prevent as much as possible their being burdened by such intruders, it was further enacted by the 3d of William III. that the forty days residence should be accounted only from the publication of such notice in writing on Sunday in the church, immediately after divine service.

"After all, says Doctor Burn, this kind of "settlement, by continuing forty days after "publication of notice in writing, is very sel- "dom obtained; and the design of the acts is "not so much for gaining of settlements, as for "the avoiding of them, by persons coming into

BOOK I. "a parish clandestinely: for the giving of notice is only putting a force upon the parish to remove. But if a person's situation is such, that it is doubtful whether he is actually removeable or not, he shall by giving of notice compel the parish either to allow him a settlement uncontested, by suffering him to continue forty days; or, by removing him, to try the right."

This statute, therefore, rendered it almost impracticable for a poor man to gain a new settlement in the old way, by forty days inhabitancy. But that it might not appear to preclude altogether the common people of one parish from ever establishing themselves with security in another, it appointed four other ways by which a settlement might be gained without any notice delivered or published. The first was, by being taxed to parish rates and paying them; the second, by being elected into an annual parish office and serving in it a year; the third, by serving an apprenticeship in the parish; the fourth, by being hired into service there for a year, and continuing in the same service during the whole of it.

Nobody can gain a settlement by either of the two first ways, but by the publick deed of the whole parish, who are too well aware of the consequences to adopt any new-comer who has nothing but his labour to support him, either by taxing him to parish rates, or by electing him into a parish office.

No

No married man can well gain any settlement in either of the two last ways. An apprentice is scarce ever married; and it is expressly enacted, that no married servant shall gain any settlement by being hired for a year. The principal effect of introducing settlement by service, has been to put out in a great measure the old fashion of hiring for a year, which before had been so customary in England, that even at this day, if no particular term is agreed upon, the law intends that every servant is hired for a year. But masters are not always willing to give their servants a settlement by hiring them in this manner; and servants are not always willing to be so hired, because as every last settlement discharges all the foregoing, they might thereby lose their original settlement in the places of their nativity, the habitation of their parents and relations.

No independent workman, it is evident, whether labourer or artificer, is likely to gain any new settlement either by apprenticeship or by service. When such a person, therefore, carried his industry to a new parish, he was liable to be removed, how healthy and industrious soever, at the caprice of any churchwarden or overseer, unless he either rented a tenement of ten pounds a year, a thing impossible for one who has nothing but his labour to live by; or could give such security for the discharge of the parish as two justices of the peace should judge sufficient. What security they shall require, indeed, is left altogether to their discretion; but they cannot well require less than thirty pounds, it having

been enacted, that the purchaſe even of a freehold eſtate of leſs than thirty pounds value, ſhall not gain any perſon a ſettlement, as not being ſufficient for the diſcharge of the pariſh. But this is a ſecurity which ſcarce any man who lives by labour can give; and much greater ſecurity is frequently demanded.

In order to reſtore in ſome meaſure that free circulation of labour which thoſe different ſtatutes had almoſt entirely taken away, the invention of certificates was fallen upon. By the 8th and 9th of William III. it was enacted, that if any perſon ſhould bring a certificate from the pariſh where he was laſt legally ſettled, ſubſcribed by the churchwardens and overſeers of the poor, and allowed by two juſtices of the peace, that every other pariſh ſhould be obliged to receive him; that he ſhould not be removeable merely upon account of his being likely to become chargeable, but only upon his becoming actually chargeable, and that then the pariſh which granted the certificate ſhould be obliged to pay the expence both of his maintenance and of his removal. And in order to give the moſt perfect ſecurity to the pariſh where ſuch certificated man ſhould come to reſide, it was further enacted by the ſame ſtatute, that he ſhould gain no ſettlement there by any means whatever, except either by renting a tenement of ten pounds a year, or by ſerving upon his own account in an annual pariſh office for one whole year; and conſequently neither by notice, nor by ſervice, nor by apprenticeſhip, nor by paying pariſh rates. By the

the 12th of Queen Anne too, ſtat. 1. c. 18. it was further enacted, that neither the ſervants nor apprentices of ſuch certificated man ſhould gain any ſettlement in the pariſh where he reſided under ſuch certificate.

How far this invention has reſtored that free circulation of labour which the preceding ſtatutes had almoſt entirely taken away, we may learn from the following very judicious obſervation of Doctor Burn. "It is obvious, ſays he, that "there are divers good reaſons for requiring "certificates with perſons coming to ſettle in "any place; namely, that perſons reſiding un- "der them can gain no ſettlement, neither by "apprenticeſhip, nor by ſervice, nor by giving "notice, nor by paying pariſh rates; that they "can ſettle neither apprentices nor ſervants; "that if they become chargeable, it is cer- "tainly known whither to remove them, and "the pariſh ſhall be paid for the removal, "and for their maintenance in the mean time; "and that if they fall ſick, and cannot be re- "moved, the pariſh which gave the certificate "muſt maintain them; none of all which can "be without a certificate. Which reaſons will "hold proportionably for pariſhes not granting "certificates in ordinary caſes; for it is far "more than an equal chance, but that they will "have the certificated perſons again, and in a "worſe condition." The moral of this obſerva- tion ſeems to be, that certificates ought always to be required by the pariſh where any poor man comes to reſide, and that they ought very ſeldom

to

to be granted by that which he propoſes to leave. "There is ſomewhat of hardſhip in this matter "of certificates," ſays the ſame very intelligent author in his Hiſtory of the Poor Laws, "by "putting it in the power of a pariſh officer, to "impriſon a man as it were for life; however "inconvenient it may be for him to continue at "that place where he has had the misfortune to "acquire what is called a ſettlement, or what-"ever advantage he may propoſe to himſelf by "living elſewhere."

Though a certificate carries along with it no teſtimonial of good behaviour, and certifies nothing but that the perſon belongs to the pariſh to which he really does belong, it is altogether diſcretionary in the pariſh officers either to grant or to refuſe it. A mandamus was once moved for, ſays Doctor Burn, to compel the churchwardens and overſeers to ſign a certificate; but the court of King's Bench rejected the motion as a very ſtrange attempt.

The very unequal price of labour which we frequently find in England in places at no great diſtance from one another, is probably owing to the obſtruction which the law of ſettlements gives to a poor man who would carry his induſtry from one pariſh to another without a certificate. A ſingle man, indeed, who is healthy and induſtrious, may ſometimes reſide by ſufferance without one; but a man with a wife and family who ſhould attempt to do ſo, would in moſt pariſhes be ſure of being removed, and if the ſingle man ſhould afterwards marry, he would generally be

removed

removed likewiſe. The ſcarcity of hands in one pariſh, therefore, cannot always be relieved by their ſuper-abundance in another, as it is conſtantly in Scotland, and, I believe, in all other countries where there is no difficulty of ſettlement. In ſuch countries, though wages may ſometimes riſe a little in the neighbourhood of a great town, or wherever elſe there is an extraordinary demand for labour, and ſink gradually as the diſtance from ſuch places increaſes, till they fall back to the common rate of the country; yet we never meet with thoſe ſudden and unaccountable differences in the wages of neighbouring places which we ſometimes find in England, where it is often more difficult for a poor man to paſs the artificial boundary of a pariſh, than an arm of the ſea or a ridge of high mountains, natural boundaries which ſometimes ſeparate very diſtinctly different rates of wages in other countries.

To remove a man who has committed no miſdemeanour from the pariſh where he chuſes to reſide, is an evident violation of natural liberty and juſtice. The common people of England, however, ſo jealous of their liberty, but like the common people of moſt other countries never rightly underſtanding wherein it conſiſts, have now for more than a century together ſuffered themſelves to be expoſed to this oppreſſion without a remedy. Though men of reflection too have ſometimes complained of the law of ſettlements as a publick grievance; yet it has never been the object of any general popular clamour,

ſuch

ſuch as that againſt general warrants, an abuſive practice undoubtedly, but ſuch a one as was not likely to occaſion any general oppreſſion. There is ſcarce a poor man in England of forty years of age, I will venture to ſay, who has not in ſome part of his life felt himſelf moſt cruelly oppreſſed by this ill-contrived law of ſettlements.

I SHALL conclude this long chapter with obſerving, that though antiently it was uſual to rate wages, firſt by general laws extending over the whole kingdom, and afterwards by particular orders of the juſtices of peace in every particular county, both theſe practices have now gone entirely into diſuſe. "By the experience of above "four hundred years," ſays Doctor Burn, "it "ſeems time to lay aſide all endeavours to bring "under ſtrict regulations, what in its own na"ture ſeems incapable of minute limitation: "for if all perſons in the ſame kind of work "were to receive equal wages, there would be "no emulation, and no room left for induſtry "or ingenuity."

PARTICULAR acts of parliament, however, ſtill attempt ſometimes to regulate wages in particular trades and in particular places. Thus the 8th of George III. prohibits under heavy penalties all maſter taylors in London, and five miles round it, from giving, and their workmen from accepting, more than two ſhillings and ſevenpence halfpenny a day, except in the caſe of a general mourning. Whenever the legiſlature attempts to regulate the differences between maſters and their workmen, its counſellors are always

always the masters. When the regulation, therefore, is in favour of the workmen, it is always just and equitable; but it is sometimes otherwise when in favour of the masters. Thus the law which obliges the masters in several different trades to pay their workmen in money and not in goods, is quite just and equitable. It imposes no real hardship upon the masters. It only obliges them to pay that value in money, which they pretended to pay, but did not always really pay, in goods. This law is in favour of the workmen; but the 8th of George III. is in favour of the masters. When masters combine together in order to reduce the wages of their workmen, they commonly enter into a private bond or agreement, not to give more than a certain wage under a certain penalty. Were the workmen to enter into a contrary combination of the same kind, not to accept of a certain wage under a certain penalty, the law would punish them very severely; and if it dealt impartially, it would treat the masters in the same manner. But the 8th of George III. enforces by law that very regulation which masters sometimes attempt to establish by such combinations. The complaint of the workmen, that it puts the ablest and most industrious upon the same footing with an ordinary workman, seems perfectly well founded.

In antient times too it was usual to attempt to regulate the profits of merchants and other dealers, by rating the price both of provisions and other goods. The assize of bread is, so far as I know, the only remnant of this ancient

usage.

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usage. Where there is an exclusive corporation, it may perhaps be proper to regulate the price of the first necessary of life. But where there is none, the competition will regulate it much better than any assize. The method of fixing the assize of bread established by the 31st of George II. could not be put in practice in Scotland, on account of a defect in the law; its execution depending upon the office of clerk of the market, which does not exist there. This defect was not remedied till the 3d of George III. The want of an assize occasioned no sensible inconveniency, and the establishment of one, in the few places where it has yet taken place, has produced no sensible advantage. In the greater part of the towns of Scotland, however, there is an incorporation of bakers who claim exclusive privileges, though they are not very strictly guarded.

The proportion between the different rates both of wages and profit in the different employments of labour and stock, seems not to be much affected, as has already been observed, by the riches or poverty, the advancing, stationary, or declining state of the society. Such revolutions in the publick welfare, though they affect the general rates both of wages and profit, must in the end affect them equally in all different employments. The proportion between them, therefore, must remain the same, and cannot well be altered, at least for any considerable time, by any such revolutions.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Rent of Land.

CHAP. XI.

RENT, considered as the price paid for the use of land, is naturally the highest which the tenant can afford to pay in the actual circumstances of the land. In adjusting the terms of the lease, the landlord endeavours to leave him no greater share of the produce than what is sufficient to keep up the stock from which he furnishes the seed, pays the labour, and purchases and maintains the cattle and other instruments of husbandry, together with the ordinary profits of farming stock in the neighbourhood. This is evidently the smallest share with which the tenant can content himself without being a loser, and the landlord seldom means to leave him any more. Whatever part of the produce, or, what is the same thing, whatever part of its price, is over and above this share, he naturally endeavours to reserve to himself as the rent of his land, which is evidently the highest the tenant can afford to pay in the actual circumstances of the land. Sometimes, indeed, the liberality, more frequently the ignorance, of the landlord, makes him accept of somewhat less than this portion; and sometimes too, though more rarely, the ignorance of the tenant makes him undertake to pay somewhat more, or to content himself with somewhat less than the ordinary profits of farming stock in the neighbourhood. This portion, however,

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however, may ſtill be conſidered as the natural rent of land, or the rent for which it is naturally meant that land ſhould for the moſt part be let.

THE rent of land, it may be thought, is frequently no more than a reaſonable profit or intereſt for the ſtock laid out by the landlord upon its improvement. This, no doubt, may be partly the caſe upon ſome occaſions; for it can ſcarce ever be more than partly the caſe. The landlord demands a rent even for unimproved land, and the ſuppoſed intereſt or profit upon the expence of improvement is generally an addition to this original rent. Thoſe improvements, beſides, are not always made by the ſtock of the landlord, but ſometimes by that of the tenant. When the leaſe comes to be renewed, however, the landlord commonly demands the ſame augmentation of rent, as if they had been all made by his own.

HE ſometimes demands rent for what is altogether incapable of human improvement. Kelp is a ſpecies of ſea-weed, which, when burnt, yields an alkaline ſalt, uſeful for making glaſs, ſoap, and for ſeveral other purpoſes. It grows in ſeveral parts of Great Britain, particularly in Scotland, upon ſuch rocks only as lie within the high water mark, which are twice every day covered with the ſea, and of which the produce, therefore, was never augmented by human induſtry. The landlord, however, whoſe eſtate is bounded by a kelp ſhore of this kind, demands a rent for it as much as for his corn fields.

THE ſea in the neighbourhood of the iſlands of Shetland is more than commonly abundant in fiſh,

fish, which make a great part of the subsistence of their inhabitants. But in order to profit by the produce of the water, they must have a habitation upon the neighbouring land. The rent of the landlord is in proportion, not to what the farmer can make by the land, but to what he can make both by the land and by the water. It is partly paid in sea-fish; and one of the very few instances in which rent makes a part of the price of that commodity, is to be found in that country.

The rent of land, therefore, considered as the price paid for the use of the land, is naturally a monopoly price. It is not at all proportioned to what the landlord may have laid out upon the improvement of the land, or to what he can afford to take; but to what the farmer can afford to give.

Such parts only of the produce of land can commonly be brought to market of which the ordinary price is sufficient to replace the stock which must be employed in bringing them thither, together with its ordinary profits. If the ordinary price is more than this, the surplus part of it will naturally go to the rent of the land. If it is not more, though the commodity may be brought to market, it can afford no rent to the landlord. Whether the price is, or is not more, depends upon the demand.

There are some parts of the produce of land for which the demand must always be such as to afford a greater price than what is sufficient to bring them to market; and there are others for

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which it either may or may not be such as to afford this greater price. The former must always afford a rent to the landlord. The latter sometimes may, and sometimes may not, according to different circumstances.

RENT, it is to be observed, therefore, enters into the composition of the price of commodities in a different way from wages and profit. High or low wages and profit, are the causes of high or low price; high or low rent is the effect of it. It is because high or low wages and profit must be paid, in order to bring a particular commodity to market, that its price is high or low. But it is because its price is high or low; a great deal more, or very little more, or no more, than what is sufficient to pay those wages and profit, that it affords a high rent, or a low rent, or no rent at all.

THE particular consideration, first, of those parts of the produce of land which always afford some rent; secondly, of those which sometimes may and sometimes may not afford rent; and, thirdly, of the variations which, in the different periods of improvement, naturally take place, in the relative value of those two different sorts of rude produce, when compared both with one another and with manufactured commodities, will divide this chapter into three parts.

PART

PART I.

Of the Produce of Land which always affords Rent.

AS men, like all other animals, naturally multiply in proportion to the means of their ſubſiſtence, food is always, more or leſs, in demand. It can always purchaſe or command a greater or ſmaller quantity of labour, and ſomebody can always be found who is willing to do ſomething, in order to obtain it. The quantity of labour, indeed, which it can purchaſe, is not always equal to what it could maintain, if managed in the moſt œconomical manner, on account of the high wages which are ſometimes given to labour. But it can always purchaſe ſuch a quantity of labour as it can maintain, according to the rate at which that ſort of labour is commonly maintained in the neighbourhood.

BUT land, in almoſt any ſituation, produces a greater quantity of food than what is ſufficient to maintain all the labour neceſſary for bringing it to market, in the moſt liberal way in which that labour is ever maintained. The ſurplus too is always more than ſufficient to replace the ſtock which employed that labour, together with its profits. Something, therefore, always remains for a rent to the landlord.

THE moſt deſart moors in Norway and Scotland produce ſome ſort of paſture for cattle, of which the milk and the increaſe are always more

than ſufficient, not only to maintain all the labour neceſſary for tending them, and to pay the ordinary profit to the farmer or owner of the herd or flock; but to afford ſome ſmall rent to the landlord. The rent increaſes in proportion to the goodneſs of the paſture. The ſame extent of ground not only maintains a greater number of cattle, but as they are brought within a ſmaller compaſs, leſs labour becomes requiſite to tend them, and to collect their produce. The landlord gains both ways; by the increaſe of the produce, and by the diminution of the labour which muſt be maintained out of it.

The rent of land not only varies with its fertility, whatever be its produce, but with its ſituation, whatever be its fertility. Land in the neighbourhood of a town, gives a greater rent than land equally fertile in a diſtant part of the country. Though it may coſt no more labour to cultivate the one than the other, it muſt always coſt more to bring the produce of the diſtant land to market. A greater quantity of labour, therefore, muſt be maintained out of it; and the ſurplus, from which are drawn both the profit of the farmer and the rent of the landlord, muſt be diminiſhed. But in remote parts of the country the rate of profit, as has already been ſhown, is generally higher than in the neighbourhood of a large town. A ſmaller proportion of this diminiſhed ſurplus, therefore, muſt belong to the landlord.

Good roads, canals, and navigable rivers, by diminiſhing the expence of carriage, put the remote

more parts of the country more nearly upon a level with thoſe in the neighbourhood of the town. They are upon that account the greateſt of all improvements. They encourage the cultivation of the remote, which muſt always be the moſt extenſive circle of the country. They are advantageous to the town, by breaking down the monopoly of the country in its neighbourhood. They are advantageous even to that part of the country. Though they introduce ſome rival commodities into the old market, they open many new markets to its produce. Monopoly, beſides, is a great enemy to good management, which can never be univerſally eſtabliſhed but in conſequence of that free and univerſal competition which forces every body to have recourſe to it for the ſake of ſelf-defence. It is not more than fifty years ago that ſome of the counties in the neighbourhood of London, petitioned the parliament againſt the extenſion of the turnpike roads into the remoter counties. Thoſe remoter counties, they pretended, from the cheapneſs of labour, would be able to ſell their graſs and corn cheaper in the London market than themſelves, and would thereby reduce their rents, and ruin their cultivation. Their rents, however, have riſen, and their cultivation has been improved ſince that time.

A CORN field of moderate fertility produces a much greater quantity of food for man, than the beſt paſture of equal extent. Though its cultivation requires much more labour, yet the ſurplus which remains after replacing the ſeed and

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maintaining all that labour, is likewiſe much greater. If a pound of butcher's-meat, therefore, was never ſuppoſed to be worth more than a pound of bread, this greater ſurplus would every-where be of greater value, and conſtitute a greater fund both for the profit of the farmer and the rent of the landlord. It ſeems to have done ſo univerſally in the rude beginnings of agriculture.

But the relative values of thoſe two different ſpecies of food, bread and butcher's-meat, are very different in the different periods of agriculture. In its rude beginnings, the unimproved wilds, which then occupy the far greater part of the country, are all abandoned to cattle. There is more butcher's-meat than bread, and bread, therefore, is the food for which there is the greateſt competition, and which conſequently brings the greateſt price. At Buenos Ayres, we are told by Ulloa, four reals, one-and-twenty pence halfpenny ſterling, was, forty or fifty years ago, the ordinary price of an ox, choſen from a herd of two or three hundred. He ſays nothing of the price of bread, probably becauſe he found nothing remarkable about it. An ox there, he ſays, coſts little more than the labour of catching him. But corn can no-where be raiſed without a great deal of labour, and in a country which lies upon the river Plate, at that time the direct road from Europe to the ſilver mines of Potoſi, the money price of labour could not be very cheap. It is otherwiſe when cultivation is extended over the greater part of the country.

There

There is then more bread than butcher's-meat. The competition changes its direction, and the price of butcher's-meat becomes greater than the price of bread.

By the extenſion beſides of cultivation, the unimproved wilds become inſufficient to ſupply the demand for butcher's-meat. A great part of the cultivated lands muſt be employed in rearing and fattening cattle, of which the price, therefore, muſt be ſufficient to pay, not only the labour neceſſary for tending them, but the rent which the landlord and the profit which the farmer could have drawn from ſuch land employed in tillage. The cattle bred upon the moſt uncultivated moors, when brought to the ſame market, are, in proportion to their weight or goodneſs, ſold at the ſame price as thoſe which are reared upon the moſt improved land. The proprietors of thoſe moors profit by it, and raiſe the rent of their land in proportion to the price of their cattle. It is not more than a century ago that in many parts of the highlands of Scotland, butcher's-meat was as cheap or cheaper than even bread made of oatmeal. The union opened the market of England to the highland cattle. Their ordinary price is at preſent about three times greater than at the beginning of the century, and the rents of many highland eſtates have been tripled and quadrupled in the ſame time. In almoſt every part of Great Britain a pound of the beſt butcher's-meat is, in the preſent times, generally worth more than two pounds of the beſt white bread; and in

plentiful years it is ſometimes worth three or four pounds.

IT is thus that in the progreſs of improvement the rent and profit of unimproved paſture come to be regulated in ſome meaſure by the rent and profit of what is improved, and theſe again by the rent and profit of corn. Corn is an annual crop. Butcher's-meat, a crop which requires four or five years to grow. As an acre of land, therefore, will produce a much ſmaller quantity of the one ſpecies of food than of the other, the inferiority of the quantity muſt be compenſated by the ſuperiority of the price. If it was more than compenſated, more corn land would be turned into paſture; and if it was not compenſated, part of what was in paſture would be brought back into corn.

THIS equality, however, between the rent and profit of graſs and thoſe of corn, of the land of which the immediate produce is food for cattle, and of that of which the immediate produce is food for men, muſt be underſtood to take place only through the greater part of the improved lands of a great country. In ſome particular local ſituations it is quite otherwiſe, and the rent and profit of graſs are much ſuperior to what can be made by corn.

THUS in the neighbourhood of a great town, the demand for milk and for forage to horſes, frequently contribute, together with the high price of butcher's-meat, to raiſe the value of graſs above what may be called its natural proportion to that of corn. This local advantage,

it

it is evident, cannot be communicated to the lands at a diſtance.

PARTICULAR circumſtances have ſometimes rendered ſome countries ſo populous, that the whole territory, like the lands in the neighbourhood of a great town, has not been ſufficient to produce both the graſs and the corn neceſſary for the ſubſiſtence of their inhabitants. Their lands, therefore, have been principally employed in the production of graſs, the more bulky commodity, and which cannot be ſo eaſily brought from a great diſtance; and corn, the food of the great body of the people, has been chiefly imported from foreign countries. Holland is at preſent in this ſituation, and a conſiderable part of antient Italy, ſeems to have been ſo during the proſperity of the Romans. To feed well, old Cato ſaid, as we are told by Cicero, was the firſt and moſt profitable thing in the management of a private eſtate; to feed tolerably well, the ſecond; and to feed ill, the third. To plough, he ranked only in the fourth place of profit and advantage. Tillage, indeed, in that part of antient Italy which lay in the neighbourhood of Rome, muſt have been very much diſcouraged by the diſtributions of corn which were frequently made to the people, either gratuitouſly, or at a very low price. This corn was brought from the conquered provinces, of which ſeveral, inſtead of taxes, were obliged to furniſh a tenth part of their produce at a ſtated price, about ſixpence a peck, to the republick. The low price at which this corn was diſtributed to the

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the people, must necessarily have sunk the price of what could be brought to the Roman market from Latium, or the antient territory of Rome, and must have discouraged its cultivation in that country.

In an open country too, of which the principal produce is corn, a well-enclosed piece of grass will frequently rent higher than any corn field in its neighbourhood. It is convenient for the maintenance of the cattle employed in the cultivation of the corn, and its high rent is, in this case, not so properly paid from the value of its own produce, as from that of the corn lands which are cultivated by means of it. It is likely to fall, if ever the neighbouring lands are compleatly inclosed. The present high rent of enclosed land in Scotland seems owing to the scarcity of enclosure, and will probably last no longer than that scarcity. The advantage of enclosure is greater for pasture than for corn. It saves the labour of guarding the cattle, which feed better too when they are not liable to be disturbed by their keeper or his dog.

But where there is no local advantage of this kind, the rent and profit of corn, or whatever else is the common vegetable food of the people, must naturally regulate, upon the land which is fit for producing it, the rent and profit of pasture.

The use of the artificial grasses, of turnips, carrots, cabbages, and the other expedients which have been fallen upon to make an equal quantity of land feed a greater number of cattle than

than when in natural grafs, ſhould ſomewhat reduce, it might be expected, the ſuperiority which, in an improved country, the price of butcher's-meat naturally has over that of bread. It ſeems accordingly to have done ſo; and there is ſome reaſon for believing that, at leaſt in the London market, the price of butcher's-meat in proportion to the price of bread is a good deal lower in the preſent times than it was in the beginning of the laſt century.

In the appendix to the Life of prince Henry, Doctor Birch has given us an account of the prices of butcher's-meat as commonly paid by that prince. It is there ſaid, that the four quarters of an ox weighing ſix hundred pounds uſually coſt him nine pounds ten ſhillings, or thereabouts; that is, thirty-one ſhillings and eight pence per hundred pounds weight. Prince Henry died on the 6th of November, 1612, in the nineteenth year of his age.

In March, 1764, there was a parliamentary enquiry into the cauſes of the high price of proviſions at that time. It was then, among other proof to the ſame purpoſe, given in evidence by a Virginia merchant, that in March, 1763, he had victualled his ſhips for twenty-four or twenty-five ſhillings the hundred weight of beef, which he conſidered as the ordinary price; whereas, in that dear year, he had paid twenty-ſeven ſhillings for the ſame weight and ſort. This high price in 1764, is, however, four ſhillings and eightpence cheaper than the ordinary price paid by prince

prince Henry; and it is the beſt beef only, it muſt be obſerved, which is fit to be ſalted for thoſe diſtant voyages.

The price paid by prince Henry amounts to $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ per pound weight of the whole carcaſe, coarſe and choice pieces taken together; and at that rate the choice pieces could not have been ſold by retail for leſs than $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ or $5d.$ the pound.

In the parliamentary enquiry in 1764, the witneſſes ſtated the price of the choice pieces of the beſt beef to be to the conſumer $4d.$ and $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ the pound; and the coarſe pieces in general to be from ſeven farthings to $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ and $2\frac{3}{4}d.$; and this they ſaid was in general one half-penny dearer than the ſame ſort of pieces had uſually been ſold in the month of March. But even this high price is ſtill a good deal cheaper than what we can well ſuppoſe the ordinary retail price to have been in the time of prince Henry.

During the twelve firſt years of the laſt century, the average price of the beſt wheat at the Windſor market was $1l.$ $18s.$ $3\frac{1}{6}d.$ the quarter of nine Wincheſter buſhels.

But in the twelve years preceding 1764, including that year, the average price of the ſame meaſure of the beſt wheat at the ſame market was $2l.$ $1s.$ $9\frac{1}{2}d.$

In the twelve firſt years of the laſt century, therefore, wheat appears to have been a good deal cheaper, and butcher's-meat a good deal dearer than in the twelve years preceding 1764, including that year.

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In all great countries the greater part of the cultivated lands are employed in producing either food for men or food for cattle. The rent and profit of theſe regulate the rent and profit of all other cultivated land. If any particular produce afforded leſs, the land would ſoon be turned into corn or paſture; and if any afforded more, ſome part of the lands in corn or paſture would ſoon be turned to that produce.

Thoſe productions, indeed, which require either a greater original expence of improvement, or a greater annual expence of cultivation, in order to fit the land for them, appear commonly to afford, the one a greater rent, the other a greater profit than corn or paſture. This ſuperiority, however, will ſeldom be found to amount to more than a reaſonable intereſt or compenſation for this ſuperior expence.

In a hop garden, a fruit garden, a kitchen garden, both the rent of the landlord, and the profit of the farmer, are generally greater than in a corn or graſs field. But to bring the ground into this condition requires more expence. Hence a greater rent becomes due to the landlord. It requires too a more attentive and ſkilful management. Hence a greater profit becomes due to the farmer. The crop too, at leaſt in the hop and fruit garden, is more precarious. Its price, therefore, beſides compenſating all occaſional loſſes, muſt afford ſomething like the profit of inſurance. The circumſtances of gardeners, generally mean, and always moderate, may ſatisfy us that their great ingenuity is not commonly

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commonly over-recompenſed. Their delightful art is practiſed by ſo many rich people for amuſement, that little advantage is to be made by thoſe who practiſe it for profit; becauſe the perſons who ſhould naturally be their beſt cuſtomers, ſupply themſelves with all their moſt precious productions.

The advantage which the landlord derives from ſuch improvements ſeems at no time to have been greater than what was ſufficient to compenſate the original expence of making them. In the antient huſbandry, after the vineyard, a well-watered kitchen garden ſeems to have been the part of the farm which was ſuppoſed to yield the moſt valuable produce. But Democritus, who wrote upon huſbandry about two thouſand years ago, and who was regarded by the antients as one of the fathers of the art, thought they did not act wiſely who encloſed a kitchen garden. The profit, he ſaid, would not compenſate the expence of a ſtone wall; and bricks (he meant, I ſuppoſe, bricks baked in the ſun) mouldered with the rain, and the winter ſtorm, and required continual repairs. Columella, who reports this judgment of Democritus, does not controvert it, but propoſes a very frugal method of encloſing with a hedge of brambles and briars, which, he ſays, he had found by experience to be both a laſting and an impenetrable fence; but which, it ſeems, was not commonly known in the time of Democritus. Palladius adopts the opinion of Columella, which had before been recommended by

Varro. In the judgment of thoſe antient improvers, the produce of a kitchen garden had, it ſeems, been little more than ſufficient to pay the extraordinary culture and the expence of watering; for in countries ſo near the ſun, it was thought proper, in thoſe times as in the preſent, to have the command of a ſtream of water, which could be conducted to every bed in the garden. Through the greater part of Europe, a kitchen garden is not at preſent ſuppoſed to deſerve a better incloſure than that recommended by Columella. In Great Britain, and ſome other northern countries, the finer fruits cannot be brought to perfection but by the aſſiſtance of a wall. Their price, therefore, in ſuch countries muſt be ſufficient to pay the expence of building and maintaining what they cannot be had without. The fruit-wall frequently ſurrounds the kitchen garden, which thus enjoys the benefit of an incloſure which its own produce could ſeldom pay for.

THAT the vineyard, when properly planted and brought to perfection, was the moſt valuable part of the farm, ſeems to have been an undoubted maxim in the antient agriculture, as it is in the modern through all the wine countries. But whether it was advantageous to plant a new vineyard, was a matter of diſpute among the antient Italian huſbandmen, as we learn from Columella. He decides, like a true lover of all curious cultivation, in favour of the vineyard, and endeavours to ſhow, by a compariſon of the profit and expence, that it was a moſt advantageous

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tageous improvement. Such comparisons, however, between the profit and expence of new projects, are commonly very fallacious; and in nothing more so than in agriculture. Had the gain actually made by such plantations been commonly as great as he imagined it might have been, there could have been no dispute about it. The same point is frequently at this day a matter of controversy in the wine countries. Their writers on agriculture, indeed, the lovers and promoters of high cultivation, seem generally disposed to decide with Columella in favour of the vineyard. In France the anxiety of the proprietors of the old vineyards to prevent the planting of any new ones, seems to favour their opinion, and to indicate a consciousness in those who must have the experience, that this species of cultivation is at present in that country more profitable than any other. It seems at the same time, however, to indicate another opinion, that this superior profit can last no longer than the laws which at present restrain the free cultivation of the vine. In 1731, they obtained an order of council, prohibiting both the planting of new vineyards, and the renewal of those old ones, of which the cultivation had been interrupted for two years; without a particular permission from the king, to be granted only in consequence of an information from the intendant of the province, certifying that he had examined the land, and that it was incapable of any other culture. The pretence of this order was the scarcity of corn and pasture, and the

ſuper-abundance of wine. But had this ſuper-abundance been real, it would, without any order of council, have effectually prevented the plantation of new vineyards, by reducing the profits of this ſpecies of cultivation below their natural proportion to thoſe of corn and paſture. With regard to the ſuppoſed ſcarcity of corn occaſioned by the multiplication of vineyards, corn is no where in France more carefully cultivated than in the wine provinces, where the land is fit for producing it; as in Burgundy, Guienne, and the Upper Languedoc. The numerous hands employed in the one ſpecies of cultivation neceſſarily encourage the other, by affording a ready market for its produce. To diminiſh the number of thoſe who are capable of paying for it, is ſurely a moſt unpromiſing expedient for encouraging the cultivation of corn. It is like the policy which would promote agriculture by diſcouraging manufactures.

The rent and profit of thoſe productions, therefore, which require either a greater original expence of improvement in order to fit the land for them, or a greater annual expence of cultivation, though often much ſuperior to thoſe of corn and paſture, yet when they do no more than compenſate ſuch extraordinary expence, are in reality regulated by the rent and profit of thoſe common crops.

It ſometimes happens, indeed, that the quantity of land which can be fitted for ſome particular produce, is too ſmall to ſupply the effectual demand. The whole produce can be diſpoſed

of to thoſe who are willing to give ſomewhat more than what is ſufficient to pay the whole rent, wages and profit neceſſary for raiſing and bringing it to market, according to their natural rates, or according to the rates at which they are paid in the greater part of other cultivated land. The ſurplus part of the price which remains after defraying the whole expence of improvement and cultivation may commonly, in this caſe, and in this caſe only, bear no regular proportion to the like ſurplus in corn or paſture, but may exceed it in almoſt any degree; and the greater part of this exceſs naturally goes to the rent of the landlord.

THE uſual and natural proportion, for example, between the rent and profit of wine and thoſe of corn and paſture, muſt be underſtood to take place only with regard to thoſe vineyards which produce nothing but good common wine, ſuch as can be raiſed almoſt any where, upon any light, gravelly, or ſandy ſoil, and which has nothing to recommend it but its ſtrength and wholeſomeneſs. It is with ſuch vineyards only that the common land of the country can be brought into competition; for with thoſe of a peculiar quality it is evident that it cannot.

THE vine is more affected by the difference of ſoils than any other fruit tree. From ſome it derives a flavour which no culture or management can equal, it is ſuppoſed, upon any other. This flavour, real or imaginary, is ſometimes peculiar to the produce of a few vineyards; ſometimes it extends through the greater part of a ſmall

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a ſmall diſtrict, and ſometimes through a conſiderable part of a large province. The whole quantity of ſuch wines that is brought to market falls ſhort of the effectual demand, or the demand of thoſe who would be willing to pay the whole rent, profit and wages neceſſary for preparing and bringing them thither, according to the ordinary rate, or according to the rate at which they are paid in common vineyards. The whole quantity, therefore, can be diſpoſed of to thoſe who are willing to pay more, which neceſſarily raiſes the price above that of common wine. The difference is greater or leſs, according as the faſhionableneſs and ſcarcity of the wine render the competition of the buyers more or leſs eager. Whatever it be, the greater part of it goes to the rent of the landlord. For though ſuch vineyards are in general more carefully cultivated than moſt others, the high price of the wine ſeems to be, not ſo much the effect, as the cauſe of this careful cultivation. In ſo valuable a produce the loſs occaſioned by negligence is ſo great as to force even the moſt careleſs to attention. A ſmall part of this high price, therefore, is ſufficient to pay the wages of the extraordinary labour beſtowed upon their cultivation, and the profits of the extraordinary ſtock which puts that labour into motion.

THE ſugar colonies poſſeſſed by the European nations in the Weſt Indies, may be compared to thoſe precious vineyards. Their whole produce falls ſhort of the effectual demand of Europe, and can be diſpoſed of to thoſe who are willing to

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give more than what is ſufficient to pay the whole rent, profit and wages neceſſary for preparing and bringing it to market, according to the rate at which they are commonly paid by any other produce. In Cochin-china the fineſt white ſugar commonly ſells for three piaſters the quintal, about thirteen ſhillings and ſixpence of our money, as we are told by * Mr. Poivre, a very careful obſerver of the agriculture of that country. What is there called the quintal weighs from a hundred and fifty to two hundred Paris pounds, or a hundred and ſeventy-five Paris pounds at a medium, which reduces the price of the hundred weight Engliſh to about eight ſhillings ſterling, not a fourth part of what is commonly paid for the brown or muſkavada ſugars imported from our colonies, and not a ſixth part of what is paid for the fineſt white ſugar. The greater part of the cultivated lands in Cochin-china are employed in producing corn and rice, the food of the great body of the people. The reſpective prices of corn, rice, and ſugar, are there probably in the natural proportion, or in that which naturally takes place in the different crops of the greater part of cultivated land, and which recompences the landlord and farmer, as nearly as can be computed, according to what is uſually the original expence of improvement and the annual expence of cultivation. But in our ſugar colonies the price of ſugar bears no ſuch proportion to that of the produce of a rice or corn field either in Europe or in America. It is commonly

* Voyages d'un Philoſophe.

ſaid,

ſaid, that a ſugar planter expects that the rum and the molaſſes ſhould defray the whole expence of his cultivation, and that his ſugar ſhould be all clear profit. If this be true, for I pretend not to affirm it, it is as if a corn farmer expected to defray the expence of his cultivation with the chaff and the ſtraw, and that the grain ſhould be all clear profit. We ſee frequently ſocieties of merchants in London and other trading towns, purchaſe waſte lands in our ſugar colonies, which they expect to improve and cultivate with profit by means of factors and agents; notwithſtanding the great diſtance and the uncertain returns, from the defective adminiſtration of juſtice in thoſe countries. Nobody will attempt to improve and cultivate in the ſame manner the moſt fertile lands of Scotland, Ireland, or the corn provinces of North America; though from the more exact adminiſtration of juſtice in theſe countries, more regular returns might be expected.

In Virginia and Maryland the cultivation of tobacco is preferred, as more profitable, to that of corn. Tobacco might be cultivated with advantage through the greater part of Europe; but in almoſt every part of Europe it has become a principal ſubject of taxation, and to collect a tax from every different farm in the country where this plant might happen to be cultivated, would be more difficult, it has been ſuppoſed, than to levy one upon its importation at the cuſtom-houſe. The cultivation of tobacco has upon this account been moſt abſurdly prohibited

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through the greater part of Europe, which neceſſarily gives a ſort of monopoly to the countries where it is allowed; and as Virginia and Maryland produce the greateſt quantity of it, they ſhare largely, though with ſome competitors, in the advantage of this monopoly. The cultivation of tobacco, however, ſeems not to be ſo advantageous as that of ſugar. I have never even heard of any tobacco plantation that was improved and cultivated by the capital of merchants who reſided in Great Britain, and our tobacco colonies ſend us home no ſuch wealthy planters as we ſee frequently arrive from our ſugar iſlands. Though from the preference given in thoſe colonies to the cultivation of tobacco above that of corn, it would appear that the effectual demand of Europe for tobacco is not compleatly ſupplied, it probably is more nearly ſo than that for ſugar: And though the preſent price of tobacco is probably more than ſufficient to pay the whole rent, wages and profit neceſſary for preparing and bringing it to market, according to the rate at which they are commonly paid in corn land; it muſt not be ſo much more as the preſent price of ſugar. Our tobacco planters, accordingly, have ſhewn the ſame fear of the ſuper-abundance of tobacco, which the proprietors of the old vineyards in France have of the ſuper-abundance of wine. By act of aſſembly they have reſtrained its cultivation to ſix thouſand plants, ſuppoſed to yield a thouſand weight of tobacco, for every negro between ſixteen and ſixty years of age. Such a negro, over and above this quantity of tobacco,

tobacco, can manage, they reckon, four acres of Indian corn. To prevent the market from being overſtocked too, they have ſometimes, in plentiful years, we are told by Dr. Douglas, (I ſuſpect he has been ill informed)* burnt a certain quantity of tobacco for every negro, in the ſame manner as the Dutch are ſaid to do of ſpices. If ſuch violent methods are neceſſary to keep up the preſent price of tobacco, the ſuperior advantage of its culture over that of corn, if it ſtill has any, will not probably be of long continuance.

It is in this manner that the rent of the cultivated land, of which the produce is human food, regulates the rent of the greater part of other cultivated land. No particular produce can long afford leſs; becauſe the land would immediately be turned to another uſe: And if any particular produce commonly affords more, it is becauſe the quantity of land which can be fitted for it is too ſmall to ſupply the effectual demand.

In Europe corn is the principal produce of land which ſerves immediately for human food. Except in particular ſituations, therefore, the rent of corn land regulates in Europe that of all other cultivated land. Britain need envy neither the vineyards of France nor the olive plantations of Italy. Except in particular ſituations, the value of theſe is regulated by that of corn, in which the fertility of Britain is not much inferior to that of either of thoſe two countries.

* Douglas's Summary, vol. ii. p. 372, 373.

If in any country the common and favourite vegetable food of the people ſhould be drawn from a plant of which the moſt common land, with the ſame or nearly the ſame culture, produced a much greater quantity than the moſt fertile does of corn, the rent of the landlord, or the ſurplus quantity of food which would remain to him, after paying the labour and replacing the ſtock of the farmer together with its ordinary profits, would neceſſarily be much greater. Whatever was the rate at which labour was commonly maintained in that country, this greater ſurplus could always maintain a greater quantity of it, and conſequently enable the landlord to purchaſe or command a greater quantity of it. The real value of his rent, his real power and authority, his command of the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life with which the labour of other people could ſupply him, would neceſſarily be much greater.

A rice field produces a much greater quantity of food than the moſt fertile corn field. Two crops in the year from thirty to ſixty buſhels each, are ſaid to be the ordinary produce of an acre. Though its cultivation, therefore, requires more labour, a much greater ſurplus remains after maintaining all that labour. In thoſe rice countries, therefore, where rice is the common and favourite vegetable food of the people, and where the cultivators are chiefly maintained with it, a greater ſhare of this greater ſurplus ſhould belong to the landlord than in corn countries. In Carolina, where the planters,

planters, as in other British colonies, are generally both farmers and landlords, and where rent consequently is confounded with profit, the cultivation of rice is found to be more profitable than that of corn, though their fields produce only one crop in the year, and though, from the prevalence of the customs of Europe, rice is not there the common and favourite vegetable food of the people.

A good rice field is a bog at all seasons, and at one season a bog covered with water. It is unfit either for corn, or pasture, or vineyard, or, indeed, for any other vegetable produce that is very useful to men: And the lands which are fit for those purposes, are not fit for rice. Even in the rice countries, therefore, the rent of rice lands cannot regulate the rent of the other cultivated land which can never be turned to that produce.

The food produced by a field of potatoes is not inferior in quantity to that produced by a field of rice, and much superior to what is produced by a field of wheat. Twelve thousand weight of potatoes from an acre of land is not a greater produce than two thousand weight of wheat. The food or solid nourishment, indeed, which can be drawn from each of those two plants, is not altogether in proportion to their weight, on account of the watery nature of potatoes. Allowing, however, half the weight of this root to go to water, a very large allowance, such an acre of potatoes will still produce six thousand weight of solid nourishment, three times

times the quantity produced by the acre of wheat. An acre of potatoes is cultivated with leſs expence than an acre of wheat; the fallow, which generally precedes the ſowing of wheat, more than compenſating the hoeing and other extraordinary culture which is always given to potatoes. Should this root ever become in any part of Europe, like rice in ſome rice countries, the common and favourite vegetable food of the people, ſo as to occupy the ſame proportion of the lands in tillage which wheat and other ſorts of grain for human food do at preſent, the ſame quantity of cultivated land would maintain a much greater number of people, and the labourers being generally fed with potatoes, a greater ſurplus would remain after replacing all the ſtock and maintaining all the labour employed in cultivation. A greater ſhare of this ſurplus too would belong to the landlord. Population would increaſe, and rents would riſe much beyond what they are at preſent.

The land which is fit for potatoes, is fit for almoſt every other uſeful vegetable. If they occupied the ſame proportion of cultivated land which corn does at preſent, they would regulate, in the ſame manner, the rent of the greater part of other cultivated land.

In ſome parts of Lancaſhire it is pretended, I have been told, that bread of oatmeal is a heartier food for labouring people than wheaten bread, and I have frequently heard the ſame doctrine held in Scotland. I am, however, ſomewhat doubtful of the truth of it. The common

mon people in Scotland, who are fed with oatmeal, are in general neither ſo ſtrong, nor ſo handſome as the ſame rank of people in England, who are fed with wheaten bread. They neither work ſo well, nor look ſo well; and as there is not the ſame difference between the people of faſhion in the two countries, experience would ſeem to ſhow, that the food of the common people in Scotland is not ſo ſuitable to the human conſtitution as that of their neighbours of the ſame rank in England. But it ſeems to be otherwiſe with potatoes. The chairmen, porters, and coalheavers in London, and thoſe unfortunate women who live by proſtitution, the ſtrongeſt men and the moſt beautiful women perhaps in the Britiſh dominions, are ſaid to be, the greater part of them, from the loweſt rank of people in Ireland, who are generally fed with this root. No food can afford a more deciſive proof of its nouriſhing quality, or of its being peculiarly ſuitable to the health of the human conſtitution.

It is difficult to preſerve potatoes through the year, and impoſſible to ſtore them, like corn, for two or three years together. The fear of not being able to ſell them before they rot, diſcourages their cultivation, and is, perhaps, the chief obſtacle to their ever becoming in any great country, like bread, the principal vegetable food of all the different ranks of the people.

PART

PART II.

Of the Produce of Land which ſometimes does, and ſometimes does not, afford Rent.

HUMAN food ſeems to be the only produce of land which always and neceſſarily affords ſome rent to the landlord. Other ſorts of produce ſometimes may and ſometimes may not, according to different circumſtances.

After food, cloathing and lodging are the two great wants of mankind.

Land in its original rude ſtate can afford the materials of cloathing and lodging to a much greater number of people than it can feed. In its improved ſtate it can ſometimes feed a greater number of people than it can ſupply with thoſe materials; at leaſt in the way in which they require them, and are willing to pay for them. In the one ſtate, therefore, there is always a ſuper-abundance of thoſe materials, which are frequently, upon that account, of little or no value. In the other there is often a ſcarcity, which neceſſarily augments their value. In the one ſtate a great part of them is thrown away as uſeleſs, and the price of what is uſed is conſidered as equal only to the labour and expence of fitting it for uſe, and can, therefore, afford no rent to the landlord. In the other they are all made uſe of, and there is frequently a demand for more than can be had. Somebody is always willing to give more for every part of them than what

what is ſufficient to pay the expence of bringing them to market. Their price, therefore, can always afford ſome rent to the landlord.

The ſkins of the larger animals were the original materials of cloathing. Among nations of hunters and ſhepherds, therefore, whoſe food conſiſts chiefly in the fleſh of thoſe animals, every man, by providing himſelf with food, provides himſelf with the materials of more cloathing than he can wear. If there was no foreign commerce, the greater part of them would be thrown away as things of no value. This was probably the caſe among the hunting nations of North America, before their country was diſcovered by the Europeans, with whom they now exchange their ſurplus peltry, for blankets, fire-arms, and brandy, which gives it ſome value. In the preſent commercial ſtate of the known world, the moſt barbarous nations, I believe, among whom land property is eſtabliſhed, have ſome foreign commerce of this kind, and find among their wealthier neighbours ſuch a demand for all the materials of cloathing, which their land produces, and which can neither be wrought up nor conſumed at home, as raiſes their price above what it coſts to ſend them to thoſe wealthier neighbours. It affords, therefore, ſome rent to the landlord. When the greater part of the highland cattle were conſumed on their own hills, the exportation of their hides made the moſt conſiderable article of the commerce of that country, and what they were exchanged for afforded ſome addition to the rent

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of the highland eſtates. The wool of England, which in old times could neither be conſumed nor wrought up at home, found a market in the then wealthier and more induſtrious country of Flanders, and its price afforded ſomething to the rent of the land which produced it. In countries not better cultivated than England was then, or than the highlands of Scotland are now, and which had no foreign commerce, the materials of cloathing would evidently be ſo ſuperabundant, that a great part of them would be thrown away as uſeleſs, and no part could afford any rent to the landlord.

THE materials of lodging cannot always be tranſported to ſo great a diſtance as thoſe of cloathing, and do not ſo readily become an object of foreign commerce. When they are ſuperabundant in the country which produces them, it frequently happens, even in the preſent commercial ſtate of the world, that they are of no value to the landlord. A good ſtone quarry in the neighbourhood of London would afford a conſiderable rent. In many parts of Scotland and Wales it affords none. Barren timber for building is of great value in a populous and well-cultivated country, and the land which produces it, affords a conſiderable rent. But in many parts of North America the landlord would be much obliged to any body who would carry away the greater part of his large trees. In ſome parts of the highlands of Scotland the bark is the only part of the wood which, for want of roads and water-carriage, can be ſent to market.

market. The timber is left to rot upon the ground. When the materials of lodging are ſo ſuper-abundant, the part made uſe of is worth only the labour and expence of fitting it for that uſe. It affords no rent to the landlord, who generally grants the uſe of it to whoever takes the trouble of aſking it. The demand of wealthier nations, however, ſometimes enables him to get a rent for it. The paving of the ſtreets of London has enabled the owners of ſome barren rocks on the coaſt of Scotland to draw a rent from what never afforded any before. The woods of Norway and of the coaſts of the Baltick, find a market in many parts of Great Britain which they could not find at home, and thereby afford ſome rent to their proprietors.

COUNTRIES are populous, not in proportion to the number of people whom their produce can cloath and lodge, but in proportion to that of thoſe whom it can feed. When food is provided, it is eaſy to find the neceſſary cloathing and lodging. But though theſe are at hand, it may often be difficult to find food. In ſome parts even of the Britiſh dominions what is called A Houſe, may be built by one day's labour of one man. The ſimpleſt ſpecies of cloathing, the ſkins of animals, requires ſomewhat more labour to dreſs and prepare them for uſe. They do not, however, require a great deal. Among ſavage and barbarous nations, a hundredth or little more than a hundredth part of the labour of the whole year, will be ſufficient to provide them with ſuch cloathing and lodging as ſatisfy the

greater part of the people. All the other ninety-nine parts are frequently no more than enough to provide them with food.

But when by the improvement and cultivation of land the labour of one family can provide food for two, the labour of half the ſociety becomes ſufficient to provide food for the whole. The other half, therefore, or at leaſt the greater part of them, can be employed in providing other things, or in ſatisfying the other wants and fancies of mankind. Cloathing and lodging, houſhold furniture, and what is called Equipage, are the principal objects of the greater part of thoſe wants and fancies. The rich man conſumes no more food than his poor neighbour. In quality it may be very different, and to ſelect and prepare it may require more labour and art; but in quantity it is very nearly the ſame. But compare the ſpacious palace and great wardrobe of the one, with the hovel and the few rags of the other, and you will be ſenſible that the difference between their cloathing, lodging and houſhold furniture, is almoſt as great in quantity as it is in quality. The deſire of food is limited in every man by the narrow capacity of the human ſtomach; but the deſire of the conveniencies and ornaments of building, dreſs, equipage, and houſhold furniture, ſeems to have no limit or certain boundary. Thoſe, therefore, who have the command of more food than they themſelves can conſume, are always willing to exchange the ſurplus, or, what is the ſame thing, the price of it, for gratifications of this

this other kind. What is over and above satisfying the limited desire, is given for the amusement of those desires which cannot be satisfied, but seem to be altogether endless. The poor, in order to obtain food, exert themselves to gratify those fancies of the rich, and to obtain it more certainly, they vie with one another in the cheapness and perfection of their work. The number of workmen increases with the increasing quantity of food, or with the growing improvement and cultivation of the lands; and as the nature of their business admits of the utmost subdivisions of labour, the quantity of materials which they can work up, increases in a much greater proportion than their numbers. Hence arises a demand for every sort of material which human invention can employ, either usefully or ornamentally, in building, dress, equipage, or household furniture; for the fossils and minerals contained in the bowels of the earth; the precious metals, and the precious stones.

Food is in this manner, not only the original source of rent, but every other part of the produce of land which afterwards affords rent, derives that part of its value from the improvement of the powers of labour in producing food by means of the improvement and cultivation of land.

Those other parts of the produce of land, however, which afterwards afford rent, do not afford it always. Even in improved and cultivated countries, the demand for them is not always such as to afford a greater price than what

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is sufficient to pay the labour, and replace, together with its ordinary profits, the stock which must be employed in bringing them to market. Whether it is or is not such, depends upon different circumstances.

WHETHER a coal-mine, for example, can afford any rent, depends partly upon its fertility, and partly upon its situation.

A MINE of any kind may be said to be either fertile or barren, according as the quantity of mineral which can be brought from it by a certain quantity of labour, is greater or less than what can be brought by an equal quantity from the greater part of other mines of the same kind.

SOME coal-mines advantageously situated, cannot be wrought on account of their barrenness. The produce does not pay the expence. They can afford neither profit nor rent.

THERE are some of which the produce is barely sufficient to pay the labour, and replace, together with its ordinary profits, the stock employed in working them. They afford some profit to the undertaker of the work, but no rent to the landlord. They can be wrought advantageously by nobody but the landlord, who being himself undertaker of the work, gets the ordinary profit of the capital which he employs in it. Many coal-mines in Scotland are wrought in this manner, and can be wrought in no other. The landlord will allow nobody else to work them without paying some rent, and nobody can afford to pay any.

OTHER coal-mines in the ſame country ſufficiently fertile, cannot be wrought on account of their ſituation. A quantity of mineral ſufficient to defray the expence of working, could be brought from the mine by the ordinary, or even leſs than the ordinary quantity of labour: But in an inland country, thinly inhabited, and without either good roads or water-carriage, this quantity could not be ſold.

COALS are a leſs agreeable fewel than wood: they are ſaid too to be leſs wholeſome. The expence of coals, therefore, at the place where they are conſumed, muſt generally be ſomewhat leſs than that of wood.

THE price of wood again varies with the ſtate of agriculture, nearly in the ſame manner, and exactly for the ſame reaſon, as the price of cattle. In its rude beginnings the greater part of every country is covered with wood, which is then a mere incumbrance of no value to the landlord, who would gladly give it to any body for the cutting. As agriculture advances, the woods are partly cleared by the progreſs of tillage, and partly go to decay in conſequence of the increaſed number of cattle. Theſe, though they do not increaſe in the ſame proportion as corn, which is altogether the acquiſition of human induſtry, yet multiply under the care and protection of men; who ſtore up in the ſeaſon of plenty what may maintain them in that of ſcarcity, who through the whole year furniſh them with a greater quantity of food than uncultivated nature provides for them, and who by de-

ſtroying and extirpating their enemies, ſecure them in the free enjoyment of all that ſhe provides. Numerous herds of cattle, when allowed to wander through the woods, though they do not deſtroy the old trees, hinder any young ones from coming up, ſo that in the courſe of a century or two the whole foreſt goes to ruin. The ſcarcity of wood then raiſes its price. It affords a good rent, and the landlord ſometimes finds that he can ſcarce employ his beſt lands more advantageouſly than in growing barren timber, of which the greatneſs of the profit often compenſates the lateneſs of the returns. This ſeems in the preſent times to be nearly the ſtate of things in ſeveral parts of Great Britain, where the profit of planting is found to be equal to that of either corn or paſture. The advantage which the landlord derives from planting, can no-where exceed, at leaſt for any conſiderable time, the rent which theſe could afford him; and in an inland country which is highly cultivated, it will frequently not fall much ſhort of this rent. Upon the ſea-coaſt of a well-improved country, indeed, if coals can conveniently be had for fewel, it may ſometimes be cheaper to bring barren timber for building from leſs cultivated foreign countries, than to raiſe it at home. In the new town of Edinburgh, built within theſe few years, there is not, perhaps, a ſingle ſtick of Scotch timber.

WHATEVER may be the price of wood, if that of coals is ſuch that the expence of a coal-fire is nearly equal to that of a wood one, we may be aſſured,

assured, that at that place, and in these circumstances, the price of coals is as high as it can be. It seems to be so in some of the inland parts of England, particularly in Oxfordshire, where it is usual, even in the fires of the common people, to mix coals and wood together, and where the difference in the expence of those two sorts of fewel cannot, therefore, be very great.

Coals, in the coal countries, are every-where much below this highest price. If they were not, they could not bear the expence of a distant carriage, either by land or by water. A small quantity only could be sold, and the coal masters and coal proprietors find it more for their interest to sell a great quantity at a price somewhat above the lowest, than a small quantity at the highest. The most fertile coal-mine too, regulates the price of coals at all the other mines in its neighbourhood. Both the proprietor and the undertaker of the work find, the one that he can get a greater rent, the other that he can get a greater profit, by somewhat underselling all their neighbours. Their neighbours are soon obliged to sell at the same price, though they cannot so well afford it, and though it always diminishes, and sometimes takes away altogether both their rent and their profit. Some works are abandoned altogether; others can afford no rent, and can be wrought only by the proprietor.

The lowest price at which coals can be sold for any considerable time, is, like that of all other commodities, the price which is barely sufficient

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to replace, together with its ordinary profits, the ſtock which muſt be employed in bringing them to market. At a coal-mine for which the landlord can get no rent, but which he muſt either work himſelf or let it alone altogether, the price of coals muſt generally be nearly about this price.

RENT, even where coals afford one, has generally a ſmaller ſhare in their price than in that of moſt other parts of the rude produce of land. The rent of an eſtate above ground, commonly amounts to what is ſuppoſed to be a third of the groſs produce; and it is generally a rent certain and independent of the occaſional variations in the crop. In coal-mines a fifth of the groſs produce is a very great rent; a tenth the common rent, and it is ſeldom a rent certain, but depends upon the occaſional variations in the produce. Theſe are ſo great, that in a country where thirty years purchaſe is conſidered as a moderate price for the property of a landed eſtate, ten years purchaſe is regarded as a good price for that of a coal-mine.

THE value of a coal-mine to the proprietor frequently depends as much upon its ſituation as upon its fertility. That of a metallick mine depends more upon its fertility, and leſs upon its ſituation. The coarſe, and ſtill more the precious metals, when ſeparated from the ore, are ſo valuable that they can generally bear the expence of a very long land, and of the moſt diſtant ſea carriage. Their market is not confined to the countries in the neighbourhood of the

the mine, but extends to the whole world. The copper of Japan makes an article of commerce in Europe; the iron of Spain in that of Chili and Peru. The ſilver of Peru finds its way, not only to Europe, but from Europe to China.

THE price of coals in Weſtmorland or Shropſhire can have little effect on their price at Newcaſtle; and their price in the Lionnois can have none at all. The productions of ſuch diſtant coal-mines can never be brought into competition with one another. But the productions of the moſt diſtant metallick mines frequently may, and in fact commonly are. The price, therefore, of the coarſe, and ſtill more that of the precious metals, at the moſt fertile mines in the world, muſt neceſſarily more or leſs affect their price at every other in it. The price of copper in Japan muſt have ſome influence upon its price at the copper mines in Europe. The price of ſilver in Peru, or the quantity either of labour or of other goods which it will purchaſe there, muſt have ſome influence on its price, not only at the ſilver mines of Europe, but at thoſe of China. After the diſcovery of the mines of Peru, the ſilver mines of Europe were, the greater part of them, abandoned. The value of ſilver was ſo much reduced that their produce could no longer pay the expence of working them, or replace, with a profit, the food, cloaths, lodging and other neceſſaries which were conſumed in that operation. This was the caſe too with the mines of Cuba and St. Domingo, and

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even with the antient mines of Peru, after the discovery of those of Potosi.

The price of every metal at every mine, therefore, being regulated in some measure by its price at the most fertile mine in the world that is actually wrought, it can at the greater part of mines do very little more than pay the expence of working, and can seldom afford a very high rent to the landlord. Rent, accordingly, seems at the greater part of mines to have but a small share in the price of the coarse, and a still smaller in that of the precious metals. Labour and profit make up the greater part of both.

A sixth part of the gross produce may be reckoned the average rent of the tin mines of Cornwall, the most fertile that are known in the world, as we are told by the Reverend Mr. Borlace, vice-warden of the stannaries. Some, he says, afford more, and some do not afford so much. A sixth part of the gross produce is the rent too of several very fertile lead mines in Scotland.

In the silver mines of Peru, we are told by Frezier and Ulloa, the proprietor frequently exacts no other acknowledgment from the undertaker of the mine, but that he will grind the ore at his mill, paying him the ordinary multure or price of grinding. Till 1736, indeed, the tax of the king of Spain amounted to one-fifth of the standard silver, which till then might be considered as the real rent of the greater part of the silver mines of Peru, the richest which have been known in the world. If there had been

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no tax this fifth would naturally have belonged to the landlord, and many mines might have been wrought which could not then be wrought, becauſe they could not afford this tax. The tax of the duke of Cornwall upon tin is ſuppoſed to amount to more than five per cent. or one-twentieth part of the value; and whatever may be his proportion, it would naturally too belong to the proprietor of the mine, if tin was duty free. But if you add one-twentieth to one-ſixth, you will find that the whole average rent of the tin mines of Cornwall, was to the whole average rent of the ſilver mines of Peru, as thirteen to twelve. But the ſilver mines of Peru are not now able to pay even this low rent, and the tax upon ſilver was, in 1736, reduced from one-fifth to one-tenth. Even this tax upon ſilver too gives more temptation to ſmuggling than the tax of one-twentieth upon tin; and ſmuggling muſt be much eaſier in the precious than in the bulky commodity. The tax of the king of Spain accordingly is ſaid to be very ill paid, and that of the duke of Cornwall very well. Rent, therefore, it is probable, makes a greater part of the price of tin at the moſt fertile tin mines, than it does of ſilver at the moſt fertile ſilver mines in the world. After replacing the ſtock employed in working thoſe different mines, together with its ordinary profits, the reſidue which remains to the proprietor, is greater it ſeems in the coarſe, than in the precious metal.

NEITHER are the profits of the undertakers of ſilver mines commonly very great in Peru. The

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ſame moſt reſpectable and well informed authors acquaint us, that when any perſon undertakes to work a new mine in Peru, he is univerſally looked upon as a man deſtined to bankruptcy and ruin, and is upon that account ſhunned and avoided by every body. Mining, it ſeems, is conſidered there in the ſame light as here, as a lottery, in which the prizes do not compenſate the blanks, though the greatneſs of ſome tempts many adventurers to throw away their fortunes in ſuch unproſperous projects.

As the ſovereign, however, derives a conſiderable part of his revenue from the produce of ſilver mines, the law in Peru gives every poſſible encouragement to the diſcovery and working of new ones. Whoever diſcovers a new mine, is entitled to meaſure off two hundred and forty-ſix feet in length, according to what he ſuppoſes to be the direction of the vein, and half as much in breadth. He becomes proprietor of this portion of the mine, and can work it without paying any acknowledgment to the landlord. The intereſt of the duke of Cornwall has given occaſion to a regulation nearly of the ſame kind in that antient dutchy. In waſte and unincloſed lands any perſon who diſcovers a tin mine, may mark out its limits to a certain extent, which is called bounding a mine. The bounder becomes the real proprietor of the mine, and may either work it himſelf, or give it in leaſe to another, without the conſent of the owner of the land, to whom, however, a very ſmall acknowledgment muſt be paid upon working it. In both regulations

tions the ſacred rights of private property are ſacrificed to the ſuppoſed intereſts of publick revenue.

The ſame encouragement is given in Peru to the diſcovery and working of new gold mines; and in gold the king's tax amounts only to a twentieth part of the ſtandard metal. It was once a fifth, and afterwards a tenth, as in ſilver; but it was found that the work could not bear even the loweſt of theſe two taxes. If it is rare, however, ſay the ſame authors, Frezier and Ulloa, to find a perſon who has made his fortune by a ſilver, it is ſtill much rarer to find one who has done ſo by a gold mine. This twentieth part ſeems to be the whole rent which is paid by the greater part of the gold mines in Chili and Peru. Gold too is much more liable to be ſmuggled than even ſilver; not only on account of the ſuperior value of the metal in proportion to its bulk, but on account of the peculiar way in which nature produces it. Silver is very ſeldom found virgin, but, like moſt other metals, is generally mineralized with ſome other body, from which it is impoſſible to ſeparate it in ſuch quantities as will pay for the expence, but by a very laborious and tedious operation, which cannot well be carried on but in workhouſes erected for the purpoſe, and therefore expoſed to the inſpection of the king's officers. Gold, on the contrary, is almoſt always found virgin. It is ſometimes found in pieces of ſome bulk; and even when mixed in ſmall and almoſt inſenſible particles with ſand, earth, and other extraneous

neous bodies, it can be separated from them by a very short and simple operation, which can be carried on in any private house by any body who is possessed of a small quantity of mercury. If the king's tax, therefore, is but ill paid upon silver, it is likely to be much worse paid upon gold; and rent must make a much smaller part of the price of gold, than even of that of silver.

The lowest price at which the precious metals can be sold, or the smallest quantity of other goods for which they can be exchanged during any considerable time, is regulated by the same principles which fix the lowest ordinary price of all other goods. The stock which must commonly be employed, the food, cloaths and lodging which must commonly be consumed in bringing them from the mine to the market, determine it. It must at least be sufficient to replace that stock, with the ordinary profits.

Their highest price, however, seems not to be necessarily determined by any thing but the actual scarcity or plenty of those metals themselves. It is not determined by that of any other commodity, in the same manner as the price of coals is by that of wood, beyond which no scarcity can ever raise it. Increase the scarcity of gold to a certain degree, and the smallest bit of it may become more precious than a diamond, and exchange for a greater quantity of other goods.

The demand for those metals arises partly from their utility, and partly from their beauty. If you except iron, they are more useful than, perhaps, any other metal. As they are less liable

liable to ruſt and impurity, they can more eaſily be kept clean; and the utenſils either of the table or the kitchen are often upon that account more agreeable when made of them. A ſilver boiler is more cleanly than a lead, copper, or tin one; and the ſame quality would render a gold boiler ſtill better than a ſilver one. Their principal merit, however, ariſes from their beauty, which renders them peculiarly fit for the ornaments of dreſs and furniture. No paint or dye can give ſo ſplendid a colour as gilding. The merit of their beauty is greatly enhanced by their ſcarcity. With the greater part of rich people, the chief enjoyment of riches conſiſts in the parade of riches, which in their eyes is never ſo compleat as when they appear to poſſeſs thoſe deciſive marks of opulence which nobody can poſſeſs but themſelves. In their eyes the merit of an object which is in any degree either uſeful or beautiful, is greatly enhanced by its ſcarcity, or by the great labour which it requires to collect any conſiderable quantity of it, a labour which nobody can afford to pay but themſelves. Such objects they are willing to purchaſe at a higher price than things much more beautiful and uſeful, but more common. Theſe qualities of utility, beauty, and ſcarcity, are the original foundation of the high price of thoſe metals, or of the great quantity of other goods for which they can every where be exchanged. This value was antecedent to and independent of their being employed as coin, and was the quality which fitted them for that employment. That employment,

employment, however, by occaſioning a new demand, and by diminiſhing the quantity which could be employed in any other way, may have afterwards contributed to keep up or increaſe their value.

The demand for the precious ſtones ariſes altogether from their beauty. They are of no uſe, but as ornaments; and the merit of their beauty is greatly enhanced by their ſcarcity, or by the difficulty and expence of getting them from the mine. Wages and profit accordingly make up, upon moſt occaſions, almoſt the whole of their high price. Rent comes in but for a very ſmall ſhare; frequently for no ſhare; and the moſt fertile mines only afford any conſiderable rent. When Tavernier, a jeweller, viſited the diamond mines of Golconda and Viſiapour, he was informed that the ſovereign of the country, for whoſe benefit they were wrought, had ordered all of them to be ſhut up, except thoſe which yielded the largeſt and fineſt ſtones. The others, it ſeems, were to the proprietor not worth the working.

As the price both of the precious metals and of the precious ſtones is regulated all over the world by their price at the moſt fertile mine in it, the rent which a mine of either can afford to its proprietor is in proportion, not to its abſolute, but to what may called its relative fertility, or to its ſuperiority over other mines of the ſame kind. If new mines were diſcovered as much ſuperior to thoſe of Potoſi as they were ſuperior to thoſe of Europe, the value of ſilver might be

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ſo much degraded as to render even the mines of Potoſi not worth the working. Before the diſcovery of the Spaniſh Weſt Indies, the moſt fertile mines in Europe may have afforded as great a rent to their proprietor as the richeſt mines in Peru do at preſent. Though the quantity of ſilver was much leſs, it might have exchanged for an equal quantity of other goods, and the proprietor's ſhare might have enabled him to purchaſe or command an equal quantity either of labour or of commodities. The value both of the produce and of the rent, the real revenue which they afforded both to the publick and to the proprietor, might have been the ſame.

THE moſt abundant mines either of the precious metals or of the precious ſtones could add little to the wealth of the world. A produce of which the value is principally derived from its ſcarcity, is neceſſarily degraded by its abundance. A ſervice of plate, and the other frivolous ornaments of dreſs and furniture, could be purchaſed for a ſmaller quantity of labour, or for a ſmaller quantity of commodities; and in this would conſiſt the ſole advantage which the world could derive from that abundance.

IT is otherwiſe in eſtates above ground. The value both of their produce and of their rent is in proportion to their abſolute, and not to their relative fertility. The land which produces a certain quantity of food, cloaths, and lodging, can always feed, cloath, and lodge a certain number of people; and whatever may be the proportion of the landlord, it will always give him

him a proportionable command of the labour of thoſe people, and of the commodities with which that labour can ſupply him. The value of the moſt barren lands is not diminiſhed by the neighbourhood of the moſt fertile. On the contrary, it is generally increaſed by it. The great number of people maintained by the fertile lands afford a market to many parts of the produce of the barren, which they could never have found among thoſe whom their own produce could maintain.

WHATEVER increaſes the fertility of land in producing food, increaſes not only the value of the lands upon which the improvement is beſtowed, but contributes likewiſe to increaſe that of many other lands, by creating a new demand for their produce. That abundance of food, of which, in conſequence of the improvement of land, many people have the diſpoſal beyond what they themſelves can conſume, is the great cauſe of the demand both for the precious metals and the precious ſtones, as well as for every other conveniency and ornament of dreſs, lodging, houſhold furniture, and equipage. Food not only conſtitutes the principal part of the riches of the world, but it is the abundance of food which gives the principal part of their value to many other ſorts of riches. The poor inhabitants of Cuba and St. Domingo, when they were firſt diſcovered by the Spaniards, uſed to wear little bits of gold as ornaments in their hair and other parts of their dreſs. They ſeemed to value them as we would do any little pebbles of

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somewhat more than ordinary beauty, and to consider them as just worth the picking up, but not worth the refusing to any body who asked them. They gave them to their new guests at the first request, without seeming to think that they had made them any very valuable present. They were astonished to observe the rage of the Spaniards to obtain them; and had no notion that there could any where be a country in which many people had the disposal of so great a superfluity of food, so scanty always among themselves, that for a very small quantity of those glittering baubles they would willingly give as much as might maintain a whole family for many years. Could they have been made to understand this, the passion of the Spaniards would not have surprised them.

PART III.

Of the Variations in the Proportion between the respective Values of that Sort of Produce which always affords Rent, and of that which sometimes does and sometimes does not afford Rent.

THE increasing abundance of food, in consequence of increasing improvement and cultivation, must necessarily increase the demand for every part of the produce of land which is not food, and which can be applied either to use or to ornament. In the whole progress of improvement, it might therefore be expected, there should be only one variation in the comparative

values of thoſe two different ſorts of produce. The value of that ſort which ſometimes does and ſometimes does not afford rent, ſhould conſtantly riſe in proportion to that which always affords ſome rent. As art and induſtry advance, the materials of cloathing and lodging, the uſeful foſſils and minerals of the earth, the precious metals and the precious ſtones ſhould gradually come to be more and more in demand, ſhould gradually exchange for a greater and a greater quantity of food, or in other words, ſhould gradually become dearer and dearer. This accordingly has been the caſe with moſt of theſe things upon moſt occaſions, and would have been the caſe with all of them upon all occaſions, if particular accidents had not upon ſome occaſions increaſed the ſupply of ſome of them in a ſtill greater proportion than the demand.

The value of a free-ſtone quarry, for example, will neceſſarily increaſe with the increaſing improvement and population of the country round about it; eſpecially if it ſhould be the only one in the neighbourhood. But the value of a ſilver mine, even though there ſhould not be another within a thouſand miles of it, will not neceſſarily increaſe with the improvement of the country in which it is ſituated. The market for the produce of a free-ſtone quarry can ſeldom extend more than a few miles round about it, and the demand muſt generally be in proportion to the improvement and population of that ſmall diſtrict. But the market for the produce of a

ſilver mine may extend over the whole known world. Unleſs the world in general, therefore, be advancing in improvement and population, the demand for ſilver might not be at all increaſed by the improvement even of a large country in the neighbourhood of the mine. Even though the world in general were improving, yet, if, in the courſe of its improvement new mines ſhould be diſcovered, much more fertile than any which had been known before, though the demand for ſilver would neceſſarily increaſe, yet the ſupply might increaſe in ſo much a greater proportion, that the real price of that metal might gradually fall; that is, any given quantity, a pound weight of it, for example, might gradually purchaſe or command a ſmaller and a ſmaller quantity of labour, or exchange for a ſmaller and a ſmaller quantity of corn, the principal part of the ſubſiſtence of the labourer.

The great market for ſilver is the commercial and civilized part of the world.

If by the general progreſs of improvement the demand of this market ſhould increaſe, while at the ſame time the ſupply did not increaſe in the ſame proportion, the value of ſilver would gradually riſe in proportion to that of corn. Any given quantity of ſilver would exchange for a greater and a greater quantity of corn; or, in other words, the average money price of corn would gradually become cheaper and cheaper.

If, on the contrary, the ſupply by ſome accident ſhould increaſe for many years together in a

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greater proportion than the demand, that metal would gradually become cheaper and cheaper; or, in other words, the average money price of corn would, in ſpite of all improvements, gradually become dearer and dearer.

But if, on the other hand, the ſupply of the metal ſhould increaſe nearly in the ſame proportion as the demand, it would continue to purchaſe or exchange for nearly the ſame quantity of corn, and the average money price of corn would, in ſpite of all improvements, continue very nearly the ſame.

These three ſeem to exhauſt all the poſſible combinations of events which can happen in the progreſs of improvement; and during the courſe of the four centuries preceding the preſent, if we may judge by what has happened both in France and Great Britain, each of thoſe three different combinations ſeem to have taken place in the European market, and nearly in the ſame order too in which I have here ſet them down.

Digreſſion concerning the Variations in the Value of Silver during the Courſe of the Four laſt Centuries.

First Period.

In 1350, and for ſome time before, the average price of the quarter of wheat in England ſeems not to have been eſtimated lower than four ounces of ſilver, Tower-weight, equal to about twenty ſhillings of our preſent money. From this

this price it ſeems to have fallen gradually to two ounces of ſilver, equal to about ten ſhillings of our preſent money, the price at which we find it eſtimated in the beginning of the ſixteenth century, and at which it ſeems to have continued to be eſtimated till about 1570.

In 1350, being the 25th of Edward III, was enacted what is called, The ſtatute of labourers. In the preamble it complains much of the inſolence of ſervants, who endeavoured to raiſe their wages upon their maſters. It therefore ordains, that all ſervants and labourers ſhould for the future be contented with the ſame wages and liveries (liveries in thoſe times ſignified, not only cloaths, but proviſions) which they had been accuſtomed to receive in the 20th year of the king, and the four preceding years; that upon this account their livery wheat ſhould no where be eſtimated higher than ten-pence a buſhel, and that it ſhould always be in the option of the maſter to deliver them either the wheat or the money. Ten-pence a buſhel, therefore, had in the 25th of Edward III, been reckoned a very moderate price of wheat, ſince it required a particular ſtatute to oblige ſervants to accept of it in exchange for their uſual livery of proviſions; and it had been reckoned a reaſonable price ten years before that, or in the 16th year of the king, the term to which the ſtatute refers. But in the 16th year of Edward III, ten-pence contained about half an ounce of ſilver, Tower-weight, and was nearly equal to half a crown of our preſent money. Four ounces of ſilver, Tower-weight,

therefore, equal to six shillings and eight-pence of the money of those times, and to near twenty shillings of that of the present, must have been reckoned a moderate price for the quarter of eight bushels.

This statute is surely a better evidence of what was reckoned in those times a moderate price of grain, than the prices of some particular years which have generally been recorded by historians and other writers on account of their extraordinary dearness or cheapness, and from which, therefore, it is difficult to form any judgment concerning what may have been the ordinary price. There are, besides, other reasons for believing that in the beginning of the fourteenth century, and for some time before, the common price of wheat was not less than four ounces of silver the quarter, and that of other grain in proportion.

In 1309, Ralph de Born, prior of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, gave a feast upon his installation-day, of which William Thorn has preserved, not only the bill of fare, but the prices of many particulars. In that feast were consumed, 1st, fifty-three quarters of wheat, which cost nineteen pounds, or seven shillings and two-pence a quarter, equal to about one-and-twenty shillings and six-pence of our present money: 2dly, Fifty-eight quarters of malt, which cost seventeen pounds ten shillings, or six shillings a quarter, equal to about eighteen shillings of our present money: 3dly, Twenty quarters of oats, which cost four pounds, or four shillings a quarter,

ter, equal to about twelve ſhillings of our preſent money. The prices of malt and oats ſeem here to be higher than their ordinary proportion to the price of wheat.

THESE prices are not recorded on account of their extraordinary dearneſs or cheapneſs, but are mentioned accidentally as the prices actually paid for large quantities of grain conſumed at a feaſt which was famous for its magnificence.

IN 1262, being the 51ſt of Henry III, was revived an ancient ſtatute called, *The Aſſize of Bread and Ale*, which, the king ſays in the preamble, had been made in the times of his progenitors ſometime kings of England. It is probably, therefore, as old at leaſt as the time of his grandfather Henry II, and may have been as old as the conqueſt. It regulates the price of bread according as the prices of wheat may happen to be, from one ſhilling to twenty ſhillings the quarter of the money of thoſe times. But ſtatutes of this kind are generally preſumed to provide with equal care for all deviations from the middle price, for thoſe below it as well as for thoſe above it. Ten ſhillings, therefore, containing ſix ounces of ſilver, Tower-weight, and equal to about thirty ſhillings of our preſent money, muſt, upon this ſuppoſition, have been reckoned the middle price of the quarter of wheat when this ſtatute was firſt enacted, and muſt have continued to be ſo in the 51ſt of Henry III. We cannot therefore be very wrong in ſuppoſing that the middle price was not leſs than one-third of the higheſt price at which this

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ſtatute regulates the price of bread, or than ſix ſhillings and eight-pence of the money of thoſe times, containing four ounces of ſilver, Tower-weight.

FROM theſe different facts, therefore, we ſeem to have ſome reaſon to conclude, that about the middle of the fourteenth century, and for a conſiderable time before, the average or ordinary price of the quarter of wheat was not ſuppoſed to be leſs than four ounces of ſilver, Tower-weight.

FROM about the middle of the fourteenth to the beginning of the ſixteenth century, what was reckoned the reaſonable and moderate, that is the ordinary or average price of wheat, ſeems to have ſunk gradually to about one-half of this price; ſo as at laſt to have fallen to about two ounces of ſilver, Tower-weight, equal to about ten ſhillings of our preſent money. It continued to be eſtimated at this price till about 1570.

IN the houſhold book of Henry, the fifth earl of Northumberland, drawn up in 1512, there are two different eſtimations of wheat. In one of them it is computed at ſix ſhillings and eight-pence the quarter, in the other at five ſhillings and eight-pence only. In 1512, ſix ſhillings and eight-pence contained only two ounces of ſilver Tower-weight, and were equal to about ten ſhillings of our preſent money.

FROM the 25th of Edward III, to the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, during the ſpace of more than two hundred years, ſix ſhillings and eight-pence, it appears from ſeveral different ſtatutes, had continued to be conſidered as what

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is called the moderate and reaſonable, that is the ordinary or average price of wheat. The quantity of ſilver, however, contained in that nominal ſum was, during the courſe of this period, continually diminiſhing, in conſequence of ſome alterations which were made in the coin. But the increaſe of the value of ſilver had, it ſeems, ſo far compenſated the diminution of the quantity of it contained in the ſame nominal ſum, that the legiſlature did not think it worth while to attend to this circumſtance.

THUS in 1436 it was enacted, that wheat might be exported without a licence when the price was ſo low as ſix ſhillings and eight-pence: And in 1463 it was enacted, that no wheat ſhould be imported if the price was not above ſix ſhillings and eight-pence the quarter. The legiſlature had imagined, that when the price was ſo low, there could be no inconveniency in exportation, but that when it roſe higher, it became prudent to allow of importation. Six ſhillings and eight-pence, therefore, containing about the ſame quantity of ſilver as thirteen ſhillings and four-pence of our preſent money (one third part leſs than the ſame nominal ſum contained in the time of Edward III.), had in thoſe times been conſidered as what is called the moderate and reaſonable price of wheat.

IN 1554, by the 1ſt and 2d of Philip and Mary; and in 1558, by the 1ſt of Elizabeth, the exportation of wheat was in the ſame manner prohibited, whenever the price of the quarter ſhould exceed ſix ſhillings and eight-pence, which

which did not then contain two penny worth more silver than the same nominal sum does at present. But it had soon been found that to restrain the exportation of wheat till the price was so very low, was, in reality, to prohibit it altogether. In 1562, therefore, by the 5th of Elizabeth, the exportation of wheat was allowed from certain ports whenever the price of the quarter should not exceed ten shillings, containing nearly the same quantity of silver as the like nominal sum does at present. This price had at this time, therefore, been considered as what is called the moderate and reasonable price of wheat. It agrees nearly with the estimation of the Northumberland book in 1512.

That in France the average price of grain was, in the same manner, much lower in the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, than in the two centuries preceding, has been observed both by Mr. Duprè de St. Maur, and by the elegant author of the Essay on the police of grain. Its price, during the same period, had probably sunk in the same manner through the greater part of Europe.

This rise in the value of silver in proportion to that of corn, may either have been owing altogether to the increase of the demand for that metal, in consequence of increasing improvement and cultivation, the supply in the mean time continuing the same as before: Or, the demand continuing the same as before, it may have been owing altogether to the gradual diminution of the supply; the greater part of the mines which

which were then known in the world, being much exhauſted, and conſequently the expence of working them much increaſed: Or it may have been owing partly to the one and partly to the other of thoſe two circumſtances. In the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the ſixteenth centuries, the greater part of Europe was approaching towards a more ſettled form of government than it had enjoyed for ſeveral ages before. The increaſe of ſecurity would naturally increaſe induſtry and improvement; and the demand for the precious metals, as well as for every other luxury and ornament, would naturally increaſe with the increaſe of riches. A greater annual produce would require a greater quantity of coin to circulate it; and a greater number of rich people would require a greater quantity of plate and other ornaments of ſilver. It is natural to ſuppoſe too, that the greater part of the mines which then ſupplied the European market with ſilver, might be a good deal exhauſted, and have become more expenſive in the working. They had been wrought many of them from the time of the Romans.

It has been the opinion, however, of the greater part of thoſe who have written upon the prices of commodities in antient times, that, from the Conqueſt, perhaps from the invaſion of Julius Cæſar till the diſcovery of the mines of America, the value of ſilver was continually diminiſhing. This opinion they ſeem to have been led into, partly by the obſervations which they had occaſion to make upon the prices both

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of corn and of ſome other parts of the rude produce of land; and partly by the popular notion, that as the quantity of ſilver naturally increaſes in every country with the increaſe of wealth, ſo its value diminiſhes as its quantity increaſes.

In their obſervations upon the prices of corn, three different circumſtances ſeem frequently to have miſled them.

First, In antient times almoſt all rents were paid in kind; in a certain quantity of corn, cattle, poultry, &c. It ſometimes happened, however, that the landlord would ſtipulate, that he ſhould be at liberty to demand of the tenant, either the annual payment in kind, or a certain ſum of money inſtead of it. The price at which the payment in kind was in this manner exchanged for a certain ſum of money, is in Scotland called the converſion price. As the option is always in the landlord to take either the ſubſtance or the price, it is neceſſary for the ſafety of the tenant, that the converſion price ſhould rather be below than above the average market price. In many places, accordingly, it is not much above one-half of this price. Through the greater part of Scotland this cuſtom ſtill continues with regard to poultry, and in ſome places with regard to cattle. It might probably have continued to take place too with regard to corn, had not the inſtitution of the publick fiars put an end to it. Theſe are annual valuations, according to the judgment of an aſſize, of the average price of all the different ſorts of grain, and of all the different qualities of each, according

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ing to the actual market price in every different county. This inſtitution rendered it ſufficiently ſafe for the tenant, and much more convenient for the landlord, to convert, as they call it, the corn rent, rather at what ſhould happen to be the price of the ſtars of each year, than at any certain fixed price. But the writers who have collected the prices of corn in antient times, ſeem frequently to have miſtaken what is called in Scotland the converſion price for the actual market price. Fleetwood acknowledges, upon one occaſion, that he had made this miſtake. As he wrote his book, however, for a particular purpoſe, he does not think proper to make this acknowledgment till after tranſcribing this converſion price fifteen times. The price is eight ſhillings the quarter of wheat. This ſum in 1423, the year at which he begins with it, contained the ſame quantity of ſilver as ſixteen ſhillings of our preſent money. But in 1562, the year at which he ends with it, it contained no more than the ſame nominal ſum does at preſent.

Secondly, They have been miſled by the ſlovenly manner in which ſome antient ſtatutes of aſſize had been ſometimes tranſcribed by lazy copiers; and ſometimes perhaps actually compoſed by the legiſlature.

The antient ſtatutes of aſſize ſeem to have begun always with determining what ought to be the price of bread and ale when the price of wheat and barley were at the loweſt, and to have proceeded gradually to determine what it ought

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" ad pretium bladi." " You ſhall judge of the " remaining caſes according to what is above " written having a reſpect to the price of corn."

THIRDLY, They ſeem to have been miſled too by the very low price at which wheat was ſometimes ſold in very antient times; and to have imagined, that as its loweſt price was then much lower than in later times, its ordinary price muſt likewiſe have been much lower. They might have found, however, that in thoſe antient times, its higheſt price was fully as much above, as its loweſt price was below any thing that had ever been known in later times. Thus in 1270, Fleetwood gives us two prices of the quarter of wheat. The one is four pounds ſixteen ſhillings of the money of thoſe times, equal to fourteen pounds eight ſhillings of that of the preſent; the other is ſix pounds eight ſhillings, equal to nineteen pounds four ſhillings of our preſent money. No price can be found in the end of the fifteenth, or beginning of the ſixteenth century, which approaches to the extravagance of theſe. The price of corn, though at all times liable to variations, varies moſt in thoſe turbulent and diſorderly ſocieties, in which the interruption of all commerce and communication hinders the plenty of one part of the country from relieving the ſcarcity of another. In the diſorderly ſtate of England under the Plantagenets, who governed it from about the middle of the twelfth, till towards the end of the fifteenth century, one diſtrict might be in plenty, while another at no great diſtance, by having its crop deſtroyed either

either by ſome accident of the ſeaſons, or by the incurſion of ſome neighbouring baron, might be ſuffering all the horrors of a famine; and yet if the lands of ſome hoſtile lord were interpoſed between them, the one might not be able to give the leaſt aſſiſtance to the other. Under the vigorous adminiſtration of the Tudors, who governed England during the latter part of the fifteenth, and through the whole of the ſixteenth century, no baron was powerful enough to dare to diſturb the publick ſecurity.

The reader will find at the end of this chapter all the prices of wheat which have been collected by Fleetwood from 1202 to 1597, both incluſive, reduced to the money of the preſent times, and digeſted according to the order of time, into ſeven diviſions of twelve years each. At the end of each diviſion too, he will find the average price of the twelve years of which it conſiſts. In that long period of time, Fleetwood has been able to collect the prices of no more than eighty years, ſo that four years are wanting to make out the laſt twelve years. I have added, therefore, from the accounts of Eton college, the prices of 1598, 1599, 1600, and 1601. It is the only addition which I have made. The reader will ſee that from the beginning of the thirteenth, till after the middle of the ſixteenth century, the average price of each twelve years grows gradually lower and lower; and that towards the end of the ſixteenth century it begins to riſe again. The prices, indeed, which Fleetwood has been able to collect, ſeem to have been thoſe chiefly which were

remarkable for extraordinary dearneſs or cheapneſs; and I do not pretend that any very certain concluſion can be drawn from them. So far, however, as they prove any thing at all, they confirm the account which I have been endeavouring to give. Fleetwood himſelf, however, ſeems, with moſt other writers, to have believed, that during all this period the value of ſilver, in conſequence of its increaſing abundance, was continually diminiſhing. The prices of corn which he himſelf has collected, certainly do not agree with this opinion. They agree perfectly with that of Mr. Duprè de St. Maur, and with that which I have been endeavouring to explain. Biſhop Fleetwood and Mr. Duprè de St. Maur are the two authors who ſeem to have collected, with the greateſt diligence and fidelity, the prices of things in antient times. It is ſomewhat curious that, though their opinions are ſo very different, their facts, ſo far as they relate to the price of corn at leaſt, ſhould coincide ſo very exactly.

It is not, however, ſo much from the low price of corn, as from that of ſome other parts of the rude produce of land, that the moſt judicious writers have inferred the great value of ſilver in thoſe very antient times. Corn, it has been ſaid, being a ſort of manufacture, was, in thoſe rude ages, much dearer in proportion than the greater part of other commodities; it is meant, I ſuppoſe, than the greater part of unmanufactured commodities; ſuch as cattle, poultry, game of all kinds, &c. That in thoſe times of poverty and barbariſm theſe were proportionably

ably much cheaper than corn, is undoubtedly true. But this cheapneſs was not the effect of the high value of ſilver, but of the low value of thoſe commodities. It was not becauſe ſilver would in ſuch times purchaſe or repreſent a greater quantity of labour, but becauſe ſuch commodities would purchaſe or repreſent a much ſmaller quantity than in times of more opulence and improvement. Silver muſt certainly be cheaper in Spaniſh America than in Europe; in the country where it is produced, than in the country to which it is brought, at the expence of a long carriage both by land and by ſea, of a freight and an inſurance. One-and-twenty pence halfpenny ſterling, however, we are told by Ulloa, was, not many years ago, at Buenos Ayres, the price of an ox choſen from a herd of three or four hundred. Sixteen ſhillings ſterling, we are told by Mr. Byron, was the price of a good horſe in the capital of Chili. In a country naturally fertile, but of which the far greater part is altogether uncultivated, cattle, poultry, game of all kinds, &c. as they can be acquired with a very ſmall quantity of labour, ſo they will purchaſe or command but a very ſmall quantity. The low money price for which they may be ſold, is no proof that the real value of ſilver is there very high, but that the real value of thoſe commodities is very low.

Labour, it muſt always be remembered, and not any particular commodity or ſett of commodities, is the real meaſure of the value both of ſilver and of all other commodities.

But in countries almoſt waſte, or but thinly inhabited, cattle, poultry, game of all kinds, &c. as they are the ſpontaneous productions of nature, ſo ſhe frequently produces them in much greater quantities than the conſumption of the inhabitants requires. In ſuch a ſtate of things the ſupply commonly exceeds the demand. In different ſtates of ſociety, in different ſtages of improvement, therefore, ſuch commodities will repreſent, or be equivalent to, very different quantities of labour.

In every ſtate of ſociety, in every ſtage of improvement, corn is the production of human induſtry. But the average produce of every ſort of induſtry is always ſuited, more or leſs exactly, to the average conſumption; the average ſupply to the average demand. In every different ſtage of improvement, beſides, the raiſing of equal quantities of corn in the ſame ſoil and climate, will, at an average, require nearly equal quantities of labour; or what comes to the ſame thing, the price of nearly equal quantities; the continual increaſe of the productive powers of labour in an improving ſtate of cultivation, being more or leſs counter-balanced by the continually increaſing price of cattle, the principal inſtruments of agriculture. Upon all theſe accounts, therefore, we may reſt aſſured, that equal quantities of corn will, in every ſtate of ſociety, in every ſtage of improvement, more nearly repreſent, or be equivalent to, equal quantities of labour, than equal quantities of any other part of the rude produce of land. Corn, accordingly,

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it has already been obſerved, is, in all the different ſtages of wealth and improvement, a more accurate meaſure of value than any other commodity or ſett of commodities. In all thoſe different ſtages, therefore, we can judge better of the real value of ſilver, by comparing it with corn, than by comparing it with any other commodity, or ſett of commodities.

Corn, beſides, or whatever elſe is the common and favourite vegetable food of the people, conſtitutes, in every civilized country, the principal part of the ſubſiſtence of the labourer. In conſequence of the extenſion of agriculture, the land of every country produces a much greater quantity of vegetable than of animal food, and the labourer every where lives chiefly upon the wholeſome food that is cheapeſt and moſt abundant. Butcher's-meat, except in the moſt thriving countries, or where labour is moſt highly rewarded, makes but an inſignificant part of his ſubſiſtence: poultry makes a ſtill ſmaller part of it, and game no part of it. In France, and even in Scotland, where labour is ſomewhat better rewarded than in France, the labouring poor ſeldom eat butcher's-meat, except upon holidays, and other extraordinary occaſions. The money price of labour, therefore, depends much more upon the average money price of corn, the ſubſiſtence of the labourer, than upon that of butcher's-meat, or of any other part of the rude produce of land. The real value of gold and ſilver, therefore, the real quantity of labour which they can purchaſe or command, depends much more upon the quantity of corn which

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they can purchaſe or command, than upon that of butcher's-meat, or any other part of the rude produce of land.

Such ſlight obſervations, however, upon the prices either of corn or of other commodities, would not probably have miſled ſo many intelligent authors, had they not been influenced, at the ſame time, by the popular notion, that as the quantity of ſilver naturally increaſes in every country with the increaſe of wealth, ſo its value diminiſhes as its quantity increaſes. This notion, however, ſeems to be altogether groundleſs.

The quantity of the precious metals may increaſe in any country from two different cauſes; either, firſt, from the increaſed abundance of the mines which ſupply it; or, ſecondly, from the increaſed wealth of the people, from the increaſed produce of their annual labour. The firſt of theſe cauſes is no doubt neceſſarily connected with the diminution of the value of the precious metals; but the ſecond is not.

When more abundant mines are diſcovered, a greater quantity of the precious metals is brought to market, and the quantity of the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life for which they muſt be exchanged being the ſame as before, equal quantities of the metals muſt be exchanged for ſmaller quantities of commodities. So far, therefore, as the increaſe of the quantity of the precious metals in any country ariſes from the increaſed abundance of the mines, it is neceſſarily connected with ſome diminution of their value.

When, on the contrary, the wealth of any country increaſes, when the annual produce of its

its labour becomes gradually greater and greater, a greater quantity of coin becomes neceſſary in order to circulate a greater quantity of commodities; and the people, as they can afford it, as they have more commodities to give for it, will naturally purchaſe a greater and a greater quantity of plate. The quantity of their coin will increaſe from neceſſity; the quantity of their plate from vanity and oſtentation, or from the ſame reaſon that the quantity of fine ſtatues, pictures, and of every other luxury and curioſity, is likely to increaſe among them. But as ſtatuaries and painters are not likely to be worſe rewarded in times of wealth and proſperity, than in times of poverty and depreſſion, ſo gold and ſilver are not likely to be worſe paid for.

The price of gold and ſilver, when the accidental diſcovery of more abundant mines does not keep it down, as it naturally riſes with the wealth of every country, ſo, whatever be the ſtate of the mines, it is at all times naturally higher in a rich than in a poor country. Gold and ſilver, like all other commodities, naturally ſeek the market where the beſt price is given for them, and the beſt price is commonly given for every thing in the country which can beſt afford it. Labour, it muſt be remembered, is the ultimate price which is paid for every thing, and in countries where labour is equally well rewarded, the money price of labour will be in proportion to that of the ſubſiſtence of the labourer. But gold and ſilver will naturally exchange for a greater quantity of ſubſiſtence in a rich than in a

poor country, in a country which abounds with ſubſiſtence, than in one which is but indifferently ſupplied with it. If the two countries are at a great diſtance, the difference may be very great; becauſe though the metals naturally fly from the worſe to the better market, yet it may be difficult to tranſport them in ſuch quantities as to bring their price nearly to a level in both. If the countries are near, the difference will be ſmaller, and may ſometimes be ſcarce perceptible; becauſe in this caſe the tranſportation will be eaſy. China is a much richer country than any part of Europe, and the difference between the price of ſubſiſtence in China and in Europe is very great. Rice in China is much cheaper than wheat is any where in Europe. England is a much richer country than Scotland; but the difference between the money-price of corn in thoſe two countries is much ſmaller, and is but juſt perceptible. In proportion to the quantity or meaſure, Scotch corn generally appears to be a good deal cheaper than Engliſh; but in proportion to its quality, it is certainly ſomewhat dearer. Scotland receives almoſt every year very large ſupplies from England, and every commodity muſt commonly be ſomewhat dearer in the country to which it is brought than in that from which it comes. Engliſh corn, therefore, muſt be dearer in Scotland than in England, and yet in proportion to its quality, or to the quantity and goodneſs of the flour or meal which can be made from it, it cannot commonly be ſold higher there than the

Scotch

Scotch corn which comes to market in competition with it. CHAP. XI.

The difference between the money price of labour in China and in Europe, is ſtill greater than that between the money price of ſubſiſtence; becauſe the real recompence of labour is higher in Europe, than in China, the greater part of Europe being in an improving ſtate, while China ſeems to be ſtanding ſtill. The money price of labour is lower in Scotland than in England becauſe the real recompence of labour is much lower; Scotland, though advancing to greater wealth, advancing much more ſlowly than England. The frequency of emigration from Scotland, and the rarity of it from England, ſufficiently prove that the demand for labour is very different in the two countries. The proportion between the real recompence of labour in different countries, it muſt be remembered, is naturally regulated, not by their actual wealth or poverty, but by their advancing, ſtationary, or declining condition.

Gold and ſilver, as they are naturally of the greateſt value among the richeſt, ſo they are naturally of the leaſt value among the pooreſt nations. Among ſavages, the pooreſt of all nations, they are of ſcarce any value.

In great towns corn is always dearer than in remote parts of the country. This, however, is the effect, not of the real cheapneſs of ſilver, but of the real dearneſs of corn. It does not coſt leſs labour to bring ſilver to the great town than to the remote parts of the country; but it coſts a great deal more to bring corn.

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In ſome very rich and commercial countries, ſuch as Holland and the territory of Genoa, corn is dear for the ſame reaſon that it is dear in great towns. They do not produce enough to maintain their inhabitants. They are rich in the induſtry and ſkill of their artificers and manufacturers; in every ſort of machinery which can facilitate and abridge labour; in ſhipping, and in all the other inſtruments and means of carriage and commerce: but they are poor in corn, which, as it muſt be brought to them from diſtant countries, muſt, by an addition to its price, pay for the carriage from thoſe countries. It does not coſt leſs labour to bring ſilver to Amſterdam than to Dantzick; but it coſts a great deal more to bring corn. The real coſt of ſilver muſt be nearly the ſame in both places; but that of corn muſt be very different. Diminiſh the real opulence either of Holland or of the territory of Genoa, while the number of their inhabitants remains the ſame: diminiſh their power of ſupplying themſelves from diſtant countries; and the price of corn, inſtead of ſinking with that diminution in the quantity of their ſilver, which muſt neceſſarily accompany this declenſion either as its cauſe or as its effect, will riſe to the price of a famine. When we are in want of neceſſaries we muſt part with all ſuperfluities, of which the value, as it riſes in times of opulence and proſperity, ſo it ſinks in times of poverty and diſtreſs. It is otherwiſe with neceſſaries. Their real price, the quantity of labour which they can purchaſe or command, riſes in times of poverty and diſtreſs, and ſinks in times of opulence and proſperity,

prosperity, which are always times of great abundance; for they could not otherwise be times of opulence and prosperity. Corn is a necessary, silver is only a superfluity.

WHATEVER, therefore, may have been the increase in the quantity of the precious metals, which, during the period between the middle of the fourteenth and that of the sixteenth century, arose from the increase of wealth and improvement, it could have no tendency to diminish their value either in Great Britain, or in any other part of Europe. If those who have collected the prices of things in ancient times, therefore, had, during this period, no reason to infer the diminution of the value of silver, from any observations which they had made upon the prices either of corn or of other commodities, they had still less reason to infer it from any supposed increase of wealth and improvement.

SECOND PERIOD.

BUT how various soever may have been the opinions of the learned concerning the progress of the value of silver during this first period, they are unanimous concerning it during the second.

FROM about 1570 to about 1640, during a period of about seventy years, the variation in the proportion between the value of silver and that of corn, held a quite opposite course. Silver