

**A letter to the Right Honourable Lord Binning, M.P. &c.; &c.; &c; : containing some remarks on the state of lunatic asylums, and on the number and condition of the insane poor in Scotland / by Andrew Halliday.**

### **Contributors**

Halliday, Andrew, Sir, 1781-1839.

Haddington, Thomas Hamilton, Earl of, 1780-1858.

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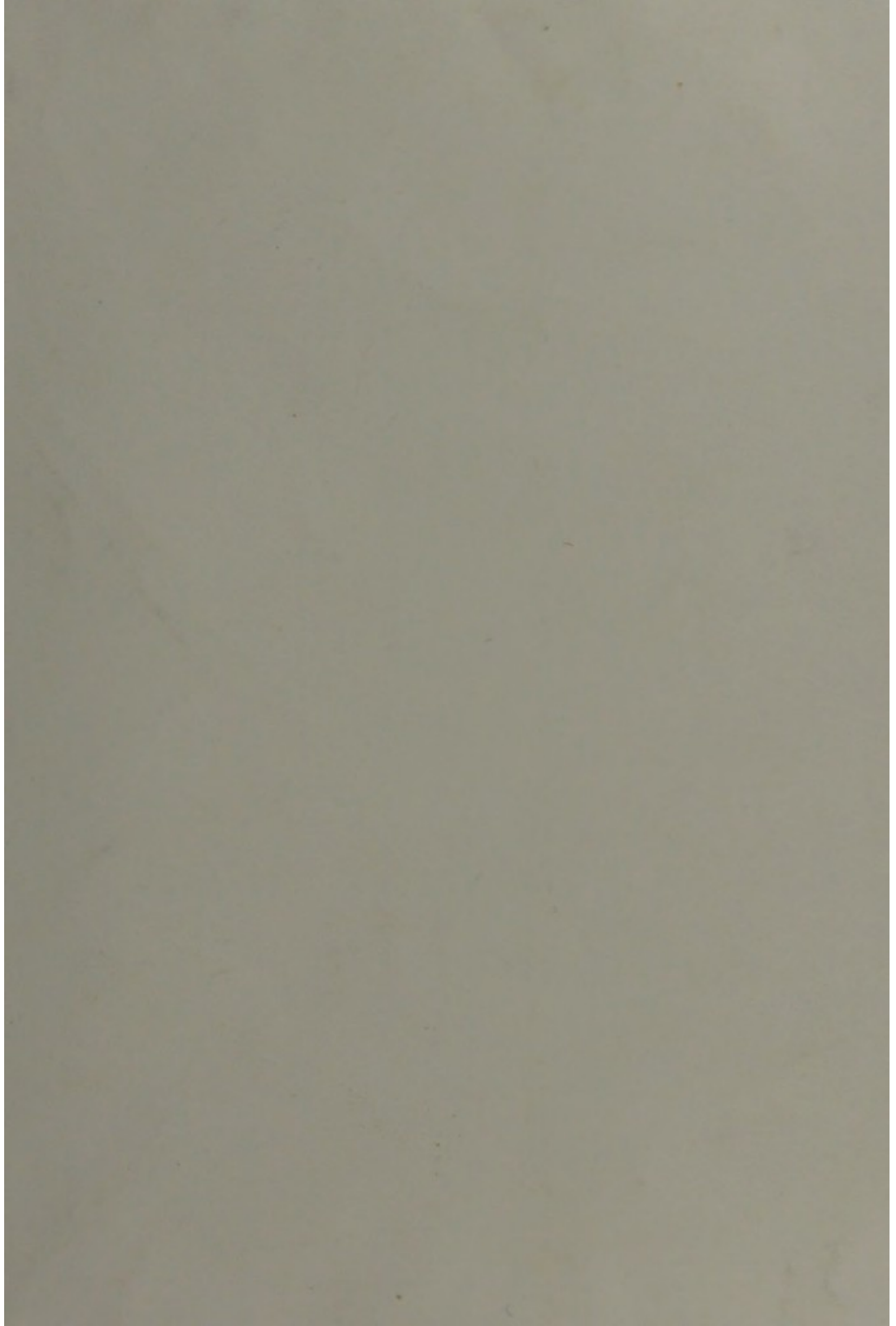
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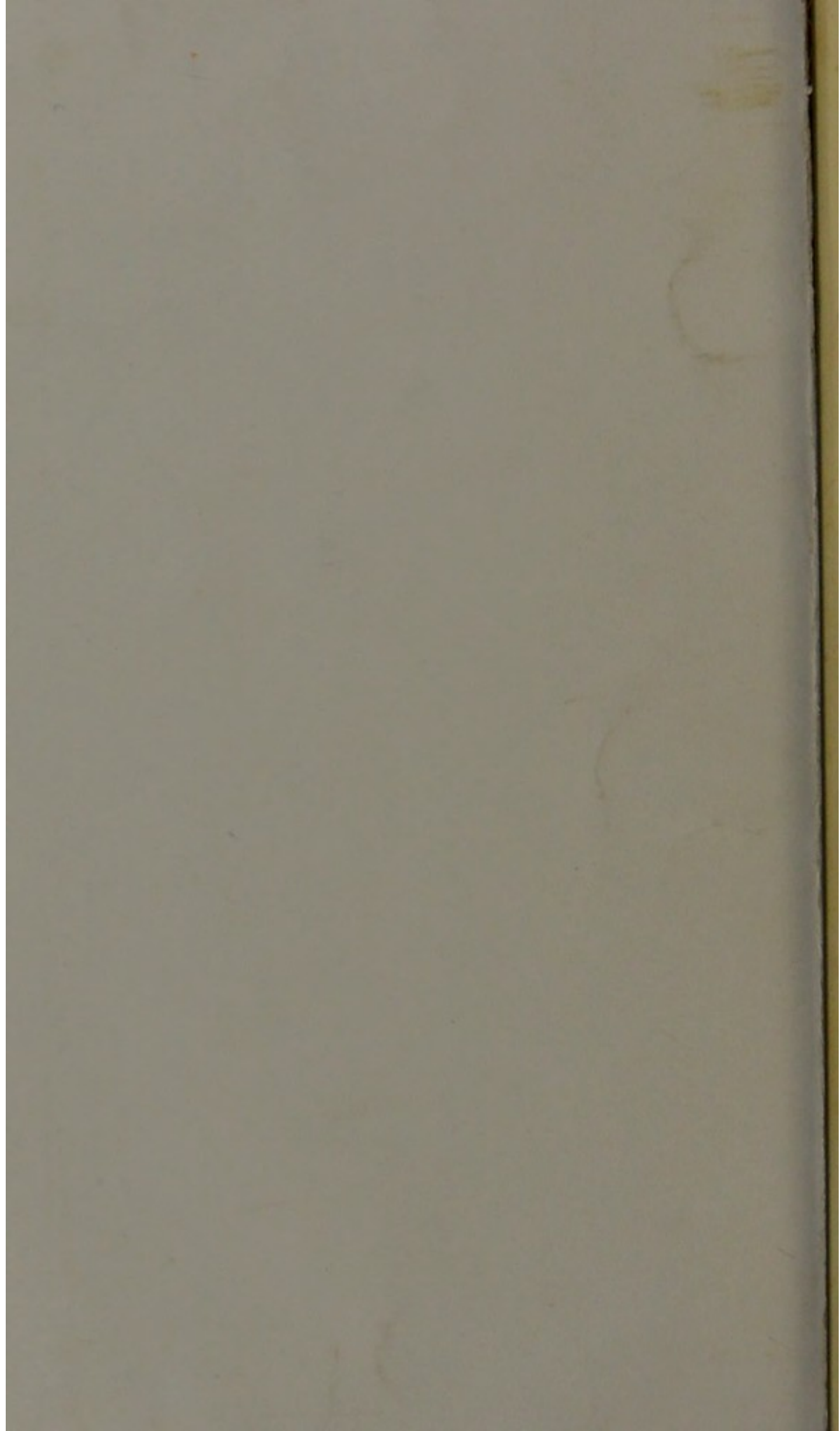
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A

# Letter

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD BINNING, M. P.

&c. &c. &c.

CONTAINING

SOME REMARKS ON THE STATE OF

## Lunatic Asylums,

AND ON

THE NUMBER AND CONDITION OF THE  
INSANE POOR IN SCOTLAND.

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BY

ANDREW HALLIDAY, M. D.

PHYSICIAN IN ORDINARY TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE  
OF CLARENCE, AND SURGEON TO HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES.

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EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR FRANCIS PILLANS, 58. SOUTH BRIDGE STREET;  
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ANDERSON, 40. WEST SMITHFIELD, LONDON.

*J. Pillans & Son, Printers.*

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1816.

A

Letter

TO

THE RIGHT HONORABLE

LORD BURNHAM, M.P.

Esq.

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SOME REMARKS ON THE STATE OF

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J. THOMSON, Printer.

1810.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD BINNING, M. P.

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

**Y**OUR active exertions in the cause of suffering humanity, more than your rank, though elevated in society, has pointed you out as the person, to whom a letter on the subject to which this refers could with the greatest propriety be addressed; and I hail with gladness an opportunity of publicly testifying, that a Nobleman has been found in the bosom of our own country, who counts it no irksome drudgery, to explore the most secret recesses of the dungeons of the insane, and who has dedicated, for a large portion of time, his superior talents to the amelioration of the condition of this most helpless, and hitherto the most neglected part of his fellow-creatures.

Your countrymen, My Lord, are not ignorant of your benevolent intentions, in not declining your nomination to the Committee appointed by the House of Commons, to consider of provision being made for the better regulation of mad-houses in England. The bill which Mr Rose introduced last session, which passed the House of Commons, and is now in the hands of many of us, as well as the reports of the Committee above mentioned, are sufficient evidence of your zeal. I believe it is altogether owing to your Lordship's representations, that the provisions of Mr Rose's comprehensive and humane act have been extended to Scotland; and under this impression of your Lordship's character and conduct, I proceed to the object for which I now address you.

The wretched and neglected state of pauper and criminal lunatics in Great Britain and Ireland, has long been the disgrace of these happy countries, and excited the commiseration of all who have in any way witnessed it. The representation of Sir George Paul, with regard to some criminal lunatics in the county of Gloucester, first drew the attention of Government to the subject in England. Mr Charles Wynn brought it before the House of Commons in 1806, and got a Select Committee appointed to enquire into the

state of Criminal and Pauper Lunatics in England and Wales, and the laws relating thereunto. After a long and laborious enquiry, that Committee made a report to the House, and the act of the 48th of the King, chap. 96. was passed in consequence of the scenes of cruelty and wretchedness which were brought to light by their enquiries.

Led by my professional pursuits, at a very early period of life, to visit such receptacles for the insane as were then in existence, the scenes of horror and neglect which it was my misfortune to witness, made an impression upon my mind which no time can obliterate. During the last twelve years, I have endeavoured by public, as well as private appeals to the feelings of those in power, to get the subject investigated. But until the Right Honourable George Rose commenced his labours, and the Committee, of which you form so distinguished a member, found it worthy of their attention, it never was perfectly understood, or fairly gone into. There seemed to be a general feeling of dislike to the subject, even with the most benevolent and humane; for though the representations of an individual so humble as I am, were ill calculated to excite attention, yet when my letters were well received, and the importance of my communications acknowledged, others of more political influence,



or greater leisure, were generally pointed out as more fitted for being the authors of such an enquiry. I persevered, however, under many disadvantages. In 1806, I was useful to Mr Wynn's Committee, and my information was considered of sufficient importance to be noticed by them in their Report. In 1808 I was enabled, through the kindness of Lords Milton and Arden, Mr Wilberforce, and the late Henry Thornton, Esq. to publish some remarks on the state of Lunatic Asylums in Ireland, which led to an examination of the subject by the Duke of Richmond, then Lord Lieutenant. Many abuses were corrected, and the condition of the insane improved in as much as it possibly could be, without further legal enactments to enforce the erection of national establishments. I had much correspondence with the Right Honourable Sir John Newport, respecting the situation of insane paupers in Ireland, which is, if possible, more distressing than in this country; and I trust that he, who has so long advocated their cause, will not desert it now, until he has secured for them the whole of the blessings which England will enjoy under Mr Rose's act.

In 1809 my attention was particularly directed to my native country, but being ordered on foreign service, I had no opportunity of prosecuting my enquiries for some years. In

1812 Mr Colquhoun, late Lord Advocate of Scotland, with the view of ascertaining the actual number of insane persons in confinement in that kingdom, addressed a letter to the Sheriffs of counties, requesting them to state for his information,

1. How many mad-houses, public or private, or places where insane persons were kept, were in each county?

2. What number of insane persons, male and female, were in each of these houses, and how long each person had been there?

3. By what authority, or by whom, had they been placed there; and what was the plan or mode of management in those houses where insane persons were?

4. They were directed to state how many insane persons were confined in the several jails within their counties. And,

5. How long each person had been in prison, and in consequence of what crime or cause he had been put in prison, and confined there, and at whose expence he was maintained?

The great want of Public Asylums in the country, and the abuses which were known to exist in many of the private establishments, had then become so notorious, that his Lordship found it necessary to call for this statement.

He gave a great deal of his attention to the subject; and as an intermediate measure, the act of the 55th of the King, chap. 69. was passed last year. I have given, in the Appendix to this letter, No. I. a general return which was made from the reports of the Sheriffs; but as that return appeared to me and many others to be deficient in several points, and gave a total considerably under the number we had reason to believe really existed in the country, I determined, if possible, to obtain a more correct, as well as a more extended and general return.

The Ministers of the Church of Scotland, so distinguished for their zeal in forwarding every work of charity, appeared to offer the best channel through which such a return could be obtained; and during a short residence in Edinburgh at the commencement of 1813, I got a number of blank forms printed, and in a letter to the Moderators of Presbyteries, transmitted one of these to be filled up by the Minister of every parish in Scotland: and with the view of drawing the attention of the country to the subject, I addressed a series of letters to the Editor of one of the Edinburgh newspapers, which he was kind enough to publish in his journal.—The information which has been collected in this way during the last three years, forms a valuable

addition to the minutes of evidence of your Committee, printed by order of the House of Commons, and I have no doubt will be acceptable to your Lordship and the public. Many of my blank forms appear never to have reached their destination, and others which may have reached it have not been attended to; yet, from the number which have been answered, and the many interesting observations which have been added by the Ministers, a very fair estimate may be formed of the number and condition of the insane poor in Scotland.

Being again called on for foreign service, soon after this enquiry was commenced, the trouble of collecting and arranging the returns from the different Parishes was most zealously undertaken by the Very Reverend Dr Baird, Principal of the University of Edinburgh. He was at great pains to ascertain the accuracy of every statement; and from a calculation founded upon the facts, he has drawn some conclusions which merit your Lordship's particular attention, and which I have given in No. II. of the Appendix. The abstract of the returns from Eighty-five parishes, which I have also given in the Appendix, No. III. sufficiently proves the justness of Dr Baird's conclusions; and from the answers which have no doubt been returned to the queries transmitted

to the Sheriffs last year, your Lordship must have a pretty just idea of the number for which it is necessary to provide accommodation in Scotland: and that such accommodation is not only necessary, but imperiously called for, is a fact which at this period will not admit of much discussion. Mr Rose's bill provides amply for the comfort of the opulent, who can afford to pay for their treatment in private institutions, as well as for that of the poor, when public Hospitals for their reception have been established.—In England, Mr Rose's bill will render Mr Wynn's act a perfect measure, and it does not appear to me, that the wisdom of man can do more for the happiness of those outcasts of society, than will be accomplished by these two acts combined: But until an act similar to Mr Wynn's, that is, an act to compel Counties or Districts to build Asylums, is passed for this country, the humane regulations which Mr Rose's bill is calculated to enforce, will become in a great measure a dead letter. In a report relative to the state of Mad-houses in the county of Edinburgh, which was presented a few months ago to the Court of Justiciary, and College of Physicians, by Sir William Rae, Bart. as Sheriff of the county, in terms of the Lord Advocate's act, I find some observations that bear so much

upon this point, and are of such importance, that I cannot refrain from laying them before your Lordship. Sir William Rae is one of those who has witnessed the evils he is anxious to remedy, and therefore speaks from a conviction of the necessity of the measures he suggests.

From a review of the number of insane in the country, and the accommodation of a public nature which at present exists, this active and benevolent magistrate has sufficiently proved, in his report to the Supreme Court of Justiciary, the impossibility of enforcing a proper attention to the comfort and cure of Pauper Lunatics in Scotland under existing circumstances. "But," says he, "if certain public institutions existed, where Lunatics could be received on moderate terms, the regulations as to private mad-houses might be made as strict as should be considered expedient, and their observance enforced with every degree of rigour. No complaint on the part of the keepers would then be listened to, as they might resign their occupation, and the Public Asylum would be ready to receive their patients. In England, such public Institutions are established by two acts of parliament; the one 48 Geo. III. chap. 96. and the other 51 Geo. III. chap. 79.

By these, each county is authorized to have such an asylum, the expence of the erection and maintenance being paid by the poor's rates; or two or more counties are allowed to join in erecting and maintaining such an institution at their joint expence. Such institutions, coupled with the proper inspection of private mad-houses, would certainly secure proper treatment to Lunatics of all descriptions; but the one of these will not do without the other; and if the proper treatment of this most unfortunate description of persons is deemed worthy of attention, it is hoped, that the time is not far distant when these necessary means will be brought into effect. It would appear that there are not fewer than one thousand insane persons in confinement in this country, and that a very great proportion of these are actually supported by parish aid. For the proper treatment of such a portion of our fellow-creatures, it is submitted that it much concerns the public that proper asylums should be found. It would only be requisite that the buildings should be erected at the expence of the district; for with respect to the support of the institution itself, there seems no danger but that it would maintain itself. Patients, as to means, behoved to be of four descriptions: 1. Paupers

supported by parish aid ; 2. Such as have means of their own, or relations capable of paying nearly what is sufficient for their maintenance ; 3. Such as can afford to pay more ; 4. Such as cannot afford to pay so much.

“ With respect to the first class, it ought to be made obligatory on all parishes within the district, to send their insane to the public asylum, and they should be bound to pay for them a sum precisely adequate to the expence of their maintenance. There seems no reason why they should pay less. In this way the maintenance of the 1st and 2d classes would cost nothing to the establishment, and the extra expence of the 4th would be more than defrayed by the surplus paid by the 3d class, and by donations, legacies, and other funds belonging to the institutions.

“ Independent of the humanity of such a measure, there appears a clear principle for subjecting districts to the expence of providing such a place of confinement. In the case of other diseases, the public have no direct interest in attending to them, and they must consequently be left to the care of the humane and charitable. But in the case of insanity, the life of every man is put in peril ; and accordingly, wherever a Lunatic is found at large, the magistrate is called upon to interfere so as to relieve the public from



the hazard they are thus exposed to. If the public are entitled to make this call, are not they bound to find the means by which such persons can be secured? A goal is no way fitted for such a purpose. In general the Lunatic has committed no crime, and other prisoners ought not to be exposed to the annoyance or danger attending such an inmate. This leads to the observation, that there is at present no provision for the custody of criminal Lunatics, the inconvenience of which is felt to a great degree. Such persons must either be left in jail, or entrusted to the uncertain care of friends; and the freedom which many of these enjoy, where this last mode is resorted to, doubtless has often had effect on deranged persons in the commission of crimes. There ought certainly to be one department in Scotland, appropriated to criminal Lunatics, to which they should be all sent, and from whence they ought never to be allowed to depart while in life. This might be connected with the asylum at Edinburgh; and Government ought certainly to supply the means for its erection. In a letter from Mr Clarke, treasurer to Bethlem Hospital, London, it appears that government gave to that hospital in 1807, L. 10,000; in 1811, L. 12,000; in 1812, L. 11,585; and in 1813, L. 39,234 : 1 : 6.

“Supposing the expediency of such institutions to be acknowledged, it may be right to look a little more closely to the means of constructing them. The objection to any measure whereof the expence must be defrayed by assessment is obviously, that it falls heavy on the landed interest, and there certainly has seldom been a time when that interest has been less able to bear any additional burden. But it does not appear to the Reporter, that the proposed burden ought to fall on the landed proprietor. Insanity is an affliction which visits all ranks of society without distinction, and the expences of an establishment calculated for its relief, attach to all of these ranks. This principle was adopted in the Bridewell act for the County of Edinburgh, being an establishment in like manner calculated for preserving the peace of all members of the community. This establishment is accordingly maintained by an assessment of one shilling annually on every house in the county of Edinburgh rented at above L. 5, and a like shilling on every occupier of a plough-gate of land, farm-houses not being charged; and this tax produces L. 650 per annum. Supposing L. 5000 wanted for the proportion for this County, it is obvious that two shillings on each house would produce L. 1300 per annum; which in four years would

more than give the sum wanted. If it was thought hard that all houses above L. 5 of rent should pay the same, it might be enacted, that the lower class should only pay one shilling, while the higher paid three. But in whatever way this might be arranged, the Reporter is confident, that while such an assessment would completely accomplish the important object in view, its amount would be felt, or grudged, by no one. If this plan was gone into, it occurs that the management would fall to be vested in commissioners, who should have power to levy the rates, to apportion the districts, to approve of the plans, and to see them executed, to choose directors, and fix general regulations for their management, and to conclude agreements with private institutions now subsisting, so as to acquire right to the premises already erected by them, where suitable. It does not occur that there would be any difficulty in these arrangements, if the mode sanctioned by the English act, where counties unite in the formation of such an establishment, there being one already subsisting in one of them, was adopted. Of such a commission the Judges of the Court of Justiciary would naturally be the chief members; and provisions would be introduced, by which advantage might be taken of the presence of the

judges at their circuits, correctly to ascertain the state of such asylums, and to see that the regulations were strictly adhered to. That Court must have felt the difficulty which inferior magistrates every day experience, in having no place where criminal Lunatics, or those wandering about uncared for by any one, can be committed. They must also be aware of the grievous effects upon any Jail, of having Lunatics therein imprisoned; and if, on the whole, it shall appear to that Court, that either the remedy here suggested, or such better one as may occur to their judgement, ought to be adopted, it is hoped that they will avail themselves of the present moment, when the attention of Parliament is so particularly directed to this subject, to give such a recommendation as, when coming from such a quarter, cannot fail to be attended with effect."

Such, My Lord, are the valuable suggestions of the Sheriff of Edinburgh; and I thank God, that it is not necessary to lengthen out this letter, by an appeal to the feelings of your Lordship, or an enumeration of existing evils. The subject has been well canvassed, and is perfectly understood. Mr Rose's bill, conjoined with a national act, compelling districts to build asylums, is all that is required, or in the present limited state of our knowledge in medicine can be desired,

for the cure and comfort of these helpless beings. I feel called upon, however, to remark, in addition to what Sir William Rae has so forcibly stated, and as a further proof of the necessity of the measures suggested,

*1st*, That of twenty-four private asylums within the county of Edinburgh, kept by individuals as sources of emolument, *two* only were found in a state to merit commendation, when officially visited by the Sheriff, and his professional assistants; and that while there is no public accommodation, the situation of these establishments cannot be ameliorated.

*2dly*, That the only asylums of a general and public nature in the kingdom, are,—one at Glasgow, begun in 1810, and opened for the reception of Lunatics on the 12th of December 1814. This is one of the finest establishments of a limited nature in any country. The expence of building it amounted to nearly L. 20,000, and was liberally contributed by the inhabitants of Glasgow, and western district of Scotland; but it is not calculated to receive above 120 patients, and unless a large proportion of these are in opulent circumstances, the benefit which it can afford to Paupers is very trifling; for the plan of this institution proceeds upon the principle that the income is to equal the expenditure, and that the profit arising from boarders is to assist in

furnishing accommodations for the poor.—A similar establishment was begun in Edinburgh some years ago, and although government gave L. 2000, the sum which has hitherto been raised by charitable contributions, does not exceed L. 6000. The wings only of the original plan have been finished, and in them about twenty patients are accommodated; but as none can be received without a board of one guinea per week, the poor, and by far the most helpless part of the community, have as yet reaped no advantage from this institution\*.

A very excellent asylum for a limited number of patients has existed for several years at Montrose. It was built, and is supported in a great measure, by a lady of the name of CARNEGIE. Another of a still more limited nature has been erected at Dundee, by private subscription, but is not yet in a state to receive patients. There is a fourth

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\* The original plan of the Edinburgh Asylum might be completed as a district or national establishment, and as I agree with Sir William Rae, in considering one asylum as only necessary in Scotland for the confinement of criminal Lunatics, and as that asylum can exist no where with so much propriety as at the metropolis, the necessary apartments might easily be added to the Edinburgh Asylum, so as to comprehend both under one management.

of the same description at Aberdeen, and a fifth forms a branch of the Dumfries and Galloway Infirmary at Dumfries; yet all these are private Institutions, and have no support but the voluntary contributions of benevolent individuals, and their power of doing good, limited when taken in the most extended sense, has been still further contracted by the debts which have accumulated, notwithstanding the strictest economy in the management of the funds. I have given in No. IV. of the Appendix, a return of the number of Lunatics confined in these asylums, and of the number they are capable of accommodating when full, as also the numbers existing in the cells of the charity workhouse or Bedlam of Edinburgh, and in the workhouse of St Cuthbert's parish.

*3dly*, That the only place known to the law of Scotland for the confinement of a criminal or dangerous Pauper Lunatic, is the common jail of the county, or the burgh where the crime was committed or the Lunatic is found. That in the case of a poor maniac, (however dangerous his being at liberty may appear), the magistrate seldom interferes, unless application is made by his friends, when, upon being satisfied of the insanity of the individual, and of the inability of his relations to place him more eligibly, a cell or apartment in the common jail is allotted,

and the charge of it given to those friends, as the magistrate does not feel himself bound to take any further cognizance of the matter.

With regard to criminal Lunatics, the law of Scotland is very defective, for if a madman commits a crime, he is sent to a jail as a common delinquent, until brought to trial in the regular course of law. If the counsel at his trial plead insanity, and prove it, he of course is not amenable for the crime for which he was put in confinement; but unless his friends can find sufficient security for his future good behaviour, he is remanded to prison, there to be kept in safe custody until such security is found, and, as Sir William Rae has so justly remarked, "the allowing of such to remain at large with their friends, under any circumstances, has often had effect on them in the commission of crimes."

There was lately in the jail of Stirling, a person confined by his relatives as a furious maniac, who was allowed to remain chained to a stone for years, without body-clothes or covering of any kind; and so remiss were these relatives in their attentions to him, that his cell often continued for many months at a time without being cleaned. A madman has remained in the tolbooth of Edinburgh, for the last twenty years; and in 1813, *Ann Simpson* had been twenty-one years in the jail of Banff, where she bore a child, the



offspring of a supposed criminal connection. Further examples of the misery attending such a practice could easily be cited, but I presume there are few who will be disposed to call it in question.

With regard to the conduct of other countries, I may be permitted, in the *4th* and last place, to observe, that I have had an opportunity of visiting a great many public and private mad-houses on the continent of Europe, and that I have uniformly found the greatest attention paid to the physical as well as moral treatment of the insane. The system of coercion is entirely exploded, and the most mild and soothing measures have been found as beneficial in restoring reason in those countries as in our own. The maniac is never suffered to wander at large, and even the idiot is anxiously cared for. The government of Bonaparte paid particular attention to this branch of political economy. A national establishment existed in the chief town of every department throughout the wide extended range of the late French empire, and the whole, whether public or private institutions, were under the controul of commissioners, appointed and paid by the state, and who were made responsible for every irregularity or improper conduct on the part of keepers or others.

And now, My Lord, to conclude,—it is most humbly suggested that this kingdom might be di-

vided into six districts, and a national asylum established at DUMFRIES, for the Counties of Wigton, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries, and the lower district of Ayrshire; at GLASGOW, for Lanark, Renfrew, Dumbarton, Bute, lower district of Argyll and upper part of Ayr. At PERTH, for the Counties of Perth, Stirling, Fife, Kinross, Clackmannan, and upper district of Argyll. At ABERDEEN, for Banff, Angus, Kincardine, Moray, Nairn, and Aberdeen. At INVERNESS, for Inverness-shire, Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, and Orkney. And at EDINBURGH, for the Counties of Roxburgh, Peebles, Selkirk, Berwick, Haddington, Mid-Lothian, and Linlithgow. The expence of building these asylums, can either be raised in the way pointed out by Sir William Rae, or in any other way that Parliament may be pleased to sanction. But until such asylums are erected, it cannot be said that we have done our duty to the insane, or in any measure wiped away the stigma which has so long attached to us as a nation.

There may be some difference of opinion as to the number of districts, and the accommodation which each asylum ought to afford, but the regulation of these matters may safely be entrusted to such a commission as Sir William Rae has suggested. It would be well if we had six national establishments in the kingdom; and unless at Edinburgh, it does not ap-

pear to me, that accommodation for more than 200 Lunatics would be required in any of them. These are matters, however, respecting which the Lord Advocate, from his superior sources of information, will be perfectly able to give the necessary detail to parliament; or they may be left to the commissioners, to be named in the act for providing District Asylums within that part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain called Scotland.

Mr Colquhoun's act has been attended with some good effects. It has prevented many from being improperly confined, and relieved some who were so confined. But it does not go to the root of the evil, and is attended with some serious disadvantages. The licence-duty in particular, which is nothing less than a tax upon insanity, has added greatly to the difficulties which the lower class of the community have to struggle with, in providing for their relations under this malady. It is therefore very properly repealed by Mr Rose's bill; and it is much to be regretted that that act did not pass into a law, during the last session of Parliament.

Since writing the above, I have been favoured by a gentleman, one of the greatest ornaments of the Scotch Bar, with a few observations on Mr Rose's proposed bill, as ordered to be print-

ed by the House of Lords. And I submit the following to your Lordship's consideration, as they appear to me to merit the attention of the benevolent author of that measure.

“ Page 6. bottom.—It seems to be intended to make the decisions of the Quarter-sessions, upon appeals by keepers, *final* to all intents and purposes. But I should conceive that the expressions are hardly sufficient to carry that object into effect, according to the practice of the Scotch Courts. It might be expedient to add the words :—*It being hereby expressly provided and declared, that the order and award so pronounced by the General Quarter-Sessions shall be final to all intents and purposes, and not reviewable by any form of process or proceeding held or attempted, in any other Court whatever.*

“ Page 7. par. 3.—The provision for payment of the Clerk is rather indefinite, and may lead to jobbing in many instances. Might it not be left to the *Sheriffs* instead of the *Justices*? The Sheriff to report the allowances to the Quarter-Sessions and General County-Meetings.

“ Page 9. par. 4.—This is a good provision as far as it goes: But where is the care for patients, in case the house contains only 90 or 80 or 50 patients in this material respect of medical

visitation? A small establishment may not afford a *daily* visitor of medical eminence; but surely something of the kind must be provided. Suppose *one hundred* in the clause, changed to *fifty*, and suppose *every* house of the kind should be compelled to have a medical visitor, who should attend at least once a-week.

“ Page 12. line 17.—Suppose the expression “ medical aid,” changed into “ sufficient medical aid.”

“ Page 19. line 15.—After the words, “ searching the register,” might not the words, “ and (if need be) any of the houses of confinement,” be added?

“ Page 19. line 13. from bottom.—Might there not be added after “ year,” and to report his opinion to the commissioners?”

Though my learned friend has been pleased, at my earnest request, to make these suggestions, he adds, that as a general measure, this act is drawn up with singular skill and great consideration to the laws of both England and Scotland.—I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your very obedient humble servant,

EDINBURGH,  
15th August 1816. }

ANDREW HALLIDAY.

# APPENDIX.

## No. 1.

*Return of the number of Lunatics in confinement in the different Counties in Scotland in 1812, extracted from the several Reports transmitted to the Lord Advocate by the Sheriffs.*

Names of Counties.	In public Jails.		In public Mad-Houses.		In private Mad-Houses.		Taken care of by Friends.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Aberdeen, -			26	22				
Argyll, -								
Ayr, -	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Banff, -	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Berwick, -								
Bute, -								
Caithness, -								
Clackmannan, -								
Dumfries, -	3		4	7				
Dumbarton, -								
Edinburgh, -	2		18	44	48	52		
Elgin, -								
Fife, -								
Forfar, -	1		67*	2				
Haddington, -								
Inverness, -			3†	3†				
Kirkcudbright, -								
Kincardine, -		1						
Kinross, -								
Lanark, -			27‡	18				
Linlithgow, -								
Orkney and Shetland,								
Nairn, Peebles, and Perth,								
Renfrew, -		1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Roxburgh, -			4	5				
Ross & Cromarty, -								
Stirling, -	1							
Selkirk and Sutherland,								
Wigtown, -							3	
	9	2	149	101	48	52	7	5

\* In the Asylum at Montrose, but the number of each sex not stated.

† In the cells of the Northern Infirmary.

‡ In the Glasgow Asylum.

From the foregoing Return it appears that there  
were,

In public Jails,	-	11
In public Mad-houses,		250
In private ditto,	-	100
In confinement with friends,		12
		<hr/>
Total,		373 persons.

No. II.

*FACTS and HINTS as to Provisions of an Act of Parliament anent Lunatics in Scotland. By G. H. BAIRD, D. D. Principal of the University of Edinburgh.*

RETURNS have been received from the ministers of 80 parishes, as to the number of the *insane* persons and *idiots* in these parishes.

The returns were made in reply to Queries circulated by Andrew Halliday, M. D. in the form of the following schedule.

Parishes.	Number of in- sane persons in confinement.		Number of Idiots allowed to go at large.		Supported in whole or part by Parishes.		Number con- fined in the public Jails.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1.								
2.								
3.								
&c.								
80	56	63	117	115	43	132	2	0
	Total in 80 Parishes.							

In Scotland there are 992 parishes, but say for the purpose of more easy calculation, that there are 1000. Then the following facts may be deduced from the Table.—

I. Total Insane—

In confinement,	56 Males.	
	63 Females.	
	—————	119
Idiots —————	117 Males.	
—————	115 Females.	
	—————	232
	—————	351
Total,		351

N. B. Of Idiots, many are noticed as at times *furious*, and requiring occasional confinement.

II. If the population of Scotland is in round numbers 1,600,000, then the average number in each parish is 1,600, and the average number of *insane* in Scotland (including idiots) is about 4,500, or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to each parish.

III. Of the 80 returns made, there are 7 parishes only in which there are no *insane* person of either the above-mentioned classes; consequently, in the whole 1000 parishes there may be 72 without insane persons.



IV. There may be about 50 of the insane in confinement paid wholly or in part by their parish funds, say at the rate of L. 20. Then the whole cost is L. 1,120 Sterling.

V. If public asylums are built in Scotland, it will be easy to calculate from the above facts the *size* of each, as suited to the population of the districts proposed to be attached to each respectively.

In each asylum, or in one asylum, if one only shall be established for Scotland at large for Criminals, there ought to be separate classes of apartments,

1. For criminal Lunatics. 2. For Lunatics who pay board from their own funds. 3. Who, though in some degree of poverty, pay only part themselves of their board, and get the balance raised by private subscription of friends, or who are paid for by their parishes as paupers. 4. For Idiots.

Idiots, now confined in Charity Work-Houses, should be removed to asylums for the insane. This is a more appropriate residence, and would release the unhappy *sane* poor from an afflicting spectacle, which cannot but aggravate their unavoidable distress.

The following seem to be the heads under which the provisions of an Act of Parliament might be successively ranged, so as to include all that is necessary for the purpose in question ; namely,

1. Purchase of premises.
  2. Building.
  3. General management as to Funds and Directors.
  4. Admission of Patients.
  5. Dismission of Patients.
- 

On these heads I refrain from detailing Dr Baird's suggestions. They coincide exactly with those contained in the Report of Sir William Rae, already quoted. I shall only add, that these suggestions acquire a higher probability of being sound, when different individuals, who have paid great attention to the point under consideration, and have had no particular previous communication with each other respecting it, happen to coincide so closely in their views.

## No. III.

*A Return of the number of Insane Persons in Scotland, who are in confinement as dangerous Lunatics, or allowed to wander about as harmless Idiots*

EDINBURGH, July 29. 1816

Number of Parishes,	Names of Parishes.	In confinement											
		With Friends or private persons.		In private Asylums.		In public Asylums.		In common Jails.		Total number confined.	Idiots allowed to go at large.		Total number of insane in each Parish.
		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.		Males.	Females.	
1	Aberbrothock,	2	1				2			5	2	1	8
2	Petty, -	3	5							8			8
3	Caputh, -		-			1				1	2	1	4
4	Westerkirk,												
5	Kirkden, -												
6	Girvan, -		2		-			-		2			2
7	Gask, -										2		2
8	Lochalsh, -			-			-				1	3	4
9	Chirnside,												
10	Ewes, -												
11	Bothkennar,							-			1	3	4
12	Benholme, -	1	2							3	3	2	8
13	Marykirk, -			-		-					4*	1	5
14	Fetteresso,	2	1							3	7	8	18
15	Dunottar, -										5	6	11
16	Fordun, -				-		-		-		4	2	6
17	Ecclesgeny,										3		3
18	Garvock, -												
19	Cavers, -		-		-		-	1		1			1
20	Bervie, -	1		-		-				1	1	1	3
21	Cannoby, -			1						1	3		4
22	Glenbervie,				-						2	1	3
23	St. Andrew's and Deerness, Orkn.	1	2						-	3	4	1	8
24	Arbuthnot,	1	2		-					3	2	1	6
25	Laurencekirk,		1							1	2†		3
26	Kinnell, -		1							1	2		3
27	Langton,		2		-					2			2
	<i>Carry over,</i>	11	19	1	0	1	2	1	0	35	50	31	126

\* One of these ought to be confined.

† Only occasionally ill, and confined in Bridewell.

‡ The two marked idiots are lads of a weak mind.

Names of Parishes.	In confinement								Total number confined.	Idiots allowed to go at large.		Total number of insane in each Parish.	Number supported by the Parish.
	With Friends or private persons.		In private Asylums.		In public Asylums.		In common Jails.			Males.	Females.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.					
<i>Brought over,</i>	11	19	1	0	1	2	1	0	35	50	31	126	66
Evenston,	3		-						3	1	1	5	2
Mid-Calder,													
Westtown, -	1		-		1				2		3	5	3
Overkeillor,				-			-			1		1	
Port-Glasgow,	1	1							2	1	1	4	2
Stathrie, -		2			-				2			2	2*
Teiish, -	1								1			2	2
Thathdean,				-			-			1	2	3	2
Name omitted,		3			-		-		3		1	4	
May, -				-			-			3	3	6	3
Nettercairn,		2		-			-		2	2	1	5	3
Little Dunkeld,	2	1		-			-		3	3	4	10	7
Marluke, -	6	4			-		-	10				+10	5
Marmark, -			-		1	1			2	1	5	8	2
Millmont,	1	1		-					2		2	4	
Muirnan, -		1							1			1	1
Muirngholm,				1					1	2	1	4	2
Old Mungo,										1		1	1
Oldbores, -		1			-				1	4	4	9	4
Oldbontail, -				-						2		2	
Oldburso,	1	1							2	3	5	10	5
Oldbrongwall, -				-				2	2	2	4	8	4
Oldbrasford,		3							3			3	
Oldbrecclesmachen,													
Oldbarriff, -	3	1							4		2	6	2
Oldbobbhall,		1		-					1	1		2	2
Oldbairloch, -	2	1			-				3	2	1	6	3
Oldbinkillie,													
Oldbithgate,	1								1	3	3	7	2
Oldbrkliston,				1					1	2		3	1
Oldbrkdalemuir,									1			1	
Oldbranstoun & Kil-													
Oldbrbeellan, -	2	2							4	1	1	6	6
Oldbrbail, -										1	2	3	1
<i>Carry over,</i>	35	44	1	2	3	3	1	2	91	87	79	267	133

See two females are boarded with private individuals at a great expence to the Parish. Only boarded in private family.

Number of Parishes.	Names of Parishes.	In confinement									Idiots allowed to go at large.		Total number of insane in each Parish.
		With Friends or private persons.		In private Asylums.		In public Asylums.		In common Jails.		Total number confined.	Males.	Females.	
		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.				
61	<i>Brought over,</i> Hobkirk, -	35	44	1	2	3	3	1	2	91	87	79	267
62	Crailing,			-				-			1		1
63	Denny, -	-	*1							1		1	2
64	Kingsbarns,			-				-			1		1
65	Greenlaw, -		1							1	2		3
66	Dornoch, <i>Sutherl.</i>				1	1			-	2	2	3	7
67	Newburn,	1		-				-		1			†1
68	Auchterarder,	3								3	2	2	7
69	Dunbar, -		3		1					4	3	1	8
70	Prestonkirk,		1							1			1
71	Inverness, 3 par.					3	1			†4	3	5	12
72	Mortlach, -										1	3	4
73	Wattin, <i>Caithness,</i>										5	1	6
74	Eckford, -								1	1	1	1	3
75	Fordyce,	1								1	2	1	4
76	LowChur. Paisley,					§4	2			6	6	7	19
77	Bo-ness, -						1			1	4	3	8
78	Lochmaben,												
79	Culross, -										3	1	4
80	Kineff, -	1	2			1				4			4
81	Dunse, -		2							2	2	1	5
82	Dryfesdale,										1	1	2
83	Dumfries,					5	6			11	3	4	18
84	Annan, -	1	1							2	3	2	7
85	Hoddam,										1	2	3
		42	55	1	4	18	13	1	3	137	134	116	387

\* Maintained at a great expence to the Parish. † Only occasionally confined.

‡ Confined in cells attached to the Northern Infirmary.

§ County Bridewell.

¶ Glasgow Asylum.

It appears from this Return, that in Eighty-five Country-parishes of Scotland there are not less than 387 individuals in a state of mental derangement.—That 102 of them are actually confined, either in private Lunatic Asylums, or, as is the case with by far the greater number, in the house of some friend or private person:—That only 31 are in public Asylums, and that 4 are confined in County Bridewells or Jails:—That 250 are permitted to wander about the country in a state of idiotism; and that 198, more than one-half the whole, are maintained by the parishes or public.

## No. IV.

Return of the Number of Insane Persons in confinement in public and private Madhouses in Scotland in 1816.

Names of Counties and Places,	In public Asylums,		In private Asylums,		In Bedlam,		In the Charity-Workhouses,		Total number confined at each place.	Total Number which can be accommodated at each place in public establishments.
	Males,	Females,	Males,	Females,	Males,	Females,	Males,	Females,		
Edinburgh & County,	14	5	57	75	17	30	2	16	216	20
Glasgow, -	40	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	73	120 if suff. funds.
Alberdeen, -	30	25	—	—	—	—	—	—	55	60
Montrose, -	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	52	55
Dundee *, -	6	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	12
Dumfries, -	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—
Inverness †, -										
	123	92	57	75	17	30	2	16	412	267

\* Accommodation built for 40, but not yet finished, from want of funds.

† No public Asylum,—see Note, Parish Return,

From the above Return it is to be remarked, that at present (10th August 1816) there are only *Five* Public Asylums for the reception of Lunatics in Scotland:—

That the total number which these can accommodate is - 267

To which may be added the Dundee Asylum when completed, 40

307

That there are confined in these public Asylums, and in private Asylums, in the County of Edinburgh, with Bedlam and Charity-Workhouses, not less than - 412

To which add the number from 85 Parish Returns actually confined, but not included in any of the places stated here, - 102

Total actually in confinement, - 514

I visited the cells of the Edinburgh Bedlam a few days ago, accompanied by the celebrated German Physician SPURZHEIM; and although the appearance of the whole is much improved since I last saw them, yet it is impossible for language to depict their wretched state. We found *fifty-four* individuals in that abode of misery, two-thirds of them females; many had scarcely a sufficiency of rags to cover their nakedness, and even the shreds that remained, appeared not to have been cleansed of their impurities for months. In a distant cell we discovered a woman, worn out by the violence of the disease, stretched upon a straw pallet, and sinking rapidly to the grave. A *Rat* was perched upon her bed: I shall not affirm that this animal had attempted to mangle the exhausted body of the dying maniac, but the sight was horrible!—Alarmed by our unexpected intrusion, it retreated coolly through a *large hole* in the floor of the cell.

I blush for my country, when I repeat the remark made by Dr Spurzheim on leaving the place, “That palaces are provided for the accommodation of the greatest villains and disturbers of society, while these unfortunate beings are left in misery;” and I am grieved to add, that I am a living witness, *that the swine in Germany are better cared for.*

F I N I S.

*J a*

SPEECH

of

OF

HENRY BROUGHAM, Esq. M. P.



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APR 1861

HENRY BROUGHAM Esq. M.P.

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# S P E E C H

OF

HENRY BROUGHAM, Esq. M. P.

*ON TUESDAY, THE 9th OF APRIL, 1816;*

IN THE

**Committee of the whole House,**

UPON THE

STATE OF THE AGRICULTURAL DISTRESSES.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND  
BROWN, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1816.

S P E E C H

BY

OF

THE

HENRY BROWNE, ESQ.

ON THE

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STATE OF THE

18

LONDON

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H. Bryer, Printer, Bridge-Street, Blackfriars, London.

## SPEECH, &c.

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MR. BROGDEN,

I FEEL very sensibly the disadvantages under which I rise to enter upon the discussion of this momentous subject; not only because I am in all respects so ill qualified to handle it successfully, but because a pretty general indisposition has been expressed by the House, to proceeding in the inquiry this night. Nevertheless, as I was one of those who objected to delay, and as I stated my readiness to go on with the debate, I am desirous of delivering my sentiments, such as they are, upon the present occasion, that I may lay before the committee the ideas (whatever they may be worth) which I have gathered from an honest and patient attention to the subject matter of our investigation.

There is one branch of the argument which I shall pass over altogether, I mean the *amount* of the distresses which are now universally admitted to prevail over almost every part of the

empire. Upon this topic all men are agreed; the statements connected with it are as unquestionable as they are afflicting; each day's experience since my honourable friend's motion (Mr. Western) has added to their number and increased their force; and the petition from Cambridgeshire presented at an early part of this evening has laid before you a fact, to which all the former expositions of distress afforded no parallel, that in one parish, every proprietor and tenant being ruined with a single exception, the whole poor rates of the parish thus wholly inhabited by paupers, are now paid by an individual, whose fortune once ample, is thus swept entirely away. Of the nature and extent of the evil, then, it is quite superfluous to speak; I purpose with your permission, to apply myself to the examination of its causes, and to such a view of the remedies or palliatives proposed, as may naturally be suggested by a consideration of those causes. Without entering somewhat at large into the origin of our present difficulties, I am afraid we shall be apt to go astray in our search after the means of relief.

A circumstance which must strike every observer who turns his attention toward this state of the country, is the comparative state of prices before and since the late war. In 1792 the average price of wheat was 47s. the quarter;

now its price is 57s. almost twenty per cent. higher ; and yet no complaint was ever heard of low prices before the war, nor were any of those signs of distress to be perceived which in these times claim our pity in every part of the empire. This consideration is of itself sufficient to shew that over-trading—that excess of cultivation is not the only cause of the evil we complain of ; and may warn us against the error of imputing it to the operation of any one cause alone ; for I am certainly disposed to rank the great extension of cultivation among the principal causes, or at least to regard it as lying near the foundation of the mischief. In attempting to unravel the difficulties of this question, I trust the committee will believe me, when I say that I approach it as I should the solution of a problem in the mathematics, without the smallest taint of party feeling, and with no other view whatsoever than a desire to discover the truth, upon a question of great and universal concernment.

The first circumstance to which I would solicit the attention of the committee, as lying at the root of the matter, is the progress of agriculture during the long period of the last war—I mean from the year 1792 downwards. The commencement of hostilities in 1793 produced the stagnation of trade and manufactures which usually accompa-

nies a transition from peace to war ; but these difficulties were of uncommonly short duration, and the brilliant success of our arms at sea, the capture of some of the enemy's colonies, the revolt of others, and the crippled state of his mercantile resources at home from internal confusion, speedily diminished his commerce in an extraordinary degree, augmenting our own in nearly the same proportion. As his conquests or influence extended over other nations possessed of trade or colonial establishments, these in their turn became exposed to our maritime hostility, and lost their commerce and their plantations ; so that in a very short time this country obtained a mercantile and colonial monopoly altogether unprecedented even in the most successful of her former wars. The consequence was a sudden extension of our manufacturing industry and wealth ; and a proportionate improvement in our agriculture. But although this effect began to be perceivable soon after the first successes of the war, it was not fully produced until a few years had elapsed, and a number of circumstances, in some measure accidental, happened to coincide with those which might more reasonably have been expected to occur during the course of the war, in promoting, I might almost say in forcing, the cultivation of the country. I should be disposed to take the ten years from 1797 to 1808, as the

period when all those circumstances, of what nature soever concurred to produce the same effect. It will be worth the attention of the committee to observe how singularly this period is filled with events, all tending one way, all bearing upon the extension of agriculture.

The French commerce and colonies had been previously destroyed; and in 1797, 1798, and 1799, those of Spain and Holland shared the same fate. About this time our monopoly might be said to have reached its height. But several accidental events now concurred with those results of the war, and influenced the progress of cultivation in a visible manner. The scarcity of wheat in 1796, and all sorts of grain in 1799 and 1800, raised the prices so much as to force a vast portion of land into cultivation. In 1797 and still more after 1800, lands were broken up which had never before known the plough, and many wastes were taken in, the tillage of which prudence would perhaps never have authorised. Somewhat of the same effect was thus produced which arose from the destruction of the principal French West Indian colonies early in the late war. The sudden diminution in the supply of sugar raised its price beyond all example, and occasioned a vast extent of new land to be cleared and planted, promoting at the same



time the culture of the old plantations. The African Slave Trade, and the conquest of the Dutch, French, and Spanish settlements, with the consequent influx of British capital, facilitated the progress of West Indian agriculture, until in the course of a few years the blank created by the commotions at St. Domingo and Guadaloupe was much more than supplied; sugars fell as far below their ordinary price as they had lately risen above it; all West Indian proprietors were distressed, and many utterly ruined; the colonies generally speaking were in a state nearly resembling the most suffering districts of the mother country at the present time; and relief was only afforded by the abandonment of many estates, chiefly such as were loaded with debts and consisted of inferior lands,—the supply being thus restored to a level with the demand. I do not mention the cases as in all respects parallel, but they agree in many of their principal circumstances.

Together with the scarcities of 1796 and 1800, the financial and military operations of the war, concurred to raise the prices of agricultural produce. Those operations did not certainly create capital, or multiply the number of mouths for consuming food; but they collected capital in masses to be expended less economically in feeding a number of persons

more carelessly than the same individuals would have been supported by part of the same capital, had it been left in the hands of private persons. I desire to be understood as casting no reflection upon the administration of the revenue appropriated to the demands of the war, because it is quite unnecessary at present to express my opinion upon this point. Every one must admit that a given sum in the hands of government, even of the most economical ministers, especially if allotted to meeting the various pressing exigencies of warfare, must be expended with much less care and parsimony than the same sums appropriated to the uses of private families under all the checks imposed by individual prudence. The tendency of such a national expenditure unquestionably is to raise prices above their natural level for a time at least, and thus to force cultivation forward, although in a long course of years the same capital in the hands of the community would have been much more augmented, and would gradually and healthfully have increased the production of the country in a greater, but not in a disproportionate degree. It is not, however, for its effect in stimulating agriculture that any man will be disposed to quarrel with the war and its expenditure. Had it no other sins to answer for, this might well be forgiven.

While the circumstances which I have mentioned were disposing men to extend the cultivation of the kingdom, an event occurred, which in its consequences mightily facilitated this operation. I allude to the stoppage of the Bank of England, in the early part of 1797. The alarm in which that extraordinary measure originated, very speedily subsided; and with the restoration of confidence, came a disposition to accommodate, on the part of bankers and other dealers in money and credit, wholly unexampled. The Bank of England soon increased its issues; and the numbers of country banks were every where augmented. In districts where no such establishment had ever before been known, they were to be found actively engaged in discounting and lending—and in issuing their own notes. In places too small to support a bank, there were agents appointed by banks fixed at some distance; or a shopkeeper or tradesman, added to his usual and regular calling, the new employment of cashing bills and passing notes. It is true that the check which had now been removed from the great Bank in London, still operated to a certain extent upon the minor dealers in credit, thus scattered over the country; they were obliged to pay if required in Bank of England paper, although the issuers of that paper were not compelled to pay in specie. But this

was rather a nominal than a real restraint, for if the holders of country bank paper could not obtain gold in exchange, they preferred coarse notes with the names of Mr. or Sir John such-a-one, whom they knew, to notes somewhat better engraved, but worth just as little, and with the names of a Governor and Company and a Mr. Newland whom they knew nothing about—so that the country banks enjoyed the same facility, with the bank in London, of increasing their issues; and they used it with much less reserve. Hence the unlimited accommodation which they afforded to farmers, and generally to all speculators in land. They assisted all adventurers more or less, but adventurers in land most of all, because they had better security to give, and were supposed to be engaged in a less hazardous line of trade. I must here repeat the remark I made upon the tendency of the war to promote cultivation. If the stoppage of the bank had produced no worse effects than throwing dormant capital into circulation, and affording a stimulus to industry, especially to agriculture, I should have little to say against that measure—Nay it might have been rather beneficial than hurtful, at least in this point of view, had the accommodation which it afforded been withdrawn more gradually, and at all events, not at the particular

moment, when perhaps the state of things required it to be still further extended.

Another circumstance to which I shall advert, also occurred within the period in question, between 1797 and 1808, I mean the great extension of our colonial possessions. The value of those establishments is, I believe, somewhat underrated in this country; not that we are slow to parade their importance in several particulars—on the contrary, we are prone to magnify them in our accounts of exports and imports, and of the quantity of tonnage, and number of seamen employed in our trade; but we seldom if ever, reflect on the vast effects produced by them upon the agriculture of the mother country. In promoting this, their wealth operates, both through the channels of commerce, and of remittances, almost as directly as the riches of one district of this island, expand themselves over and fertilize another less wealthy territory, in its neighbourhood. The conquest and rapid cultivation of the Dutch colonies, to take the most remarkable instance, may be traced in its effects upon many a once barren tract of land in the northern parts of Great Britain, where by the names of the farms and of their occupiers you may be reminded of those lucrative speculations in Surinam, Demerary, and Berbice, to

which the agriculture of the mother country owed these accessions.

The last circumstance I shall mention as falling within the same period, is the completion of our commercial and manufacturing monopoly, by the destruction of almost all other trade and peaceful industry, the final result of Buonaparte's continental and military system. In the end, indeed, we felt the effects of this prodigious attempt, as I shall presently have occasion to state; but for some time it only consummated the ruin of our competitors, and gave new resources to our seaport and manufacturing towns. The effects of this increase upon the industry of the country, at a period when men were singularly prone to farming speculations, cannot easily be over-rated. We are apt to suppose the sphere of such influence much more contracted than it really is. If any one is desirous of perceiving how widely it extends, I think I can furnish him with a medium through which he may view it. When the measures of the enemy, which began with the Berlin and Milan decrees, had, through the co-operation of our own Orders in Council, succeeded in crippling the trade of almost all our great towns, the distresses of the merchant and manufacturer affected not merely the farmer in his neighbourhood, but

lowered the cattle and corn markets to a great distance, so that fat beasts were sold at very low prices, 100 and even 150 miles from the manufacturing districts in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, in consequence of the distresses prevailing over those parts of the country. In like manner, it is evident that the earlier events of the war, which suddenly promoted the wealth of the great towns, tended as rapidly to augment the cultivation of even the remote provinces.

Now, Sir, having ascertained the existence of so many and such powerful causes, uniting their forces in one direction, during the period I have mentioned, and all tending manifestly to promote the agriculture of the country, some of them by tempting men to embark in farming concerns, others by furnishing them with the means of speculation, even if we do not take into the account such circumstances as the general progress of the arts and the depreciation in the value of the circulating medium, and the consequent rise in the money price of produce, which I am very far from under-rating, but only pass over for the present as operating less exclusively upon the cultivation of land than the other circumstances which I have enumerated, I say even if these considerations are omitted, enough has been shewn to prove that a start must have been made in the

productive powers of this island, quite unexampled in any equal period of its former history. When, on the other hand, I reflect upon the nature of the causes which I have enumerated, and find that most of them are of sudden occurrence, and that their combination in the short space of about ten years was accidental; when, moreover, I perceive that the most material of them were of a temporary duration, and could not remain long to support the great cultivation which they had occasioned, I am disposed to think that I have got hold of a principle upon which something like an overtrading in agriculture, and a consequent redundance of produce, may be inferred to have happened, how difficult soever it may be to ascertain the amount of this excess by any strict calculation. In truth I am little inclined to resort to estimates upon the present question; where circumstances are clearly proved to have existed, the natural operation of which plainly was such as I have described, it is unnecessary to seek among statistical returns for evidence of effects which we know must have been produced. I have heard of conjectures as to the number of acres inclosed, during the ten years I am referring to, in which there may have been 1200 Inclosure Bills passed. Some of my honourable friends near me, I know, have estimated this amount at two millions, which I men-



tion not so much from any reliance upon the accuracy of the statement, as out of respect for them, and because this admission is at variance with their own doctrine that there has been no excessive cultivation. But it is evident that such an estimate, even if correct to an acre, would by no means shew the increase of production, for a good deal of the land enclosed by Act of Parliament was formerly cultivated in common field; and, on the other hand, the improvements in the cultivation of the old enclosures have probably done more to augment the whole agricultural produce, than all the new lands that have been taken in. If, however, we take the total amount, every thing included, to be equal to the produce of two millions of acres added to the former produce, and if it be true that the population has only increased two millions during the same period, there will appear to have been an increase of nearly six millions of quarters in the supply, and only an increase in the permanent demand, in the proportion of two millions. But, as I have already said, these estimates are not to be trusted either way, and I had much rather rest upon the broad principle furnished by a reference to the known events in the history of the late war, down to the year 1808. The improvements in most parts of the country have been going on so visibly, that the most careless ob-

server must have been struck by them. Not only wastes have disappeared for miles and miles, giving place to houses, fences, and crops; not only have even the most inconsiderable commons, the very village greens, and the little stripes of sward by the way-side, been in many places subjected to division and exclusive ownership, and cut up into corn-fields in the rage for farming; not only have stubborn soils been forced to bear crops by mere weight of metal, by sinking money in the earth, as it has been called,—but the land that formerly grew something has been fatigued with labour, and loaded with capital, until it yielded much more; the work both of men and cattle has been economized, new skill has been applied, and a more dexterous combination of different kinds of husbandry been practised, until, without at all comprehending the waste lands wholly added to the productive territory of the Island, it may be safely said, not perhaps that two blades of grass now grow where one only grew before, but I am sure, that five grow where four used to be; and that this kingdom which foreigners were wont to taunt as a mere manufacturing and trading country, inhabited by a shopkeeping nation, is in reality, for its size, by far the greatest agricultural state in the world.

Previous to the year 1810 or 1811, no great effect appears to have been felt in the corn market

from all this system of improvement. The measures taken to increase our produce had not begun fully to operate, and the new inclosures had not yielded their due returns. The crop of 1810 was not a very good one, and that of 1811 was extremely bad. But about 1812, when the new cultivation and the improvements in farms generally, may be supposed to have produced their full effect, there began a series of events, some of them accidental and beyond human foresight to anticipate, others less strange perhaps in themselves, but in their union scarcely more to be expected, all operating in the same direction, and that direction the very opposite, as far as regards agriculture, to the line in which the no less unparalleled combination of circumstances already mentioned, had been operating in the preceding years. The harvest of 1812, was a very abundant one; that of 1813, I believe, exceeded any that had ever been known; and the crop of 1814 was not much inferior. But the political events of those three years had an influence still more important upon the markets. Here I must take leave to state how widely I differ with my honourable friend the member for Essex, (Mr. Western) respecting the effects of the peace. In the able and luminous speech with which he introduced this subject to the house, and in which he shewed at once the greatest industry, talent, and mode-

ration, he contended that the termination of hostilities could not be assigned as a cause of the depression in prices, because those prices had begun to fall during the war; and he observed in confirmation of his position, that after former treaties of peace, agricultural produce had risen. The facts upon which he relied when taken altogether, far from supporting his doctrine, furnish me with a satisfactory answer to it. After the peace of Paris, it is true, wheat rose from 36 to 41 shillings the quarter, in 1763, and to 42s. 6d. on an average of five years, ending 1767. So after the peace of Versailles, it rose 5s. the quarter. But the statements upon which my honorable friend relied, as decisive in his favour, were taken from the period in question, viz. the year 1813. In January of that year, the market price of wheat was 120s. and in November it had fallen to 75s. The victualling contracts of Portsmouth, were made in January at 123s. 10d.—in November at 67s. 10d. Those of Plymouth, in February at 121s. 9d.—in September at 86s. Those of Deptford, in February for flour per sack—at 100s. 3d.—in November at 65s. Now I beg the committee's attention to these facts, because when coupled with the well known events of the year 1813, they clearly refute my honorable friend's argument, pretended to be built upon them.

In January and February wheat and flour were high ; in September they had fallen very considerably, owing partly no doubt, to the very abundant harvest reaped during the interval, but in no small degree owing to the important change in public affairs which had taken place during the same interval. The destruction of Buonaparte's grand army had been effected the winter before, and had laid the foundation of the deliverance of Europe, but that happy event had not been completed. The most gigantic enterprize which unprincipled force had ever attempted in modern times, had been defeated by a lucky concurrence of accidents with the violence that gave birth to the project ; but much of its author's power still remained unbroken, and no man could foresee that the blind fury which had borne him into jeopardy, would still hurry him to ruin. At all events, a new and a desperate struggle was inevitable, and the great prize of peace on the one side, or universal empire on the other, was to be fought for once more in the ensuing campaign. In the spring and summer of 1813 this battle was fought ; and the enemy after incredible efforts of gallantry and skill, was repulsed—but nothing more. Peace seemed considerably more probable, therefore, in September, than it had been in January ; but it was not certain. The improvement in our

prospects, however, co-operated with the harvest, and prices were lowered from 122s. to 86s. Soon after this period, came the decisive battle of Leipsick; peace was now certain, and all that remained to be settled was the terms upon which it should be made, and the degree of security which should attend it; for the struggle which followed could be said to decide nothing more. Accordingly in the interval between September and November prices had fallen from 86 to 68, in round numbers. Contractors could no longer expect the same terms when in all likelihood this was their last bidding. Government was not pressed as before, when its difficulties were so nearly at an end; and the market felt the effects not only of an extraordinary crop, but of the approaching times of peace when the demands of government should be withdrawn, and the supplies of the continent poured in. No man who attends to these facts and dates can entertain a reasonable doubt that the fall of prices was in some degree connected with the approaching termination of the war.

In truth, Sir, it is impossible to overlook the tendency of such a change as the peace brought about in all the great markets of agricultural produce. A sudden diminution in the expenditure of Government, to the amount of above fifty

millions, could not be effected without greatly deranging all markets, both for manufactures and produce directly; and by affecting the markets for manufactures, it must also have influenced circuitously those in which the farmer is more immediately interested. To take only a few specimens of these effects—Can it be denied that the stoppage of the exportation of grain, provisions, and even forage, to the Peninsula, had an influence in lowering the prices of those articles at home? When orders are no longer given for clothing in Yorkshire and arms in Warwickshire, does the change which throws so many manufacturers out of employment produce no diminution in the demand for food, and no increase in the levy of parish rates? Look at the effects of the Government retiring from the Irish provision market, now that three fourths of the navy are dismantled. Beside the accounts from the sister kingdom, every gentleman connected with the north and west of England, knows that last summer and autumn, the droves of Irish cattle poured through Liverpool, Bristol, and the Welch ports, covered the roads for miles; and that the price of butchers' meat, and the rents of grazing farms, which had till then kept up, notwithstanding the fall of grain and of corn lands, began to be sensibly affected. I state these circumstances with the more satisfaction because they are in their nature tem-

porary, and we are led to a somewhat more comfortable prospect by the consideration, that whatever part of the present distresses is ascribable to the change from war to peace, may reasonably be expected to diminish every day, at least as soon as the results of the peace shall enable the general trade of the country to resume its natural and accustomed channels; and shall supply the blank occasioned directly and circuitously in the demands for produce, by the diminished expenditure of Government.

The next circumstance to which I shall advert as materially operating against agriculture, is the distress in the commercial world during the latter years of the war. It is very certain that the effects of the fatal year 1810, continue to be felt at this day in the mercantile world. The foundations were then laid of many failures, which have only been delayed by the natural efforts of unfortunate men to ward off a blow they could not escape; efforts which it is impossible very harshly to blame, although undoubtedly the delay of the crash has in most instances only rendered it more pernicious to creditors, and extended its effect more widely, occasioning, perhaps, several failures instead of one. The difficulties of 1812 are fresh in the recollection of the Committee, and are still working their effects in many parts of the country,



although the repeal of the Orders in Council by enabling us to export goods, which were all paid for to the amount of seven or eight millions, afforded a most seasonable and important relief, and enabled capitalists to lower their stock on hand in a great proportion. That stock, however, began to increase during the unhappy continuance of the American war; and the peace, unexpectedly made, in Europe, followed by the treaty with America, soon produced an effect to which I must request the serious attention of the Committee, because I believe its nature and extent is by no means well understood. After the cramped state in which the enemy's measures, and our own retaliation, (as we termed it), had kept our trade for some years, when the events of of spring 1814, suddenly opened the Continent, a rage for exporting goods of every kind burst forth, only to be explained by reflecting on the previous restrictions we had been labouring under, and only to be equalled, (though not in extent), by some of the mercantile delusions connected with South American speculations. Every thing that could be shipped was sent off; all the capital that could be laid hold of was embarked. The frenzy, I can call it nothing less after the experience of 1806 and 1810, descended to persons in the humblest circumstances, and the furthest removed, by their pursuits, from commercial

cares. It may give the Committee some idea of this disease, if I state what I know to have happened in one or two places. Not only clerks and labourers, but menial servants engaged the little sums which they had been laying up for a provision against old age and sickness; persons went round tempting them to adventure in the trade to Holland, and Germany, and the Baltic; they risked their mite in the hopes of boundless profits; it went with the millions of the more regular traders: the bubble soon burst, like its predecessors of the South Sea, the Mississippi, and Buenos Ayres; English goods were selling for much less in Holland and the north of Europe, than in London and Manchester; in most places they were lying a dead weight without any sale at all; and either no returns whatever were received, or pounds came back for thousands that had gone forth. The great speculators broke; the middling ones lingered out a precarious existence, deprived of all means of continuing their dealings either at home or abroad; the poorer dupes of the delusion had lost their little hoards, and went upon the parish the next mishap that befel them; but the result of the whole has been much commercial distress—a caution now absolutely necessary in trying new adventures—a prodigious diminution in the demand for manufactures, and indirectly a serious

defalcation in the effectual demand for the produce of land.

The peace with America has produced somewhat of a similar effect, though I am very far from placing the vast exports which it occasioned upon the same footing with those to the European market the year before; both because ultimately the Americans will pay, which the exhausted state of the Continent renders very unlikely; and because it was well worth while to incur a loss upon the first exportation, in order, by the glut, to stifle in the cradle those rising manufactures in the United States, which the war had forced into existence contrary to the natural course of things. But, in the mean time, the enormous amount of, I believe, eighteen millions worth of goods were exported to North America in one year; I am informed nearly sixteen millions went through the port of Liverpool alone; and, for a considerable part of this, no returns have been received, while still more of it must have been selling at a very scanty profit. The immediate effect has been a sensible increase of the difficulties which I have already described as flowing from the unexpected opening of the European market in the impoverished and unsettled state of the Continent.

And now it was, when a general commercial distress began to prevail, that the consequences of our paper circulation, and the banking operations connected with it, not gradually as had been expected, but almost instantaneously developed themselves. Whether the change of measures, which I am about to mention as one of the principal, if not the very first cause of our present sufferings, began with the country banks or the bank of England; whether it was the necessary consequence of the difficulties which were pressing upon trade, and which, at any rate, it mightily increased, or was the chief cause of those difficulties; whether or not blame is imputable to any persons, or bodies corporate, I will not stop to inquire, for it is wholly immaterial to the present investigation; and when I mention certain known facts in one order rather than another, I do so without intending to assert that they were connected together. The Bank of England not very slowly limited its discounts and diminished its issues of paper about three millions. At one period, indeed, the amount of notes in circulation had exceeded that to which they were now reduced, by six millions; but the average had been for some time about three millions higher. The country banks acting less upon system and more under the influence of alarm, lessened their discounts in a much greater

degree. A single failure would stop all such transactions over a whole district, and I could mention one large stoppage which made it difficult, for a length of time, to discount a bill any where in three or four counties. The persons who felt this change most severely were of course those who had been speculating in any way, but above all others, speculators in land; those who had either purchased or improved beyond their actual means upon the expectation of that credit and accommodation being continued, which had enabled them to commence their operations. Ordinary traders have much greater facilities in the money market; and their speculations are much more speedily terminated. The improver of land has to deal with property not easily convertible into money, and his adventures extend necessarily over a long course of years. Persons in this situation soon found their borrowed capital withdrawn; when the fall of produce made it difficult for them to pay the interest, they were suddenly called upon for the principal; they had gotten into a situation which no prudence could have enabled them to avoid, because it was the result of events which no sagacity could have foreseen; they had for many years been tempted to speculate by a facility of obtaining capital or credit, which in a month or two was utterly withdrawn; and before the least warning

had been given either by the course of events, or by the dealers in money and accommodation, a support was removed which the most cautious of men might well have expected to be continued indefinitely, or at any rate, to be gradually removed. I beg leave, in illustration of this matter, to remind the Committee how those undertakings have been carried on which I before described as extending so greatly the agriculture of the country. A man of small fortune, or a farmer making considerable profits by the high prices of the period I have so often alluded to, saw an opportunity of making a desirable purchase, upon an enclosure, or a sale in his neighbourhood. He had scraped together a couple of thousand pounds, perhaps; but the sum required for buying, and then improving the land, was four or five. The banker supplied this difference, and by his accommodations enabled some middleman, trading in credit, to supply it, and the cultivator had every reason to hope he should, in a few years, be able to repay it by the continued prosperity of farming concerns. At any rate he reckoned upon paying the interest and not being called upon for the principal, in security of which he probably deposited the title deeds of his purchase as a pledge. The extension of cultivation caused by these very operations, together with the other circumstances to

which I have referred, rapidly lowers the price of all produce; the alarm of money dealers begins to spread; hardly able to pay the interest which is in reality a fourth more than it was while the currency was depreciated 25 per cent, he is called upon to pay up the principal itself; destitute of any thing that can be turned into money, he is fain to abandon his purchase with all the improvements which his savings and his toil have made upon it; and the lender finds himself in hardly a better situation, without the means of obtaining payment, and with title deeds in his hand, which he can turn to no account, unless he brings the land into the market. Now, the certainty of such a measure lowering its price, prevents this step from being taken; and, accordingly, great as the distress has been, very little land has been actually sold; not so much as ought to have been, is thrown out of cultivation; good money, to use the common expression, is thrown after bad; the money dealer becomes, from necessity, a land jobber; and the distress continues pushing its shoots in all directions, round the whole circle of trade, until, by reaction, the farmer suffers again indirectly, and the total amount of suffering is, if I may so speak, augmented by its universality, and the connection of its parts. Nor should I be at all surprized if things were to grow worse before

they got better ; at least I am very certain that the price of land will be lower before it is higher, from the undoubted fact of many sales that must take place, having been delayed as long as possible in the vain hope of the necessity being evaded.

In referring to the state of credit and circulation, I have purposely avoided dwelling upon the great evils that have resulted from the fluctuations in the value of the currency, not because I under-rate them, but because they only affect one class of sufferers from the present distresses, I mean, those who have made bargains or formed calculations for time ; such as persons taking long leases, or borrowing money at a fixed rate of interest, or speculating upon making sales at a future period. Of these classes I shall say a word or two by and bye. But there is a circumstance affecting all classes, and of which it is quite impossible to exaggerate the importance in accounting for the changes that have recently afflicted the agriculture of the kingdom, I mean, the state of our finances—the complete revolution which the last twenty-five years have effected in the revenue and expenditure of the country.

During that period our revenue has increased from fifteen to about sixty-six millions ; our



expenditure in one year exceeded one hundred and twenty-five millions; this year of peace it is to be above seventy-two millions, and no hopes are held out of its being permanently below sixty-five. That such a prodigious change could be wrought in the system of taxation and of public credit, without seriously affecting the landed interest, from which so large a proportion of the taxes is drawn, no man will for a moment suppose. But I believe few have formed to themselves distinct ideas of the manner in which excessive taxation has been operating on agriculture, and very inadequate notions are I am sure, entertained of the amount of that operation. It is not indeed, very easy to trace it; and to estimate precisely how much of the pressure falls exclusively upon the cultivator would be impossible. But I shall take the liberty of submitting to you such means of approximation as I have been able to find, aware of the justice of an observation made this night by the member for Surry (Mr. H. Sumner,) that by communicating freely the ideas which have struck each of us upon this great question, we may hope for mutual correction and instruction.

I shall suppose a farm of four hundred acres of fair good land, yielding a rent of from £5 to £600 a year, managed according to the husbandry practised in the northern counties, with which

only I can profess any particular acquaintance. It will require for a four course, 200 acres, being in corn, 100 fallow, and 100 in hay and grass, fourteen plough horses, and supposing a saddle horse, and a servant, and a dog to be paid for, with a farm-house of twelve windows, the assessed taxes will amount to £22. 8s. a year. This is a clear addition to the expences of 1792, with which I am making the comparison. I pass over the Income Tax, as not peculiar to farmers, though it has been peculiarly oppressive to them wherever the estimated exceeded the real profits. But the principal increase of expence has been upon the labour. The wages of the nine regular men servants who must be employed, have risen since 1792 from £30 to £50 each, but I will put the rise only at £15, making in the whole £135. Beside this, we must allow for the rise in the day labour required at spring and fall. Upon the 200 acres in corn, this will amount to a rise from 10s. an acre to 15s. or £50 in all—Upon the other 100 acres in hay and grass, the rise will be from 5s. an acre to 7s. 6d.—and the same upon the 100 acres of fallow—making an addition of £25; or £75 for the whole increase upon day labour. Two women servants must be allowed—and their wages are more increased in proportion, than those of men, principally I believe, from

the unwillingness of farmers wives and daughters to work as they used to do before the more flourishing times; but take the rise on this head only at £10—and we have the total increase on labour £220. Blacksmiths' and carpenters' bills have in like manner been raised, certainly not less than £15 each upon such a farm as I am supposing; and the rise on saddlers' bills cannot be estimated at less than £10; making upon these bills a rise of £40, which added to the former heads, gives the total increase in the expences of cultivating such a farm, as equal to £282 8s. independent of the great rise on lime and all sorts of manure.

Now I admit, that we have no right to set down the whole or nearly the whole of this large sum to the taxes which have been imposed since 1792: but a great part of it manifestly does arise from those taxes. Whatever part arises from the increased prices of grain and other provisions may be deducted, and will fall again with those prices. Whatever remains must be ascribed to the taxes chiefly. Above £22 of the sum comes from direct taxation. At least one half of the rise on the saddlers' bills, or £5 more is owing to the same cause. But a considerable proportion of the grand item of labour is imputable to the taxes also. For let us only

reflect on the nature of the duties which have been imposed. Many of them affect articles of prime necessity; as soap, salt, leather, and candles, all of which are ranked among necessities of life by the writers on these subjects, and, what is a better authority, are felt to be such by the consumers; taxes upon all of which are allowed by those writers to affect directly the price of labour. Now the tax on leather has been doubled within the last four years; being raised from three halfpence, at which it stood before the war, [Here the Chancellor of the Exchequer said across the table, "And ever since the reign of Queen Anne"] to threepence, the present duty. The duty on salt which in 1782, and I believe up to 1792 was only 10d. a bushel, had been raised previous to 1806 to 15 shillings, the present duty. And candles have in the same period been taxed considerably. But these articles are not the only ones which may be reckoned necessities, and are subjected to additional duties. In most parts of England beer is to be classed in this list, from the universal custom of drinking it which prevails, and the duties upon it most seriously affect the farmer as a consumer of it, besides their pernicious tendency against his interest as a grower. The duty on malt has been raised from 10s. 7d. per quarter, to 34s. 8d. of which

16s. is war duty; that on beer since 1802 has been increased from 5s. 7½d. per barrel, to 9s. 7¼d. or about 4s. while that on spirits has been raised since 1792 from 7d. to 21d. per gallon of wash, or 14d. addition. The total revenue collected from these duties is £12,350,000, by which the land suffers directly in proportion to the whole amount, and indirectly in proportion as its cultivators are consumers of the manufactured article. But the price of agricultural labour is affected likewise by the duties of custom on many imported goods, which long habit has rendered scarcely less essential than some which I have enumerated as articles of first necessity. Of this class is sugar, upon which the heaviest taxes known in the history of finance, are laid. I believe indeed there are many persons who would rather go without soap than sugar; and this is now subject to a duty of 30s. per cwt. instead of 15s. at which it was taxed before 1793. It must also be observed that whatever prohibiting or protecting duties have been laid upon foreign manufactures of articles used in clothing, these fall directly upon the labourer, and in so much tend to raise his wages, for the benefit, not certainly of the farmer, but the manufacturer. It is therefore evident that much of the augmentation in the expence of working a farm, a considerable portion of the sum of £220 which I

have stated to have been added since 1792 to that large branch of a farmer's expenditure, is chargeable to the taxes; and a portion also of the sum of £35 the part of the rise in the carpenter's and other bills not directly affected by taxes, must also be charged to the same account. It is impossible to state with any degree of accuracy what the total amount of the increase of taxation has been upon these items; but that it must have been considerable no one can reasonably doubt; and I beg to warn gentlemen against under-rating it from the fall in the rate of wages that has lately taken place. Labour has indeed come down, and in my opinion a good deal more than was to be wished, I mean a good deal more than the fall of other prices justified. This fall must have resulted from the general distress of the country, and the number of hands in consequence every where thrown out of employment; but it is no sort of proof that the present is the natural and healthy state of wages; or that they will long remain so low; or that the fall in the price of provisions has permanently reduced wages to their level before the war; and therefore it is no kind of evidence that the increase in the expence of cultivation has arisen from the rise in prices alone, and not also from the increase of taxation.

But it may be said, that the taxes have not fallen exclusively upon the farmer, and that he only suffers in common with the rest of the country. Now, to this I shall offer, I think, the most satisfactory answers. It must be remembered, in the first place, that part of the taxes fall directly and exclusively upon the landed interest. Some of the assessed taxes, and the enormous malt, beer, and spirit duties are clearly of this description. But next, observe how differently the farmer is circumstanced in these times from the other parts of the community, with respect to the rise in wages, produced partly by the taxes. The commodity in which he deals is on the decline in point of price from over cultivation; he cannot, therefore, throw the tax upon the consumer. If manufactured goods are in high demand, the customer pays the duties to which the manufacturer may be subject, either directly, or indirectly by the rise in wages caused by those taxes. If those goods are falling in price, the tax presses upon the manufacturer himself. Now this is, and for some time past has been, in a peculiar manner, the state of the farmer, who indeed never has the means of suddenly accommodating the supply of his commodity to the demand, with the nicety and dispatch observable in the operations of trade. But, a still more material circumstance distinguishes the situation of the farmer from that of

the manufacturer, relieving the latter at the expence of the former. I allude to the state of the law, which throws upon the land the whole burthen of maintaining the poor, and reduces the price of *all* labour below its natural level at the sole expence of the cultivator. It is well known to the Committee, that whatever may have been the intention of the Legislature, (and the meaning of the statute of Elizabeth is sufficiently plain,) yet, from a defect in the powers of the act, the money raised for the support of the poor, is paid entirely by the land. Persons in trade only pay in so far as they are also owners of real property. Thus a manufacturer who is deriving ten or twelve thousand a year from his trade, is rated as if he only had a large building worth four or five hundred a year beside his dwelling-house, while his neighbour, who possesses a farm of the same yearly value pays as much; that is, the man of ten thousand a year in trade, pays no more than the man of five hundred a year in land. Yet, only observe the difference between the two in the relation to labour and to the poor. The farmer employs a few hands—the manufacturer a whole colony;—the farmer causes no material augmentation in the number of paupers—the manufacturer multiplies paupers by wholesale; the one supports—the other makes paupers, manufactures them just as certainly, and in something of the same proportion



as he manufactures goods. The inequality of this distribution is plain enough, but I am now speaking of it in its relation chiefly to the subject of wages. From the abuse of the poor laws, it has become the prevailing practice to support by parish relief, not merely persons who are disabled from working by disease or age, but those who, though in health, cannot earn enough to maintain them; and, by a short-sighted policy, wholly unaccountable, the custom has spread very widely of keeping down the wages of labour by the application of the poor rates, as if any thing could equal the folly of paying rates rather than hire; of parting with the disposition of your own money, and of paying for labour, not in proportion to your own demand for that labour, but in proportion to some general average of the district you chance to live in. I pass over the inevitable effect of this arrangement, in raising the total amount of the sums paid for labour, and in throwing upon one farm the expences of cultivating another less favourably circumstanced; it is enough for my present purpose to remark, that the whole effect of the system is to make the land pay a sum yearly, levied in the most unequal manner, applied in the least economical way, for the purpose of lowering the wages generally, and lowering the wages of manufacturing as well as agricultural labour. From this unquestionable

position, I draw two inferences, I think equally undeniable, and bearing directly upon the subject of our present inquiry;—the one is, that the effects of taxation in raising the price of labour are not distributed equally over all classes of the community, but fall exclusively upon the land, the land paying for the rise which the taxes have occasioned, both in agricultural labour, and in all other kinds of work—the other is, that, even if the fall in the price of provisions should apparently restore wages permanently to their former level, the real rate of wages would still be raised, and the real costs of cultivation be augmented, unless the poor rates also had been brought back to their former amount. The sum now levied upon the land for this purpose, exceeds eight millions. Before the American war it was less than two. I think I have said enough to shew how immediately, how severely, how exclusively the rise in the taxes from fifteen to sixty-six millions has pressed upon agriculture; how impossible it is to expect substantial relief as long as that pressure continues.

I have now, Sir, I fear, at a very unreasonable length, gone through the causes which appear to have co-operated in producing our present distresses; and I come at last to a consideration of the means by which the evil may be remedied,

or at least rendered supportable. In entering upon this part of the subject, I feel sensibly the delicacy of the ground I am going to tread. No one ought, without the most serious examination of it, to venture an opinion which (from the respect paid to our deliberations in this place,) may have a material influence upon the fortunes of individuals, and, at any rate, may agitate their hopes and fears in a crisis of such general solicitude. I wish, therefore, to state nothing that has not been suggested to my mind by very mature and anxious deliberation; but, whatever may appear justified by such research, I think it my duty to propound, without the smallest regard to personal considerations, or to the prejudices that may prevail in any quarter.

And, first, I am afraid there is one class of persons who can hardly expect *effectual* relief from any measures, or from any supposeable change of times; I mean those who have been trading largely in land upon borrowed capital. They have speculated upon a continuance of extravagant prices, and the fund is, in all likelihood, gone for ever, out of which their debts were to have been repaid. The fall in the market price of bullion is of itself a severe loss to such adventurers; they have still to pay in money as before, when every hundred pounds is really worth one hundred and

twenty-five ; they have to pay as much money to their creditors as formerly, and they can only receive three-fourths as much from their customers. I would fain hope, however, that such is not the situation of the great bulk of proprietors, to whom, perhaps, a permanent relief, (and even to the speculator a palliative,) may possibly be found. Those who have been expending large sums on bad land are in the worst state, and I fear that a good deal which ought never to have been cultivated at all, must be abandoned, and much grass land that should not have been broken up, must be laid down again as well as circumstances will permit, unquestionably at a great loss. The lowering of rents, which has pretty generally taken place, can hardly be reckoned any considerable relief, if other circumstances remain the same. It is a severe loss to the landlord, a loss which he sustains alone !of all who have made time bargains ; for no one hears of mortgagees or other creditors giving up twenty-five per cent, either on principal or interest, because the value of money has risen in that proportion : but to the tenant it affords a very inadequate relief, for he is complaining of a fall in the price of his gross produce, of above three pounds an acre, (supposing the produce to be three quarters per acre,) and all that the landlord can do for him is to take off five shillings an acre, leaving him to struggle against a loss of fifty-five shillings. But I shall

now beg the attention of the Committee to the different measures which have been proposed, and in discussing these, as well as in submitting others to your consideration, I shall be guided by the view which I have taken of the nature and causes of the evil.

The first of these remedies, in point of importance as well as of time, is the Corn Bill of last Session. Although that measure is no longer a matter of discussion, yet as I had not the honour of a seat in this house either when my honourable friend (Mr. Western) brought forward the bill of 1804, or when he raised the importation price last year from 63s. 6d. to 80s. I deem it more fair not to avoid the topic, but to state my opinion frankly upon its merits, the more especially as it has been the object of very strong disapprobation in many parts of the country. I certainly am disposed to think favourably of it, although I am well aware how diffidently it becomes us to speak upon a measure which has divided so widely the ablest men, both in Parliament and out of doors, marshalling in almost equally formidable array on the opposite sides of the dispute, the statesmen and the political authors,\* whose opinions upon such a subject are

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\* See, on the one side, Mr. Malthus's excellent tracts—and, on the other, the very able discussion of the Corn Bill of 1804, by Mr. Mill.

the most entitled to respect. As it is impossible, however, upon such a controversy not to oppose great authorities, so it is some comfort that, for the same reason, one has the support also of eminent names; and this emboldens me in stating, that I conceive the measure to be politic, at the least, as a palliative, or as affording the means of carrying the country through difficulties, the greatest pressure of which we may hope will only prove temporary. But then, I can by no means excuse the language of those who deride it merely because it is temporary, or as they term it, an expedient. If it enables us to get over the existing evils, arising, in great part, from a transition to a new state of things, it does a great *permanent* good; it saves much valuable capital from being totally lost, much skill and labour already bestowed, from being thrown away; and it may thus, even where it fails in affording entire relief, be most important as preventing entire ruin. A measure of this description is only in name one of a temporary nature; its operation is solid and lasting. I pass over its tending to secure a constant and certain supply of food to the community; I am speaking of it merely as a measure calculated for the relief of the agricultural interests, and of all the branches of trade immediately dependent upon them. In the same light may be regarded the

extension of the measure to some other kinds of agricultural produce, which is at present before Parliament.

But I own I view, in a very different light, my honourable friend's propositions respecting Bounties upon the exportation of corn. To pass over every other objection to such a plan, if there be any truth in the positions which I think I have established, that the principal causes of our distresses are the too rapid extension of cultivation, and the intolerable weight of the taxes ; surely it follows inevitably that to force exportation by a bounty, would only perpetuate the one of these causes, and increase the other. Indeed, I marvel that my honourable friend could have thought of such a measure in times like the present. Why, its very essence is taxation, and to a vast amount, — taxation upon the people of this country to make us sell corn cheap to foreigners—taxation upon the land already oppressed with burthens. And how are such new sums to be levied? We have got rid of the income tax—that is some relief to the farmer. Does my honourable friend wish this burthen to be once more imposed for the relief of agriculture? Or, does he peradventure desire to see the malt tax again raised from 14s. to 30s. in order to encourage the production of grain? All that has ever been paid in boun-

ties formerly, is a trifle compared with the sums which this new scheme would require. In 1814, for instance, the last year for which we have the return, the whole of the bounties paid by government did not exceed £206,800—a sum, in all probability, very injudiciously bestowed, but still not very ruinous in its amount. A corn bounty, when wheat is selling, perhaps, 20s. a quarter higher in this country than in the foreign markets, would cost a million for every million of quarters taken out of the home market: and each effect produced by this forced exportation, in raising the price at home, would render the exportation more costly.

But nothing, in my humble opinion, can be worse founded than another remedy suggested by my honourable friend; I mean the exclusion of foreign corn from our warehouses and the encouragement to store our own grain in the public repositories. Have farmers no barn-yards or granaries of their own, in which they can keep their corn until the market is favourable? Are the crops in greater danger of rats there than in the King's Warehouses? But it is pretended that foreign corn is at present imported, and fills the public granaries, ready to be poured out the instant that the Gazette gives the signal by declaring the average to be 80s. for the last six weeks; and my honourable friend considers that if the permission thus to warehouse



foreign grain were withdrawn, no such effect could be produced. Now, I will suffer myself to be devoured by the vermin I have been talking of, if I do not, in a few minutes, shew my honourable friend himself, the fallacy of this argument. Does he think that merchants wait for the Gazette to learn the price during any period of six weeks? Are they ignorant of the weekly and daily state of the markets? Do they not know at any moment of any six weeks how the prices are running, and can they form no guess, as the six weeks elapse, of the average at which the Gazette return is likely to state them? Why, the corn merchant does not even wait until a harvest is ripe before he commences his calculations, in order to form his plans of importation. I happen to know a little of this branch of trade, and I can inform my honourable friend, that there are emissaries sent round the country while the grain is in the ear, to collect samples, which are sifted out and measured and weighed, in order to affix data upon which the goodness of the crop, its yield, may be estimated, long before a sickle has glanced among the stalks. While my honourable friend is sitting in his study, forming plans upon the supposition that those corn-merchants will wait for the periodical promulgation of the average, by the King's printer, they are actually in his fields, committing an innocent trespass, to obtain the earliest information of the next crop as the ground-

work of their speculations; and upon this knowledge they speedily begin to act. If the permission to warehouse is withheld, they still must act upon the rise of the markets, and the only difference will be, that instead of collecting the grain on this side of the water, they will have it on the other, to the benefit of foreign merchants, agents and warehousmen, but just as ready to be poured in as if it were in our own ports. Indeed, any one must be sensible, after a moment's consideration, that nothing but a confident expectation of the price approaching to 80s. could induce merchants to bring over their cargoes and lodge them in this country, when they know, that until it reaches the point, all the expences of the importation are incurred for nothing. Whether the voyage is made before or after the day on which the Gazette declares the point has been attained, must obviously be a matter of perfect indifference; and it is the only thing which the permission or prohibition of warehousing can affect.

The alteration suggested in the laws relating to wool, appears to me in a very different light. I had the honour of broaching this important subject on the first day of the session, and every thing that has since come to my knowledge confirms the opinion I then ventured to express.

As a committee has been appointed this night to investigate the question, at the suggestion of my honourable friend (Mr. F. Lewes,) who has thrown so much light on the whole matter now under discussion, I shall abstain from going into it at length; but I must beg to press upon your attention how greatly the agricultural interests are concerned in it. The most important relief has been afforded to many parts of the country by the good prices which wool has borne during the depression of almost all other produce: I allude especially to the long coarse wool, the ancient and peculiar staple of this island. Ten years ago it was from 9d. to 1s. the pound; now it is 21d. and it was recently as high as 2s. This article is the growth, and has during the bad times formed the support of Lincolnshire and the midland counties. Further northwards we have principally the coarse wool from the black-faced sheep. This is grown in the northern counties, and as far as Edinburgh: it used to be 7d. or 8d. and is now 14d. or 15d. the pound. The relief afforded by such prices is not confined to the wool grower; it extends to all other agriculturists in his neighbourhood; because whatever saves a farmer from distress or ruin upon the general balancing of his accounts, keeps him from glutting the market with his produce or stock, and prevents the general market of agricultural produce from being depressed. In like manner, to support the

wool districts has extended relief to the other districts, and has produced a favourable effect upon the whole markets of the country, rendering the pressure of the general distress considerably lighter than it would have been had the wool grower been in the same predicament with all other agriculturists. There is every reason however to apprehend, that this article also is on the decline: it has actually fallen within the last three months, and would certainly fall much more rapidly but for the large orders now in the market in consequence of extensive contracts for clothing foreign troops. I have heard of one contract for the uniforms of 150,000 men, which must raise the demand for the wool immediately connected with that in question. Under these circumstances, and indeed at any time, it seems to be a most unwise policy as far as regards our agriculture, to prohibit the exportation of wool. The finer sort would in all probability find no market abroad, and a permission to export it would therefore have no effect either way; but for the coarse, especially the long wool, there must always be a great demand, as it is absolutely necessary to certain manufactures, and is at present peculiar to this island. It well deserves the attention of the committee, whether the prohibiting laws should not be repealed, which compel the wool grower to sell his commodity at home in

order that the manufacturer may work it, and the consumer may wear it much cheaper than they would if the farmer had the choice of his market. The establishment of a free trade would not raise the price above its present standard, nor in all likelihood would it prevent some further fall, but it would at least guard us against the great depression which may now be apprehended. These are points, however, well worthy of inquiry, and I look to the labours of the committee appointed to night for much information upon them.

But the most material subject for our consideration, consistently with the view which I have taken of the present distresses is manifestly the burthens peculiarly affecting land; and these are the tythes, parish rates, and general taxes. Upon the subject of tythes, I have much to submit to your notice, as it has long and anxiously engaged my attention; but it seems not to be peculiarly connected with our present inquiry, as tythe rather affects the expenditure of capital in improvements, and this is certainly not the predicament of almost any person in these times. I am desirous therefore of deferring to another opportunity the observations which I have to make on the plans of commutation proposed by different gentlemen, particularly by my honourable friend the member for Hert-

fordshire (Mr. Brand) as well as another method not yet suggested, by which I feel assured an arrangement of this important matter might be made with great facility and safety. The subject of the poor rates, however, is one which, in an especial manner, presses for discussion; and I am confident that every one who may have honoured with his attention the observations which I have submitted to you, will perceive how essential some revision of the system is to the welfare of agriculture.

It is clear that the exclusive pressure of parish rates upon the land, was never in contemplation of the Legislature; but as the 43d of Elizabeth, whatever it may enact with respect to the persons who shall pay, furnishes no means of obtaining payment in proportion to the profits of trade and professions, the law, if unaltered, must continue to throw the whole burthen upon the land owner. In addition to this he has to support almost all the public works, as roads, bridges, and churches, in which he is no more interested than the other members of the community. They are made originally at his expence, and kept in repair by him; and, although the rest of the country refunds a part of the money originally advanced, yet, every one knows, how seldom this is adequate to his repayment—while the re-

pairs, constantly required, are a certain loss to him. At present, however, I am speaking chiefly of the poor rates. The deviation, in some measure necessary, from the intent of the Statute of Elizabeth, as to the class who shall pay them, is not more fatal to the interest of the land owner, than the perversion of that law, without any such excuse, to the support of all poor persons, whether capable or incapable of work, and the supply of money to those who earn what are deemed inadequate gains. I confess that I see but one radical cure for the state into which this last abuse has thrown the country, and which is daily growing worse, deranging its whole economy; debasing its national character. The inequality of the system may be remedied; at least, I would fain hope that some method might be devised, without having recourse to the odious machinery of the Income Tax, for making the other property bear its share with the land in defraying the expence which should fall equally on all income, if it is to be compulsory upon any. But though great relief may thus be obtained, the worst vices of the system are deeper seated, and admit, I fear, but of one cure. As the law is now administered, under the influence of the habits which have unfortunately grown up with the abuse of it, the lower orders look to parish relief, no longer with dread or shame; but they regard it as a fund out of which their wants may at all times be sup-

plied. To say nothing of the effects of this feeling upon their habits of industry and economy ; to pass over its fatal influence on their character, and especially on their spirit of independence ; only observe how it removes all check upon imprudent marriages, and tends to multiply the number of the people beyond the means of subsistence—that is, to multiply the numbers of the poor. A young couple who feel inclined to marry, never think, now-a-days, of waiting until they can afford it, until they have a prospect of being able to support a family. They hardly consider whether they are able to support themselves. They know that whatever deficit may arise in their means the parish must make up ; and they take into their account the relief derivable from this source, as confidently and with as little repugnance as if it were a part of their inheritance. It is truly painful to reflect that our peasantry who, some time ago, used to regard such a supply with dread—used to couple every notion of ruin, misery, and even degradation with the thought of coming upon the parish—should now be accustomed themselves to receiving relief almost as if it were a regular part of their wages. I can see but one effectual remedy for this great and growing evil ; it is the one which follows so immediately from the principles unfolded in Mr. Malthus's celebrated work. It might be objec-



tionable, on many grounds, to withhold relief from the future issue of marriages already contracted; but why may not such relief be refused to the children born of marriages to be contracted after a certain period? An exception might perhaps be made in favour of those who are incapable of working from age, or other infirmity, though I know not that it would be better to make their claims a matter of right than an appeal to charitable assistance. But persons able to work, and the issue of marriages had after the law is changed, should certainly be excluded. This change would not operate an immediate reform of the system, but the reform would be a perfectly sure one, and it would commence almost as soon as the law passed. If any gentleman is scared at so great an innovation, I will only ask him to survey the enormous amount and odious nature of the evil complained of, and to make his choice, between the expedient suggested, and the mischief so severely felt, not, indeed, as it at present exists, but in the still greater extent towards which it is daily hastening.

The next point to which I shall beg the attention of the Committee, is the means of relieving the land, and indeed the country in general, from the pressure of taxation, which I have shewn to

have so great a share in the present distresses. That such relief is within our reach, to a very great extent, I hold to be perfectly manifest. The whole sums applicable to the sinking fund for the last year amount to £15,627,000, and including the Irish debt, £16,928,000. Of this the financial operations of 1808 and 1813, have appropriated £4,302,000; there remains undisposed of, £12,626,000, and the sinking fund on the Austrian and Portuguese loans is £124,000, which makes the whole unapplied fund £12,750,000. Now, of this large revenue £6,479,000 arises from the one per cent. upon all loans contracted since 1793. It may be thought consistent with good faith to preserve this portion of the fund entire; and before such a plan as I am now suggesting could begin to operate, it would amount to about six millions and a half. The remaining part of the fund, including the annual grants, and the interest of the other redeemed stock, amounting to £6,271,000, or at the period in question, to about £6,300,000, might, I will venture to say, not only without detriment, but with advantage to the credit of the country, be applied to its relief in the remission of the most oppressive taxes. If a sinking fund of six millions and a half is left, operating at a time when there are no new loans, it will produce a far greater effect in the stock market

than the whole fund has ever done during war, when much more stock was constantly poured in than the commissioners could redeem. Indeed, this is too large a fund to remain so applied in time of peace, and could only be justified by the notion prevailing in some most respectable quarters, that good faith towards the lenders, since 1792, requires the one per cent. to be left untouched. But for preserving the other six millions and a quarter, no pretext can be urged, especially after the inroads already made upon the fund during war, which have destroyed all idea of its inviolability, in the minds of those who held it sacred. The prospect of the vast benefits which might be conferred on the country by such an arrangement, is so dazzling that I am afraid to trust myself with painting it. Only let the Committee reflect for a moment upon the taxes which might be instantly repealed, supposing always that our expences have been by retrenchment brought within our present revenue. The taxes that press most upon agriculture—those on leather, husbandry horses, and malt, might at once be done away. The most oppressive of the assessed taxes might also be repealed. The bad gains of the lottery, by which money is raised directly at the expence of public morals, might be abandoned. In short, we should have the pleasing task, during the remain-

der of this session of inquiring what taxes pressed most severely upon the people, or were most pernicious in their effects, and of lightening the burthen to the extent of between six and seven millions. As the remaining part of the sinking fund increased, further relief might, from time to time, be afforded; for surely it never could be in the contemplation of any one who understood the public economy of the country, in its trading as well as financial concerns, that the whole amount of the taxes required by the existing debt should be repealed at once, and the transition made suddenly from a levy of forty-two millions a year to no levy at all. Nor could any friend to the stability of the constitution wish to see the executive government for any period, how short soever, possessed of that enormous income unappropriated to any service. But they who tell us that the sinking fund is sacred, or rather that it has, since 1813, become sacred—who will not hear of any proposition for gradually reducing it—whom nothing will satisfy but a rise of stocks in a few months to par, the repayment of £100 for every £50 or £55 that we have borrowed, and the continuance of all our heavy burthens until the moment when they may all cease together—those persons must surely be prepared either to shew that the taxes now paying

for the benefit of posterity are unconnected with the distresses of the present age, or to produce some other means of relieving their country. The question is now at issue between the stockholder and all the rest of the community, and it is for the Committee to say whether they will, at all hazards and costs, take his part, or listen to the only imaginable means of effectually remedying the most trying of the evils we are labouring under.

Before I sit down, Sir, I must advert to the great importance of keeping a most watchful eye over the mercantile and manufacturing interests of the kingdom. It is an inexcusable ignorance or thoughtlessness alone, which can ever overlook the intimate connection between our trading and our agricultural concerns; nor can any thing be more preposterous than the clamour frequently raised on the one or the other side, as if those two great branches of public industry could have interests incompatible with each other. The sufferings of the merchants and manufacturers are hardly less severe in these times, than the distresses which immediately occupy our attention in this Committee. It well becomes us to see that they do not increase under the pressure of foreign competition, since the restoration

of peace on the Continent. Whatever measures may tend to open new markets to our industry, the Government is most imperiously called upon to entertain; a more effectual relief can hardly be given to agriculture than such a support extended to the other parts of the community. Let me in this light, intreat the attention of the Committee, and more especially of his Majesty's Ministers, to the trade with South America. Connected as we are with the Governments of Portugal and Spain, by every tie that can give one power a claim to favour from another, surely we may hope to see some arrangements made which shall facilitate our intercourse with the rich markets of Mexico, Brazil, and Peru. At present, if I am rightly informed, a considerable traffic is driven with those fertile countries, but under trammels that render it irksome and precarious. It is known that no consuls or residents, either commercial or political, are established in Spanish America; and, indeed, the whole trade is little better than a contraband carried on with a certain degree of connivance. Yet it is difficult to imagine any thing more beneficial to our mercantile interests, than the establishment of a regular and authorized connection with those parts of the world. The subject is not free from delicacy, in consequence of the efforts making by the Spanish colonies to shake off the yoke of the mother

country—efforts, for the success of which every enlightened, indeed, every honest man, must devoutly pray. But wherever the authority of the Spanish and Portuguese Governments extends, it may be hoped that some footing will be obtained for our merchants by negotiation, while, with respect to the revolted colonies, I trust his Majesty's Ministers will beware how they carry their delicacy towards the mother country too far, and allow other nations to pre-occupy the ground which our own countrymen ought to have their share of. The Americans are in the neighbourhood; we know their indefatigable activity and vast commercial resources; let us take care, not that we press forward to exclude them from the markets in question—that is impossible; but that we obtain access to those marts for ourselves. It is a subject of vast extent and importance; I abstain from entering further into it; but this I will venture to assert, that the minister who shall signalize his official life by establishing, whether in the old or the new world, such a system as may open to his country the commerce of South America, will render a greater service to the state, and leave to posterity a more enviable fame, than it is in the power of conquest to bestow.

Sir, I have to thank the Committee for the

patient attention with which they have honoured me. I am conscious that I owe it to the singular importance of the subjects I have been handling; and that, too, is the only apology I can offer for having so long trespassed upon your indulgence.

FINIS.



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