SERIOUS

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

Preſent alarming State

OF

AGRICULTURE, &c.

A

Houses of the Oireachtas

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OF

AGRICULTURE

AND THE

LINEN TRADE,

BY A

FARMER.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR W. WATSON, IN CAPEL-STREET,

M, DCC, LXXIII,

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M,DCC,LXXII.

Houses of the Oireachtas

TO HIS

GRACE

Dr. Richard Robinſon,

PRIMATE

OF ALL

IRELAND, &c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

AVERY principal gentleman of this county, in whoſe company I had the honour of ſpending a few hours

ſome time ſince, aſked me, what I thought might be the cauſe of the great emigration of the lower kind of people to America?

The queſtion, I found upon reflection, involved matters of the utmoſt conſequence to this Kingdom — AGRICULTURE and the LINEN TRADE; for which reaſon, I have beſtowed ſome time and pains in conſidering it; and, if I have been able to diſcuſs it with accuracy and preciſion, I truſt it will be found not altogether unworthy your Grace's attention and patronage.

The many great and laſting improvements, planned and executed by your Grace, for the Public Good, while they fill us with

with wonder and gratitude, are a certain pledge of your receiving favourably any attempt, to follow, though at the moſt humble diſtance, your Grace's patriotic example.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect,

MY LORD,

Your Grace's

Moſt devoted,

Moſt obedient,

and moſt

humble Servant,

ARMAGH,
SEPT. 1, 1773.

A FARMER.

Houses of the Oireachtas

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SERIOUS

CONSIDERATIONS

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Preſent alarming State

OF

AGRICULTURE, &c.

IN this age of improvement of the arts and ſciences, it will not I hope be thought preſuming, or impertinent, in one who affects no higher character than that of a rational practical Farmer, to point out to the Public, a ſcheme of profitable agriculture, which,

Forest of the Oreachtas

while it enriches the Farmer, will diffuſe plenty of all ſorts of proviſions, through this manufacturing country, at a much cheaper rate, than they can now be ſold for, from the wretched pitiful crops that we ſee yearly produced, by the preſent barbarous method of tilling the ground.

My ideas, which I ſhall endeavour to prove to be founded on facts, will probably expoſe me to much cenſure; but relying wholly on the integrity of my heart, and conceiving it to be the duty of every honeſt man to contribute, as much as in his power, to the Public Good; I ſhall not ſcruple to lay down the following axioms:

1ſt. That the preſent mode of letting ſmall farms to weavers, is extremely injudicious and prejudicial to this Kingdom; and next, that ſuch farms are never cultivated, in that ſpirited maſterly manner, as is neceſſary for procuring that plenty of the fruits of the earth, which the providence of God, in his great bounty and goodneſs to man, hath given it a capability of.

To illuſtrate what I have to ſay on that ſubject, I muſt beg leave to ſuppoſe a tract of one thouſand ſquare

acres

acres of land, inhabited by one hundred weaving families, each ſupported, in ſome meaſure, by the produce of its little farm of ten acres. This ſuppoſition will, I believe, be allowed to be no unfair repreſentation of the whole of this manufacturing country, with ſome very few exceptions; and if I can demonſtrate, that theſe little farmers, from their inability, by reaſon of their poverty or ignorance, do not raiſe above one-fourth part of the proviſions, which their land would produce under a ſpirited rational culture; one of the points which I endeavour to eſtabliſh, will be allowed me, and the other muſt of neceſſity fall in with it.

Let us then obſerve the weaver ſeated in his little farm, what will be his management of it? He begins generally with a capital not exceeding four pounds, including his loom, and with his wife's fortune, (ſeldom ſo much, but ſcarce ever more) he may poſſibly add a ſmall cow, and ſome wretched furniture for his cabin: Unable to keep a team, or even a ſingle galloway, he muſt with patience wait, till his more wealthy neighbour hath

finiſhed his ſpring labour, and then, when his corn ſhould be four or five inches above ground, he hires the farmer's jaded team, to ſcratch up the ſurface of four acres of his little farm for oats, from a lay of three years, when it had been perfectly exhauſted by his predeceſſor; on this he ſows twenty buſhels of ſeed, which by giving him three months credit for, the farmer hath ſupplied him with, at twenty-five ſhillings per boll, of ten buſhels, when the price for money is only twenty ſhillings; and if he hath been fortunate and diligent enough, to ſcrape up from about his door, a little dung, (well ſtored with dock and nettle ſeed) he muſt hire a horſe to carry it out, and with two days of his own labour, to ſpread it in the lazy-bed way, and the help of another as poor as himſelf, and his wife to lay the ſets, he plants four buſhels of potatoes, which he is to pay for, in about a month, at the rate of eighteen-pence per buſhel, the current price being then only thirteen-pence, or fourteen-pence *. The drawing out his dung,

* *But I have known them buy potatoes*

as well as the help he hath had in ſetting his potatoes, together with the ploughing and harrowing of his little ſpot under culture, muſt all be paid by his own labour; for the farmer, to avoid diſburſing any money, makes it a condition, to be paid for the uſe of his horſes, by the weaver's help, in ſeting and weeding his potatoes, and diging them out, and aſſiſting in making his hay, turf, &c. to the unſpeakable loſs of the Linen Trade.——He hath found too in his farm, a rood of potatoe ground; this he gets laboured on the ſame terms as for his oats, and ſows it with two pecks of flax ſeed, which ſome conſcionable retailer of that commodity hath generouſly granted him a few months credit for, at the moderate advance of one or two ſhillings per peck, above the ready money price; and if the credit given is for a longer time, the price riſes beyond all degrees of proportion, ſo as to amount frequently

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toes upon credit for two ſhillings per buſhell, when I was ſelling ſome of a much ſuperior kind at ſixteen-pence, for ready money.

quently to the double of what it ſold for in the ſowing ſeaſon. His little ſpring labour being thus ſlovened over, his wife can then, and not before, ſit down to her wheel, and he to his loom, for five or ſix weeks, after which it will require the full exertion of their joint labours, to keep his little farm tolerably clean from weeds, and repay the engagements which he is under for tilling it. Five acres remain under graſs, if ſuch it may be called, which hath been perfectly exhauſted by his predeceſſor; however ſuch as it is, he contrives, with it and the aſſiſtance of the high road, to keep his little beaſt from ſtarving the firſt year: he hath beſides about half an acre of flat, wet, ſpritty ground, which he calls meadow. About the middle or latter end of July, impelled by hunger and want of credit, he begins to dig up his potatoes, though not half arrived at maturity, ſo that by the end of November, they are above two-thirds conſumed. If the Linen Trade hath been favourable to him, (that is, if a number of commiſſioners, who lay out other folk's money, or ignorant

ignorant fooliſh young men, who are vain of ſhewing what large quantities they buy, have been buſy in the markets) our little motley man, half weaver, and half farmer, hath contrived not to run in debt, above two or three pounds.

His oats of four acres, with the wretched culture they have had, do not produce more than one hundred buſhels, which, if he hath not been forced to ſell on the foot, to pay his debts and rent, muſt now be diſpoſed of, at the beſt price he can (at that cheap ſeaſon) get for it, ſeldom exceeding thirteen-pence per buſhel: he then ſits down to his loom, and his wife, as much as her ſtate of pregnancy, or nurſing, will permit, to her wheel, and if the Linen Trade hath ſtill continued favourable to him, that is, if he hath got for his web, more than every true friend of this country ſhould wiſh it to be ſold for, who opens his eyes to future events, and ſees that the many powerful rivals we have in that branch, ſhould induce us, by every honeſt means, to underſell them; if this, I ſay, hath been the caſe, he may, perhaps, notwithſtanding his

loſs

loſs in farming, (1) have wrought himſelf

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(1) Dr. the Weaver's Farm of 10 acres, at 14s. per acre, rent and taxes.

	£.	s.	d.
To rent and taxes,	7	0	0
Ploughing for oats, four acres, at 5s. per ditto,	1	0	0
20 Buſh. oats ſeed, at 2s. 6d.	2	10	0
Sowing, harrowing, at 2s.6d.	0	10	0
Drawing out dung for potatoes, and ſpreading,	0	3	10
2 Men ſetting, a boy to lay,	0	2	1
4 Buſh. potatoes ſeed, at 1s.6d.		6	0
Ploughing and ſowing, one rood for flax,	0	2	0
2 Pecks, flax ſeed, at 2s.6d.	0	5	0
Weeding corn, flax, potatoes,	0	10	0
Reaping oats,	0	15	0
Tythe of oats, at 2s. meadow, and ſmall dues, 2s. 6d.	0	10	6
Pulling flax, 2 women 1 day,		1	1
Drowning, lifting, ſpreading,		1	1
Drying with turf, beetling,	0	3	3
6 Women ſcutching,	0	3	3
Digging potatoes,		2	8½
Cuting meadow, 6½d. winnowing hay, 1s. 1d. bringing home, and ſtacking, 2s.2d.		3	9½
	£. 14	9	7

himſelf clear of debt, by the time his ſpring labour comes round again.

	Cr. £.	s.	d.
By ten bolls of oats, at 10s. 10d.	5	8	4
6 Stone of ſcutched flax, at 5½d. per pound, (great produce)	1	18	6
½ Acre of hay, (high price)	1	0	0
Grazing for hire, a ſmall heifer,	0	10	6
35 Buſhels of potatoes, at 8d.	1	3	4
Straw,	1	17	0
	11	17	8
Loſt this year by the farm, (beſides victualling women who attended the flax) *	2	11	11
£.	14	9	7

* *This loſs upon his farm, together with his expences in houſe-keeping, for at leaſt one half of the year, muſt all be*

paid

His ſecond year's management is a tranſcript of the former, except that he takes from his paſture a rood of ground for potatoes, and ſows with oats that which was nearly exhauſted laſt year by his flax: this, while it diminiſhes his paſture, makes but a poor amends by tillage, as the oats after his flax do not yield above five buſhels, and then he turns it out to reſt for at leaſt three years: His crop of four acres of oats, being the ſecond from lay, is rather more favourable than the former, and he reaps one hundred and twenty buſhels at the harveſt;

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paid for out of the profits of his weaving; a melancholy reflection to the true friends of this unhappy infatuated country; eſpecially when we conſider, that the major part of the Linen made here is coarſe, and that the weaving farmer cannot by reaſon of his many avocations, work above fifteen double pieces in the year, conſequently, there is an unneceſſary load of near three ſhillings and ſix-pence laid on each piece, which is about one penny per yard, a trifle under.

harveſt; but as his family encreaſes, the labour of his wife is conſequently leſs, and though the Linen Trade hath ſtill been briſk, yet it requires his whole diligence and activity, to wipe himſelf clear of debt, by the following ſpring; for notwithſtanding his crop of oats hath exceeded that of the former year twenty-five buſhels,(2)

(2) Dr. the Weaver's Farm, the ſecond Year.

	£.	s.	d.
To rent and charges as before,	14	9	7
Ploughing and ſowing with oats, one rood of laſt year's flax ground,	0	1	10½
5 Pecks of ſeed oats for it,	0	3	1½
Additional tythes,	0	0	6
	£ 14	15	1

yet the loſs of the greater part of his wife's labour, hath deprived him of all the advantage of it. But the third year is the moſt diſtreſsful, for then, as his family encreaſeth in number, his crop decreaſeth in quantity, as well as

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Cr.

	£.	s.	d.
By produce as before,	11	17	8
Additional produce more than laſt year on 4 acres of oats,	1	1	8
5 Buſhels on a rood of flax ground,	0	5	5
Additional ſtraw, more than laſt year, 37 ſtooks, at 3d.	0	9	3
	13	14	0
Loſt this year by the farm,	1	1	1
	£14	15	1

as quality: (3) His four acres, which are ſtill in oats, produce no more than eighty

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(3) Dr. the Weaver's Farm, the third Year.

To rent and charges, as before, £ 14 15 1

Cr.

	£.	s.	d.
By 8 bolls of oats, at 9s. 9d.	3	18	0
Flax, hay, and potatoes as before,	3	17	5½
By Straw, 160 ſtooks, at 2d.	1	6	8
* Loſt this year by the farm,	5	12	11½
	9	2	1½
	£ 14	15	1

* *Which upon* 15 *pieces of Linen is a tax of* 7*s.* 6*d. each, above* 2*d. per yard.*

eighty buſhels of a poor ſtarved grain; and his wife's inability, by her encreaſe of family, to aſſiſt as before, obliges him to hire a boy, to attend his loom, and help to weed his crop, which, from an injudicious courſe of ſlovenly tillage, requires it more than ever. More proviſions muſt be had, and unable as he is to buy them, but from hand to mouth, he muſt in the ſpring, provide as he wants them, at an extravagant rate. Happy if the high price of Linen enable him ſtill to ſtand his ground, indebted only four or five pounds. Every year afterwards, his circumſtances grow worſe and worſe; ſo that to eſcape a jail, he makes a moon-light fliting, as it is called, and flies to England or America, or perhaps attaches himſelf to the ſervice of ſome more wealthy neighbour, with whom he ever afterwards lives in a ſtate of wretched dependance, of abſolute beggary and vaſſalage. And here I appeal to moſt country gentlemen, whether they do not find many ſuch about them; for my own part, I employ three of them in my little farm, and occaſionally ſeveral of their children, who muſt otherwiſe have ſtarved or gone a begging,

ging, and a great part of thoſe whom I call in at hay and corn harveſt, &c. conſiſts of ſuch. What then, will it be aſked, ſhall we do with this very uſeful body of men, to whoſe ſkill and labour, we are endebted for our (only free) trade? I anſwer, if you wiſh the Linen Trade to flouriſh among us, let them ſtick to their looms, and, if they muſt have land, let them hold no more than is neceſſary for one or two cows graſs; throw your eſtates into farms, from one to three hundred acres, to be let to men who are able to cultivate them to the beſt advantage; let theſe be diſcouraged under the moſt ſevere penalties, viz. double rents, from letting any part of them beyond a cotter's take of three or four acres, to one family, and oblige them alſo to pay an advanced rent for all their meadow and paſture, beyond a certain proportion of their farm, ſo as always to have at leaſt two-thirds of it in labour; let a judicious courſe of tillage be laid down for them, and conſtrain them under heavy penalties to obſerve it: No more ſcratching the ground for three ſucceſſive crops of oats, and then leaving it, as they term it, to reſt, as

naked

naked as the high road, five acres of which, would ſcarcely keep a cow in fleſh; inſtead of that, ſubſtitute the following courſe, or ſomething ſimilar, ſo as never to have two crops of white corn ſucceeding each other.

1. Potatoes with plough or dibble, to be cleaned with horſe or hand-hoe.
2. Bere or barley.
3. Clover one year for meadow.
4. Wheat.
5. Peas or beans, well hoed.
6. Oats.
7. Turnips, well hoed, and a ſlight dreſſing for
8. Wheat or Barley.
9. Flax, and then potatoes as before.

With ſuch a courſe the farmer would take treble crops from the ground, and would conſequently be enabled to ſell proviſions at a much cheaper rate, than he can now raiſe them for; the weaver having no avocation from his loom, could give up his whole time and attention to it, and make at leaſt eight or ten pices more in the year, and of better cloth, than he can do now; and by the low price of proviſions, he

he could afford to ſell his Linens at ſuch a rate as to command a conſtant foreign demand for them: Whereas, (I ſhudder at the thought) if things are ſuffered to go on in the ſame courſe, in which they have moved for ſome time paſt, we ſhall be underſold in all foreign markets; and when once the Dutch, French, German, and Ruſſia Linens, have obtained ſome time, we ſhall find it next to impoſſible to get ſale for ours. Let us not flatter ourſelves; Our good friends the Engliſh and Americans, will never think themſelves obliged to take off our goods, if they are dearer, or of an inferiour quality to what they can import from other manufacturing countries; all that they owe us, and indeed all that we have a right to expect from them, is to give us the preferance of their money, the price and quality of our goods conſidered: I have now in my poſſeſſion ſome remnants of hempen and flaxen Ruſſia Linens, which I bought in London, at the third hand from the importer, where no doubt every man had his profit, (and which, moreover, had paid an heavy duty) which are cheaper and better, than any I can procure in this manufacturing country: And yet it is a

favourite maxim with many of our country gentlemen, that our brown Linens can never be too high, not once reflecting upon the number of our competitors, ready to underſell us, nor, that a trade where the profits between buyer and ſeller are not reciprocal, muſt be of ſhort duration: About thirty months ſince, when, upon ſome expected demand, for the American markets, (in which however we were ſadly diſappointed) our brown Linens roſe to an extravagant price, I have known many gentlemen over-joyed at it, not conſidering that ſo unnatural a riſe in the ſtaple trade of a manufacturing country, muſt in the nature of things, ſoon ſubſide, and that lands then taken at the extreme high rents, which the unthinking weaver then fooliſhly imagined, the profit of his web would enable him to pay; muſt conſequently ſink as much below their real value, whenever ſuch a reverſe, as we now feel, happened; inaſmuch as by far the greater part of their eſtates are let to ſuch, who are now ſo abſolutely diſpirited, that they have not yet determined how low they would reduce the rents.

But

But I think I hear the landed gentry ſay, can you ſeriouſly adviſe us to lower our rents at leaſt one third of their preſent value? No gentlemen, I am not ſo unreaſonable; I would, on the contrary, wiſh to ſecure to you an advantageous and certain value of your lands, independant on the accidental fluctuations of trade, without being expoſed to the failure of tenantry on the one hand, or laying yourſelves, as is now likely to be the caſe, at the mercy of a ſet of poor deſponding, diſpirited weavers, who are, for the preſent, utterly unable to ſecure to you above one-half of your late rents. The farmer, ſuch as I have mentioned, can very well afford to give you thirteen or fourteen ſhillings, per Engliſh acre; and, where he is not above one or two miles removed from good, natural manures, he will grow rich by it: (if at a greater diſtance, ſome abatement ſhould be made him) and I dare ſay, that moſt gentlemen would be well ſatisfied with ſuch rents: I know indeed ſome poor wretches, who engage to pay twenty ſhillings, and a guinea, per acre; but they hold in general the third or fourth, removed from the lord

of the ſoil, under a ſet of unfeeling taſk-maſters, who keep them naked and half ſtarved, in a perpetual ſtate of bondage: Would gentlemen take the trouble of informing themſelves of the wretched condition of ſuch people, they would not fail to prevent, by every poſſible means, that kind of ſubdividing of their farms. But ſome miſtaken advocates of the weavers, will ſay, what ſir, would you degrade this very uſeful body of men, into the abject ſtate of cotters? Miſtake me not, good ſirs, I look upon them as a very uſeful and neceſſary body, and would go as far in their ſervice, as any one; but yet I would not wiſh to ſee them landholders; not becauſe I deſpiſe, but becauſe I love and eſteem them, and therefore would wiſh to ſee them employ their time more beneficially, for themſelves and their families, than they can poſſibly do by attending to their little farms: I would have them live as weavers do in England, with plenty and comfort; I have travelled through a great part of the manufacturing counties there, not altogether an unattentive obſerver, and particularly in Yorkſhire, about Leeds, Wakefield and Hallifax,

Hallifax, and in Lancaſhire, about Preſton, Warrington and Mancheſter; I obſerved the country, for ſome conſiderable diſtance round theſe towns, to be thickly inhabited by weavers; and I can with truth affirm, that not one of thoſe of whom I occaſionally aſked the queſtion, poſſeſſed a ſingle foot of land, beyond a garden: The farmer ſupplied them daily with milk, butter, cheeſe, flour, potatoes, &c. and the butcher with fleſh meat; for there, the weavers, except the diſſolute and debauched, not only poſſeſs the neceſſaries, but enjoy alſo, many of the comforts, and ſome few of the luxuries of life, which are here the lot of only our wealthier folks, and are utterly unknown, to our weavers and ſmall farmers. But many will aſk, how is this total change of things to be brought about? Not all at once I confeſs: ſuch an improvement muſt come by degrees; the landed gentlemen, were they even unanimous in deſiring it, could not effect it of a ſudden: Leaſes would interfere, and render ſuch a ſcheme for the preſent impracticable in its full extent; but ſomething might be done, even now, to open mens eyes

to

to their own intereſts; many gentlemen have it at this inſtant, in their power to let perhaps more than one ſuch farm as I mention; let them look out for an occupier, and publiſh the conditions in England; men of property and judgment, might be found there, who would conſent to come among us for a good farm, eſpecially if gentlemen could be prevailed upon to relinquiſh thoſe ſlaviſh clauſes, which are now too generally introduced into leaſes, ſuch as duty-work, with duty-corn, and fowls, beſides grinding our grain at certain mills, at an extravagant price; terms and conditions utterly unknown among the ſenſible ſpirited gentlemen, and farmers of England, which, while they ſtrongly ſtigmatize the ſlaviſh ſouls of the wretches, who ſubmit to them, throw a ſhade on (otherwiſe) the faireſt characters.

I am ſenſible of the delicacy of this ſubject, and that it is ſcarcely poſſible to ſpeak of it as the thing deſerves, without giving offence, where of all things I could wiſh to avoid it; and I know too how very difficult it is to get over the prejudice of old cuſtoms, eſpecially

cially where they ſeem to favour our intereſt: but my deſire is by no means to abridge the landed gentry of any part of their revenues; on the contrary, I would wiſh to allow them the full value of their eſtates, that they may be enabled to live with all that dignity, eaſe, and hoſpitality, which are ſo much the diſtinguiſhing characteriſticks of the gentlemen of this Kingdom: The rents which they now receive, under the ſlaviſh name of duties, I know do not exceed four-pence per acre, and the forced rent of their mills, cannot equal two-pence more, aboliſh theſe, and we are ready and willing to advance your rents ſix-pence per acre; the tenant who will not, let him continue ſtill in fetters, he does not deſerve to be free: Your mills, however, would ſtill let at near two-thirds of their preſent value, though not a ſingle tenant were bound to them; and theſe would be more fairly and honeſtly dealt by, if the millers knew they might go to what mill they pleaſed: But ſhould it, upon tryal, be found impracticable to induce an Engliſh farmer, to ſettle among us, from the horrour he muſt conceive of the ſlaviſh condition

of

of that ſtate, in this Kingdom, I would adviſe to accept of the offer ſo often made by Mr. Young of Northmines, and receive from him, an intelligent huſbandman, to whom I would wiſh to ſee conſigned, the management of a farm of one, two, or three hundred acres; and by keeping an exact diary of the profits and expences of a farm, under ſuch management, I doubt not, it would be found more advantageous, than any rent it would poſſibly let for, either to weaver or farmer. A few ſuch examples would ſoon be univerſally followed, and, inſtead of that diſtreſs and miſery, which in our preſent low ſtate of the Linen Trade, we are daily witneſſes to, we ſhould ſoon ſee the whole face of the country changed, the rents liberal, and well paid, the farmer enriched by plentiful crops, and the weaver, with a full command of money to procure to his family, all the neceſſaries, and many of the conveniencies of life. But I have occaſionally heard it objected to this ſcheme, that the experiment hath been already tried, and found to be ineffectual: Some gentlemen it is ſaid have been at the expence of building, neat convenient

factories,

House of the Oireachtas

factories, for weavers to be ſupported merely by their loom, and the experiment hath conſtantly failed: theſe objectors however muſt allow me to ſay, that the gentlemen who have attempted ſuch eſtabliſhments, have failed not through any defect in the plan, but from an errour in the execution of it: They have built factories, it is confeſſed, but have neglected to eſtabliſh near them, one or more ſenſible ſpirited farmers, from whom their little manufacturing colony ſhould have derived its ſupport: Whereas, were farms firſt ſettled, the weavers would have no avocation to take them from their looms, no temptation to call them from their natural employment, and would conſequently greatly encreaſe, and improve our Linen manufacture; the command of money which this encreaſe of trade would give them, would be an alluring inducement to the farmers to vie with each other for their cuſtom; and thus theſe two very uſeful bodies of men would be linked together, by the firmeſt bands of ſociety—their mutual wants and intereſts.

It will not here I hope be required of me to prove that where men are

wholly employed in the practice of any one trade, they will make a greater proficiency and improvement in it, than they could poſſibly do, were their attention frequently called off to other purſuits; but ſhould any one be ſo unreaſonable as to put me to the proof of it, I would beg leave to inſtance to him in the articles of pins or watches, that the former, though ſeemingly of the moſt ſimple conſtruction, is notwithſtanding the work of ſeveral diſtinct trades, not one of which infringes on the buſineſs of the other; the perſon who cuts the wire into proper lengths, hath nothing to do with the poliſh or ſilvering of it; another gives it the point; a fourth forms the heads; and I believe a fifth puts them on: The watch-maker too, buys his wheels from one; his chains from another; a third furniſhes ſprings, a fourth provides ſcrews; a fifth rivets and pins; and, if I am not miſ-informed, that elegant uſeful little machine, is a compoſition of the joint labours of ten or a dozen different tradeſmen; if any one doubts that both one and the other, are better and cheaper, than if they were the work each of one man, the watch or

pin-

pin-maker will ſoon undeceive him. But ſtill there will be found, many objectors to this plan, merely on account of the novelty of it, or perhaps that they imagine, that there can be no better method of cultivating the ground, than the good old one, which they ſee daily practiced by men grown grey in the buſineſs of farming; they will not upon ſuch occaſions, fail to inſtance a few men, who have ſeemingly amaſſed wealth in the practice of it, not conſidering that among the very few, who hold large farms of good land at a low rent, and are worth, perhaps, two or three hundred pounds, (here deemed a fortune) they cannot inſtance one, who hath not had the advantage of ſome lucky hit, in the linen, flax-ſeed, meal, malting, or other trade, or perhaps hath dabbled not a little in lending out ſmall ſums, at an exorbitant intereſt; or, in fine, ſaved a little money, by living like a brute, and denying himſelf all the comforts, and many of the neceſſaries of life: Strip him of theſe helps, and by the mere buſineſs of farming, as it is here practiced, I will undertake to prove him to be no gainer: For inſtance, in the ſingle arti-

cle of potatoes, that moſt uſeful, moſt beneficial of all roots, whether we conſider it as food for man or beaſt, or as the beſt preparation in nature, for a ſubſequent crop of bere or barley, he cultivates them in the old lazy bed way, often without one ſingle previous ploughing, but ſcarce ever more than one; allured by the cheapneſs and eaſe of that ſlovenly kind of culture, and never keeping a regiſter of the profits and expences of his farm, he is well aſſured, by a groſs gueſs, that by keeping them up to the ſpring ſeaſon, he can then ſell them among the weavers, and ſmall farmers, (for all others have enough for their own ſeed) at ſuch a price as to give him ſome profit; but this method, beſides that it doth not half labour, or mellow his land, is ſo extremely ſlovenly and imperfect, that it is next to impoſſible to keep it tolerably clean from weeds; for my own part I never yet ſaw a ſubſequent crop of barley or wheat, where I could not have traced the ſhape of the old potatoe ridge, merely by the luxuriant growth of couch graſs and other weeds, which had been pared indeed, but not eradicated from the brows, or borders of

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the old ridges; beſides that it is utterly impoſſible with that imperfect ſlovenly culture, (if indeed it deſerves the name of culture) to raiſe ſuch a crop of potatoes, as may enable the grower to ſell them at a reaſonable price, to the conſumer, and to make at the ſame time, ſuch a profit by it, as to pay the wear and tear of his horſes, and farming implements, and to lay up any thing towards defraying the charges of accidental contingencies (4).

Upon

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(4) Dr. one acre of land cultivated in the moſt approved lazy-bed way.

	£.	s.	d.
To rent and taxes,	0	14	0
Ploughing and harrowing,	0	7	6
6 Horſes and 4 men dunging,	0	12	4
16 Buſhels of ſeed at 18d. which is the middle price in ſpring,	1	4	0
10 Men, with 2 boys ſeting,	0	9	2
6 Men ſhoveling,	0	5	0
1ſt Weeding, (very imperfect) 8 men,	0	6	8
	3	18	8

Upon the whole, though I have beſtowed ſome pains in the inveſtigation

	£.	s.	d.
Brought forward,	3	18	8
2d ditto, 6 men,	0	5	0
12 Men diging-up, and 12 gatherers,	0	15	0
Drawing home, and houſing, (2 carrs and 2 men,)	0	4	8
	5	3	4
Profits on this acre *,	2	8	4
	£7	11	8

* *When we reflect on the expences attending this little crop, and that in every farm, there muſt of neceſſity be ſome land, from which the tenant cannot derive any the ſmalleſt profit, ſuch as the land under drains and hedges, with that under his yard, buildings and high road, and that however diligent he may be, there will be ſtill ſome part of his farm, that is not worth the rent; that beſides, it will be almoſt impoſſible for him to provide manures for above one-tenth part of his land, for the culture*

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tion of this ſubject, as conſidering it of the utmoſt importance to this diſtreſs'd

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	Cr. £.	s.	d.
By 140 buſhels, being the middle crop between 120 and 160, which ſhould not be higher to the conſumer than 10d. per buſhel, but as things are now managed, are ſold at 1s.1d. in the ſpring, and ſometimes as high as 2s. however, as 1s.1d. is a good price to the grower, I ſhall calculate upon it.	7	11	8

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of potatoes, when all this is attended to, the profit of £2 8s. 4d. muſt be allowed to be very pitiful and trifling. The author's plan indeed is much more expenſive, (above ſeven pounds to the acre) but his crops are anſwerable, he can prove beyond a doubt, that he raiſed 1351 Buſhels, from two acres, and one-half of ground; his crop, this year, has every appearance of being much more conſiderable.

treſs'd country; nothing leſs indeed, than whether we ſhall become a wealthy, happy people; or dwindle, from bad to worſe, into a ſtate of abſolute beggary and bankruptcy, to which we ſeem now to be haſting with great ſtrides; yet will I not venture to conclude it to be wholly exempt from errours, ſome it is poſſible there may be, (though I am not conſcious of any) becauſe among thoſe who here affect to call themſelves farmers, there is not perhaps one, I am ſure, I know not one, who keeps a regular account of the profits and expences of his farm; but ſuppoſing, as I really do, that my premiſſes are right, the concluſions which I have drawn from them, will, I hope, appear to be natural and unforced; and as I have no manner of intereſt in hazarding this little publication, which may poſſibly provoke much cenſure from the better kind of people, and abuſe from the lower, the candid public will, I hope, excuſe ſuch inaccuracies as may be found in it.

FINIS.