

**CHEAP CORN, BUT NO
BREAD: OR THE RESULTS
OF A FREE CORN TRADE**

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Cheap Corn, But No Bread: Or The Results of a Free Corn Trade by Cheap corn

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PREFACE.

ERRATA.

On page iv, line 16, for *course* read *cause*.

tection can scarcely be contemplated, and that it would have been more to the point to bring forward some feasible plan, likely to afford direct relief. If, however, it is ever possible to reconcile men to a measure which they believe injurious to their interests, it certainly is at that time when the effects of such a measure are so

slight as scarcely to be felt. A consumer is at present supplied with corn at very nearly as low a rate as if the trade was perfectly free; and it is presumed he may therefore be induced to consider the subject without those angry feelings which always accompany present loss.

The present low price of corn may, perhaps, be partly attributed to the great improvements in husbandry which have taken place of late years, both in Great Britain and Ireland, and to this extent the existing protection, if continued, will gradually bring relief from the increase of population, and consequent additional consumption. A more efficient course will, I think, be found in the state of our currency, but this question I shall studiously avoid, on the present occasion. "It is an ill wind that blows no one good," says the proverb, and the present time of trouble is so far of use that it furnishes

an additional weapon for defence; the confessed inability of the legislature to afford direct relief, giving us an additional right to demand that they will not inflict direct injury, and that as we are left to struggle through distress unaided, so should we be allowed to enjoy any little prosperity that may follow unmolested.

Should the old question be repeated "of what use are your enactments if they leave you liable to the distress you complain of?" The answer is obvious. The low prices under which the British farmer is fast sinking, are, with our protecting duties, but temporary, without them they must be permanent.* Besides, if as you say, the duties are of trifling benefit to us, they are of equally little importance to you; why, then, seek to deprive us of a

* The price of corn in any one market, would, of course, vary according to the seasons, &c., we should, however, draw our supplies from so many different countries that a scarcity in one would generally be compensated by plenty in another, and the average price would probably continue tolerably uniform.

good which you rate so low, but which we, on the contrary, consider indispensable.

Before entering on the question, it may be as well to state that I applied myself to the examination of the subject with a wish to be convinced of the expediency of free trade, as more consonant with my general politics which are decidedly whig. After careful consideration, however, I came to the conclusion, that such a system would be eventually injurious to those very classes who expect to be the greatest gainers thereby. Such an unexpected result made me doubt my own arguments; but as I have not been able to detect the fallacy (if such there be), I lay them before the public, in the hope that if they also think them valid, they will act accordingly.

RESULTS

OF A

FREE TRADE IN CORN.

THE principal results expected from a free trade in corn are—

1st. A diminution in the price of corn (and consequently of the other necessaries of life), to such an extent as to effect a manifest improvement in the condition of the labouring classes.

2ndly. An increase of demand for manufactures in exchange for foreign corn, thus creating a thriving state of trade, with increased employment for our shipping: and

3rdly. A great addition to the general wealth and happiness of the nation, consequent upon the extension of trade and the prosperous condition of the lower classes.

I shall, perhaps, be considered paradoxical, for endeavouring to establish propositions completely opposed to the above very prevalent ideas on the subject. This, however, shall not deter me from making the attempt; the question is by far too important to be let alone, from the fear of being thought absurd. I shall, therefore, without further preface, proceed in my endeavour to prove the truth of the following startling assertions.

1st. That the labouring classes will be the first to suffer from the introduction of corn duty free.

2ndly. That the manufacturers, even of those staple commodities whose business would not be immediately injured by free trade, would, after a short season of prosperity, experience the most ruinous effects from such a measure.

3rdly. That the wealth and happiness of this country would be materially and immediately diminished by free trade.

I address myself first to you, my labouring countrymen, because you form the most numerous