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CONDITIONS.

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FROM COBBETT'S LONDON REGISTER

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE U. STATES OF AMERICA.

LETTER XIII.

John Bull's great Lottery—John Bull's Bulwark in Peace—John Bull's Counterbuff.

Botley, 18th May, 1816.

You have lotteries in your country, and I think, it would be a great deal better for your morals if you had none. Qualify the thing how we please, be the object of it what it may, still it is gaming; it is, at the very best, a game at hazard—it is an endeavor to get money out of the pockets of others, by exciting in those others a hope which, upon the whole, must of necessity be false; and, where is there any man of character, who would not be ashamed to acknowledge, that he had wilfully and deliberately excited a false hope in another for the purpose of getting money from him. But, I am now about to talk to you of a lottery of a very different description indeed. It is John Bull's great annual lottery. You have blanks as well as prizes in all your lotteries; and so have we in some of ours. Those who put into your lotteries purchase tickets, or shares of rickets—so it is in some of ours. But, in John Bull's great national annual lottery, there are no blanks, and the parties give nothing for their tickets.

Not to keep you longer in suspense, this is the nature of the thing. Just after Easter Tuesday, the officers of the several parishes hold a meeting, at which, by the way of lottery, they distribute amongst the most able parishioners, young paupers to be kept by the said parishioners & brought up by them in their own houses, or, at any rate, maintained by them, clothed, fed, lodged, and doctored, at their own particular expense, until they grow up to be men or women. Luckily I have just had a prize drawn for me in this lottery; a girl, about 10 or 12 years of age. So that, besides about six hundred dollars a year that I pay towards the keeping of the paupers in money, I shall, if I live so long, have this girl upon my hands for 7 years! This is big John Bull's great lottery. If I had all my share of paupers quartered upon me as this girl is, I should have about twenty-eight of all ages. This number I maintain, and have maintained for years, while, upon an average, I have not employed more than twelve laborers, or thirteen at most, including garden and every thing. In my own house we are twelve altogether. So that I have more than one pauper to every other human being moving within the sphere of my support.

These facts, which I state in the face of the country and of my own neighbors, cannot be denied; and it is from facts like these that we are enabled to judge of the real state of the nation. The coaches and chariots and landaus that rattle through the squares and streets of London; the forests of masts that rise in the seaports; the loads of pearls and diamonds that shine at the court; even the beautiful mansions and pleasure grounds that are seen all round the metropolis: these; no one; no, nor all these put together, are a proof of the prosperity of a nation: all these may exist, and the nation be plunged in the deepest of misery and degradation.

Let any sensible man apply his mind to this subject for a moment, and (for it is worth his while) trace this poor girl to her probable fate; and then he will see the effects of a taxing and pauperising system. What am I to do with this child, whom the law compels me to take and maintain? I know not whether she be bastard or orphan, or one of a family whose father and mother are alive. She is forced upon me to be kept and reared up by me. Were I so disposed, it would be impossible for me to pay any attention to her morals or to any part of her conduct. I must of necessity leave her to the care of some other person. My intention is to place her in a farm-house, under the authority of a woman, who may teach her, perhaps, to feed pigs and poultry, to milk, and make butter and cheese; but, can I expect any one to have due care of the moral behaviour of this girl? Yet, what is to become of her?

Can I point out any thing better? I cannot; for, in the poor-house her chance would be infinitely worse. My wife? Faith she has the rearing of her own children to attend to. Her time is as precious as mine; for no children of ours will have, to reproach us with having fed them from mercenary breasts, or with having committed their education to hirelings.

I do not complain of the expense imposed upon me in this instance. I do not complain of any unfairness in the drawing of the lottery. My neighbors would scorn to act so mean. But, I complain of a state of things, that imposes upon me a duty, which it is out of my power to perform. All I can possibly do is, to see that this girl has plenty of food and clothing, and that she is properly lodged, and duly attended in sickness. But, do I not do this for my horses and my cows? What I complain of is, a state of things, which takes so large a part of the children from their natural guardians, their fathers, mothers, relations, and friends, and throws them upon the mercy of those who utter strangers to them, and who, instead of natural feeling for them, must, unless they bring great consideration to their aid, naturally have a feeling against them; and especially in cases where the support of a pauper is a serious pecuniary burthen to the party on whom it is imposed.

Now, my old English friends in America, who used to join me (for I took the lead) in singing the praises of the English government and Pitt, what do you think of this? Perhaps you think, by this time, as I do; that we were a set of very ignorant though honest fellows, who confounded admiration of men in power with love of country, and whose violent prejudices, though bottomed in the best of principles, led us into a thousand follies, and really made us, perhaps, instrumental, in some small degree, in producing the enormous evils under which our country now groans.

I remember a book, that we used to look at a good deal, entitled "A Picture of England." It contained views of county seats and of fine hills and valleys. This book and Grose's Antiquities were enough for me. Alas! this was no picture of England, if by England, we mean the English nation; and if, by the nation, we mean the great body of the people: I now give you the means of judging of the real state of England; I give you the true "Picture of England." Here am I, with twelve persons in family, including servants, and with thirteen laborers, on an average, constantly employed; and the maintenance of twenty-eight paupers falls fairly to my share! This, my old friends; this, my worthy countrymen, is the real picture of England—and should I not be a very despicable man, if the false shame of acknowledging past erroneous opinions were to prevent me from laying this picture before you?

Now, in a state of things like this, what a farce it is to be told about "enlightening the lower orders." How are my twenty-eight poor wretches of paupers, and my thirteen laborers and their families, but one step above paupers; how, I ask, are they to be enlightened? And, if this were possible, which it is not, what would be the use of it? What could it do more than add mental to bodily suffering? Away, then, with all the talk; all the palaver; all the cant; all that cunning can suggest to hypocrisy for the purpose of deluding the well-meaning, thoughtless, but liberal men, who subscribe their money to support this shew of regard for the minds and souls of the poor!—Were not a system of clerical education necessarily calculated to debase the object of it, in a state of things like this it is a pure folly, to attempt it. It is bread, and not books, that the poor creatures stand in need of. The government takes from me so much, that I am unable to give more than I give to my laborers. I have only enough left to give them the means of barely keeping life in their bodies. They, therefore, successively become paupers. If, as in America, the labourer took the share, or the far greater part of it, which the government takes here, there would be no paupers; laborers would have money against a day of sickness. This, however, has all been so clearly shewn in No. 2 of this volume, that I will here take it as an established fact, that it is the increasing, and now enormous, weight of taxes, and that only, which has caused the fearful increase of pauperism, crimes, and capital punishment.

Away, then, I say again, with all the projects for enlightening the people by the means of schools, and of enriching them by the means of saving banks. What! Put by the 'savings' of my twenty-eight paupers and thirteen laborers, few of the latter of whom taste

meat once a week! What! a project for putting out the savings of such people to interest! Yet I should not wonder if this project were to reach you; there being none of our projects, of the humanity kind, that you do not adopt, as it were in the way of rivalry.—Would you not do well to make haste and rival us in the number of paupers? I hope to be able to give a check to this ape-like disposition, which leads you to look for example, to follow, where you ought to look for example to shun. As to the professed object of the saving bank project, it would be easier, if it were worth while, than to show the impossibility of its doing any good in any country; but, as to the real object, a word or two may be said. With regard to the laboring people in country places, they will never hear of the thing. But, in large towns, where there are numerous journeymen, who may save now and then a shilling, and who are sturdy chaps that read newspapers and that talk politics, it is tho't to be of importance to get sums of money thus collected, and thereby attach these swarms of sturdy, talking and active men to the system. Not another word need be said, only that the project will fail. The friendly societies were great favorites. George Rose, their patron, brought in many acts of parliament to encourage their increase. Their money was put into the funds too. But, these societies are now found not to be good. They drew men together; and when assembled together, they talked! Wicked rogues!

The saving bank project, which has originated in that seat of all that is, at once conceited, impudent and servile, Edinburgh, whence, too, is coming a project for changing our weights and measures, and for throwing into utter confusion the trade and transactions of England, the colonies and the United States; as connected in trade with England; this saving bank project has in view to avoid the congregation evil of the friendly societies. It is intended to collect the money, without collecting the people. But, the proprietors do not seem to reflect, that, in getting rid of the gregarious quality, they throw aside the strongest lures of all such schemes; to wit: the pot, the pipe, the song and the chat. For the sake of these, journeymen will yield up a little of their wages to go into a fund; but, when there are no lures of this sort, they will not easily discover any solid reason for their giving up their means of present gratification, with a view to spare the purse of the parish in their old age.

Back, then, we still return to the old point; the taxes, the taxes! While we are loaded with them as we now are, nothing can retard the progress of pauperism and of crimes. A tradesman, who works for me, and to whom I was talking, the other day, about the distresses of the times; observed, that he found it hard to stagger along with four children upon his back. "But," said he, "I could make shift to carry them, if I had not somebody else to carry. I have a soldier or two to carry besides—and you, sir, have a general, I dare say, upon your back." The idea put me in mind of Hannah More's religious tract entitled, "*Behr ye one another's burdens*," which was intended to reconcile the nation to the sufferings under the calamities of 1796, and at the head of which she put a woodcut, representing a parcel of people carrying bags and bales of sins and misfortunes—for Hannah was, perhaps, as artful, as able and as useful a scribe as ever drew pen in the cause of the system. But Mrs. Hannah, with your leave, it is not exactly one another's burdens that we bear. It is according to the idea of my tradesman, that some of us carry others upon our back. In the first place, I for instance, have twenty-eight paupers fastened upon me.—Then, I pay taxes, direct and indirect, about a thousand pounds a year, besides the poor rates. Perhaps a great deal more. Now, as I am a sort of literary man as well as a farmer, I may suppose myself ridden, by William Gifford, who has two or three sinecures which amount to about a thousand pounds a year. Here I stagger along, then, with the political editor, poet and reviewer, astride upon my shoulders, & with my twenty-eight paupers hanging upon my arms, and in my skirts. Come, then, my old English friends in America, you will still confound the system with England, and who bid us be content, and call us Jacobins, if we complain; come here yourselves, and stick to it as we do. Do not remain there abusing republican government. Do not content yourselves with giving us advice. Come and share with us. Come, any one of you, and take a leg of William Gifford, and fourteen of my paupers; and then preach patience and divine right as long as you like.

Those who receive nothing out

of the taxes, are loaded according to the strength of their backs. Such a man as sir Francis Burdett, or Mr. Coke, has a rider like George Rose mounted on him; and, if all goes well, the son of sir Francis will have to carry George's son, after both the fathers are dead. To carry three or four captains, or a general officer, or a company of soldiers, or an admiral, or a parcel of lieutenants or soldiers, would not mortify one so much; but, do you think, my old English friends, that it is a sweet reflection to me, that the taxes, I pay, or, at least, a sum equal to them, is swallowed up in sinecures by a man like William Gifford? To those who render honorable service to the country; or, who endeavor to do it, no just man will grudge a reward.—But, is it not as clear as day light, that whatever sum this sinecure man takes from me, I cannot have to give to my laborers? Is it not clear that taxes make paupers? Is it not clear, that as long as these enormous taxes exist, pauperism and crimes can never be diminished?

Come, then, I say, my old English friends in America, and participate in our burdens as well as in our glory.—Do not remain there, while you exhort us to pay and be silent. It is very easy for you, who do not feel the little finger of taxation; to reproach us for our grumbling.—It is very easy for you, whose laborers may eat bread and meat every day in their lives, to tell us, whose laborers cannot get a full meal of the former, that we ought to be contented, and to think our government 'the envy and admiration of the world.' At this time the wages of a laborer at Botley, are 10s. a week; and flour is 15s. a bushel—consequently, the most that he can get is 38 pounds a week; or 5s. pounds a day, for himself, wife, and perhaps three or four children. In some parts of the country, laborers have not more than 8s. a week, and in some not so much. Why do you not come, then, if this be "the envy and admiration of the world;" why do not come and share our blessings?

And, you Cossack priests of New-England, why do you not come and help us to enjoy the benefits of those "ancient & venerable establishments," in the praise of which you have snuffled so sweetly for so many years?—The newspapers tell us, that the prince of Saxe-Cobourg has ordered fifty white horses to be bought for his use. Why do you not come, then, and see these fine sights? I would not advise you to come and preach to our laborers, that potatoes without either meat or bread are better than beef, pork, bread and turkey; for that would expose your reverend patres to the unsavory salute of addled eggs. But, if parsons Osgood and Parish and Gardiner and Channing, and as many more as would make up a score, will perform a pilgrimage from Boston to Botley, I hereby engage to find them a lodging, not under the same roof with myself, but under those of my laborers, in whose fare they shall participate, which will give them an opportunity of saying grace over a platter of cold potatoes, and of proving to their hosts how happy they ought to think themselves in living under those "venerable institutions," of which the Yankees, through the means of "a successful democratic rebellion," have been wholly deprived. Anticipating in idea the scenes that will arise from the performance of this pilgrimage, I burn with curiosity to hear the arguments that parson Channing will make use of to prove, that a mess of potatoes is better than a joint of meat; though I must distinctly premise, that if, in such a case, the mess, platter and all, should go, souze, at the head of the holy pilgrim, he must place the damage to the account of "the bulwark," for that I will not be responsible for any consequences that may result from his harangue.

John's bulwark in peace is nearly completed by the progress of the alien act. But, this measure has not been carried into effect without a great deal of exposure. There is something so awkward; something so ugly; something so much like a lurking fear on the very face of the thing; and, when in addition the opposition to the measure was taken up by such a man as Sir Samuel Romilly, is it not wonderful if a great degree of shame has stuck to it? Accordingly the hired writers have laid on upon Sir Samuel with great fury and filth. Of the manner, in which they perform this sort of work, you will easily judge by the following specimen from the *Courier* of the 10th instant:

"Sir Samuel's extraction and personal situation may therefore, well excuse the tendency of his mind against an alien bill; but we are much at a loss to guess why such men as Sir James Mackintosh and Mr. Horner—they are persons for whom, though we differ

from the general course of their political conduct, we have much respect; they are estimable in consideration of their individual talents and character, but they are doubly so from comparison with those amongst whom we find them;—we are, therefore surprised to be notified to find them opposing a measure which we think strictly constitutional; absolutely necessary, and consistent with all real English interests and English feelings.—What, says Samuel Romilly—"Will you excuse the skills, industry, & genius of the French?—No, no, we reply; we do not lack their skill, industry, and genius; we want them neither in commerce, nor in handicraft, nor in the church, nor in the law. We are come to a fine pass, indeed, to be told that it is good policy to introduce foreigners to assist, that is, to rival us in arts and manufactures.—No, no, sir Samuel, we have had enough of these gentry, and John Bull would be but too happy to get rid of this plague in future. But this is not the object of the present bill, but intended as Lord Castlereagh expressed it, not to carry into effect any policy of foreign powers but to protect British policy from being disturbed by the misconduct of strangers. In private life we all have the power to turn an imprudent, knavish, a riotous, or even an impudent stranger out of doors;—why should the state not have a power that every subject has? Why should England not enjoy a protection that every other nation in the world has? In looking over the debate we observed a curious circumstance.—Not one English gentleman opposed this bill; there were Hamilton and Brougham, Hopper and Moshinosh; but not one Englishman. We beg pardon; there was one—Sir Samuel Romilly."

This is the way in which these hirelings do their work. Now, the gentleman, whom this writer thus attacks, though not a politician such as the times call for, is allowed on all hands, to be the most able lawyer in England, and a man of spotless reputation; while Horner and Mackintosh, who are here praised, are nothing more than what I have before described to you.

But only attend for a moment, to the shameful language of this writer! Only think of a bill of this sort being called an enjoyment for England! Thus it is, that these men induce the people to confound the government with the nation. What a falsehood, too, to say that every nation in the world have such a law. You have no such law; and you are a nation, I hope; and tho' not so old, full as stout as big John Bull. *The Morning Chronicle* answers his opponent thus:

"When *The Courier* states that not an Englishman voted against the alien bill, the editor should have added, that the bill itself was not brought in by an Englishman: It is the measure of Lord Castlereagh, and comes from the congress of sovereigns against the cause of freedom, justice, and humanity. It is a bill of inhospitality, the preamble to which should be to refuse an asylum to all who trusted to the first professions of the British court, that they would not impose on the French any form of government or family without their consent; and to all who should desire to withdraw themselves from capricious tyranny and religious intolerance. It may be entitled 'A bill to open the ports of America for the introduction of the arts, manufactures, and property of all the ingenious, useful, thinking, independent and provident part of the population.' And when it is recollected what we gained by the Edict of Nantes, the value of this bill to America may be properly estimated."

This view of the matter agrees precisely with my views of it, stated in my late numbers. This will be a great benefit to you. It will hasten to fill your country with the best men in Europe. When once a man has his foot on the plank of an American ship, he may set despots at defiance. But, pay a little attention once more to this measure as it affects us. This hired writer blusters in the real John Bull style. He wants no foreigners. He despises foreigners. He hates foreigners. The mercenary creature knows that this suits the prejudice of his readers; but, then, he seems to forget how many hundreds of thousands of pounds have been extracted from foolish John Bull to support *French emigrants; German sufferers; Vendean; Chouans.*

He forgets how many pounds in pension money silly John Bull paid to the foreign scribes, Mallet du Pan and sir Francis D'Ivernois. But does he forget the Hanoverian officers and soldiers? Does he forget that whole districts of this same England were for a long while, placed under the command of foreign officers, and that even regie