VI. *Copy of an Original Proclamation of Queen Elizabeth, concerning the Scarcity of Grain; and a Letter from her Majesty's Privy Council to the Sheriff and Justices of the County of Norfolk, on the same Subject. Communicated by Francis Douce, Esq. F. A. S.*

Read Nov. 27, 1800.

“ BY THE QUEENE.

“ ELIZABETH R. [*Autograph.*]

THE Quenes Majestye is presently given t' understand of sum ill-disposed persons, who, partly to move misliking amongst the comun and meaner sort of her loving people, partly of covetousnes, to enhaunce the prices of corn, have of late secretly spred abroad, in markets and other places, that the prices do ryse and ar like daily to encrease, by reason that certain persons have bought sum quantites of grayn to her Majesties use in fundry countrees: and that also her Majestie meaneth to graunt to sum about her licence to cary corn out of the realm. Upon which rumors being maliciously spred, it may indede happen, that although there be no scarcite in the realme (thanked be Almighty God) yet therby the covetousnes of such as have either of ther own stoore, or by unlawfull bargaynes ingrossed into their hands great quantite of all manner of grayn, will take occasions to inhaunce the prices therof without necessary cause, to the detriment and burden of the multitud which have lack. Therfor her Majestie, mynding to prevent

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the inconveniences that may herof arrise, doth straightly chardg and commaund all manner of persons, and specially such as have governaunce of markets to apprehend and committ to prison such as do or shall utter and spred abroad any such devises to move dearth or offence amongst her good subjects. And secondly, her Majestie willeth all her good subjects to understaund for a truth, that she hath no meaning to do, or suffer any thing to be done, wherby any dearth of corn shuld rise amongst her people, neither hath she graunted licence to any person about her to cary out any quantite of grayn, and therfor, if any be so namid of evil intent, the same is also misused. And as to the providing or buying of any grayn by any of her ministers in her Majesties name, other then hath ben ordinarily alwayes for her household and her gar-risons upon the frontieres, she is pleased that the truth of her good meaning be understand, which was this: Having fundry earnest requests made to her Majestie by diverse of the townes belonging to the king of Spayne, her highnes good brother in the Lowe Countreyes, to have licence for buying and carying out of certain quantity of wheat and other grayn for their neccessite, her Majestie thought best neither fully to graunt, nor flatly to deny the same, until it might be furst understand, how the same might be done without hurt to her own countrey. And therfor furst, order was given to certeyn of her ministers, to prove at what prices certayn severall quantityes of grayn in fundry countrees might be bought for redy money without using any other meanes then comunly is used betwixt subject and subject, meaning if it shuld appear that a convenient quantite might be provided at reasonable prices and without enhauncying of prices or other damage to the realm, then her Majestie wold gratifie her neighbours therewith, in like sort as that her realm hath ben often tymes of late yeres from the other parts beyond the seas in tyme of scarcite here. And so in that maner her Majestie thought

·better to make a prouff by her own ministers, what might be reasonably had and provided, rather then to permitt straungers and their factors to travel abrode in the countrees, wherby both the prices shuld be disordered and yet they not satisfyed. Nevertheless, confidering it appereth that a nombre of covetous men having ingrossed into their hands in sundry countyes of this realm, and speciallie nere the sea coasts, great quantites of all manner of grayn, specially of such as serve for bread and drink, have, by pretence of this her Majesties good and loving intention, through spreadding of false rumors, threatened a dearth, and by forbearing to bring there corn to the markets, as they wer accustomed, have given sum colour thereof, and so the prices be growen soudenly very great and not to be well indured, nor such as can bear the sending out of any grayn out of the realm without occasion of great inconvenience to the multitude of the meaner sort: For help wherof, and for the tender favour which her Majeste beareth towards her loving subjects whom this matter moost toucheth, her Majesty hath given order to her ministers, in respect of the greatnes of the prices that now ar, to forbear from the transportation over the seas of the said grayn, and to disperse it among her loving people. And doth moost straightly charge and commaund that no manner of grayn shall be conveyed out of the realm by any manner, person, English or straunger. And further, that due serch be made immediately in all places, what quantites of corn hath ben bought by any manner of person by way of ingrossing, and to extend, as reason is, her lawes against them to the uttermoost, and all others that by that means of ingrossing or otherwise by forestalling or regrating, or by inordinate keping of grayn, have alredey or hereafter shall gyve any occasion to enhaunce the prices therof, as of late they have ben moost apparently by such meanes. And so her Majesty willeth and chardgeth all manner her officers and other ministers to see to the execution of the premiffes, as the spreadders of rumors,

rumors, who have given or shall give and threaten cause of dearth, and such persons as by ingrossing, forestalling, or any other unlawful meane, hath or shall give like cause of dearth, may be duely punished. And for the furder remedying of thinconvenience aforfayd: Her Majestie meaneth furthwith to sende speciall commission to persons of speciall trust in fundry countyes requisit to inquier upon the statuts provided against ingrossing, forstalling, or inhauncyng of the prices as well of grayn as of other victails, and to provide also, that the markets shal be duely feryd of necessary grayn and victaill. Gyven at her Majestes palays of Westminster, the twentieth day of January, 1565, in the eight yere of her Majesties reign.

“ God save the QUEENE.”

(COPY.)

“ To our lovinge Frendes the Highe Sheriffe and the rest of the Justices of Peace of the Countie of Norfolke.

AFTER our hartie comendacons: Wheras the Quenes Ma^{tie} uppon compassion of hir pore people, for the disordered and willfull increase of prices of graine and so consequentlie of breade, without juste cause, hath by hir proclamacon presentlye given straight comandement to all sheriffes and justices of the peace, to cause such order to be observed as were by hir comandement the last yere published in printe for the staie of the dearth of corne, hir Majestie allso hath comanded us to consider in what sorte the same orders hath not bin observed, and by what meanes scercitie of graine hath bin brought to merketts, and the same allso inhainfed
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from tyme to tyme within theis two mounthes, in many places of the realme, the store beinge sufficient to furnishe the marketts, and no cause whie in refone that any owners of corne should increase the prices above such rates as have bene by the said owners two or three mounthes past uttered and sould; and that it is most evident that the ingrossinge of corne, and forstallinge of marketts by covetous men, by buyinge out of the marketts at farmers houses great quantities of corne, hath bin cause of this dearth lately growne. For theis and other offences manifestlie comitted againste the said orders, wee doo most earnestlie requier you even for confience sake to have regarde hereunto, and to procede to the examinacion of the offences comitted against the said orders, and speedelie to deale severelie with all such as be owners of corne, and have any plentie thereof, not only by assessement to compell them upon payne of imprisonment to bringe weekelie to the marketts, next unto there dwellinge, some proporcons of all sorts of grayne convenient, but to overule them in thier prices so as the same be not sould at any dearer rate and prices then was at the least two or three mounthes paste by the same persones. And rather to have hir Majesties poore lovinge subjects to be in this cruell sorte forced to famine, you shall lymitt yourselves accordinge to your nere dwellinges to the markett townes, so as at our markets some of you may be alwaie present to assit the poorer sorte with provision for their money at reasonable prises; which if the owners therof shall not be induced by you and perswaded to assent to utter their corne at such reasonable prices as you shall by your discretion lymitt, you shall cause the said corne to be distributed especiallie to the poorer sorte. And if any shall murmer or repine at your order, ye shall, as the course of the state of the realme requireth in such a tyme of necessity, comitt them that shall refuse to performe your order to prison if any be in the said markett towne, or else to the prison of the countie, there to remayne without any
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baile untill they fhall conforme themselves to your faid order. And though by this our lettre wee do generally requier all iustices of peace to have care of this caufe, and to reforme the parties that have plentie of corne, and doe give caufe of rayfinge of prices or of disfurnishinge of marketts, yet wee require you alltogether to understand our meaninge, that wee will not that any one that is a iustice of peace and is a great owner of corne of his owne growth, or by rent or buyinge fhould have authoritie to execute the contents of this our lres for furnishinge the marketts at reasonable prices; but that fuch iustices of peace fhould be ordered and compelled to ferve the marketts in as large maner as any other perfone beinge noe iustice of peace. For otherwise wee here that in fome places the meaner perfones complaine that they are compelled to ferve the marketts where fome of them beinge iustices of peace are themselves, and other their tenants, fervants and dependants for the most parte, fpared and forborne, havinge greate quantities of corne in ftore above there ordinarie expences then the meaner forte, which are compelled to ferve the marketts, which error wee trust that fuch of you as are not to be charged therewith will, accordinge to your duties and othes, directlie and without any parcialitie regarde this our direction. So wee bid you hartelie farewell.

From the courte at Grenewiche, the thirde of August 1596.

your very loving Friends,

JO. CANT,	W. BURGLEY,	
THO. EGERTON,	W. COBHAM,	T. BUCKHURST,
	RO. CECILL,	J. FORTESCUE."

VII. *Account*