

THE

GROANS

OF

IRELAND:

IN A

LETTER

TO A

MEMBER

OF

PARLIAMENT.

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M,DCC,XLI.

THE
GROANS
OF
IRELAND.

SIR,

I HAVE been absent from this Country for some Years, and on my Return to it last Summer, found it the most miserable Scene of universal Distress, that I have ever read of in History : Want and Misery in every Face; the Rich unable almost, as they were willing, to relieve the Poor; the Roads spread with dead and dying Bodies; Mankind of the Colour of the Docks and Nettles which they fed on; two or three, sometimes more, on a Car going to the Grave for want of Bearers to carry them, and many buried only in the Fields and Ditches where they perished.

This universal Scarcity was ensued by Fluxes and malignant Fevers, which swept off Multitudes of all Sorts : whole Villages were laid waste by Want and Sicknefs, and Death in various Shapes; and scarce an House in the whole Island escaped from Tears and Mourning.

It were to be wished, Sir, that some curious Enquirer had made a Calculation of the Numbers lost in this terrible Calamity : If one for every House in the Kingdom died (and that is very probable, when

we consider that whole Families and Villages were swept off in many Parts together) the Loss must be upwards of 400,000 Souls: If but one for every other House (and it was certainly more) 200,000 have perished. A Loss too great for this ill-peopled Country to bear; and the more grievous, as this Loss was mostly of the grown-up Part of the Working People.

Sir, when a Stranger travels through this Country, and beholds its wide extended and fertile Plains, its great Flocks of Sheep and Black Cattle, and all its natural Wealth, and Conveniencies for Tillage, Manufactures and Trade, he must be astonished, that such Misery and Want could possibly be felt by its Inhabitants; but you, who know the Constitution, and are acquainted with its Weaknesses, can easily see the Reason.

Laws are the Wisdom of the Collective Body; they are devised by the most prudent and wise Men in the State; and to honest Men, are Lessons of Prudence, Oeconomy and Social Virtue; or may be considered as Pacts between the whole People, which they are to keep and perform; and to these certain Rewards and Punishments are annexed, to encourage the Sloathful, and deter the Hardy.

'Tis by these Lights that a People are guided; and where they are wanted, the Particulars left to the weak Guidance of their private Opinions, go astray, and wander in a Maze of Absurdities and Mistakes; and 'tis from the Want of them, that this Country, one of the most fertile in the World, is subject to such frequent Wants and Famines as it feels; this is the third I have seen in the Compass of twenty Years: 'Tis indeed the severest, and attended with the most dismal Consequences: But about twelve or thirteen Years ago, there was one very near as bad; and from whence can this proceed, Sir? — From the Want of

of proper Tillage Laws to guide, and to protect the Husbandman in the Pursuit of his Business; one scarce Year sets all Hands to the Plow, this begets a great Plenty; there are neither Granaries to receive, not Bounties to encourage the Exportation of this Plenty; the Husbandman cannot get for his Grain, what the Labour cost him, he sinks under its Weight, deserts the Plow, stocks with Sheep, and in a few Years there is another Scarcity, another Famine: This is the known Course of our Tillage in this Country; and it must ever be so, whilst Laws are wanting, by Premiums, to take off the Loads of a plentiful Year, which without them, must necessarily suffocate and oppress the Tillage.

Probably, Sir, when you have read thus far, you may conclude, as most of the Gentlemen whom I have discoursed on this Head have done, that this is an Evil without remedy; for that as we are to submit to the Judgment of another Country in all Bills sent over by us, this which would set us above Want, and of consequence, above buying our Bread from them, cannot be granted to us; and I must therefore beg Leave to give you my Sentiments upon it:

England thinks itself the Mother Country, and imagines that it has a Right to settle proper Acts and Agreements with us, whereby the Trade and Business of the one should not interfere or clash with that of the other, but that each applying to their particular Occupation, should have an Opportunity to employ their Hands usefully, and the Grand Business in Contemplation on the Occasion was, the Woollen and Linnen Manufactures; to us they gave the Linnen, and reserved the Woollen to themselves.

This Matter has been mistaken by us of this Side the Water; we thought it a Grievance to be restrained in any Particular, conscious of our Zeal and Affection for them, we grew jealous of the Partiality;

ty; Anger and Disgust ensued, and the one and the other begot such Sentiments in us, that exercising our natural Rights, and the Liberty which we thought ourselves deprived of by Power and Injustice, we fell upon a clandestine Trade with *France* and *Holland*, and sent to them our Raw Wool, by which they were enabled to grow in the Manufacture, and to rival *England* (which restrained us) in almost all the Branches of it, and that in almost all the foreign Markets in the World.

These Rivals at foreign Markets engrossing the Customers, left daily less to be done in *Britain*, and the Manufactures of *England* consequently stood daily less and less in need of *Irish* Wool, their own Growth became sufficient for the Demands upon them; and since that fatal Time, the Price of our Wool at home fell gradually with the *English* Manufactures, till at this present Time there being no Demand for it but from the *French* Market, it has sunk down to five and six Shillings per Stone, from twelve, thirteen, or fourteen Shillings; a Price which the Grower about twenty or twenty five Years ago, frequently had from *England*.

This is the fatal Bone of Dissention, the grand Matter of Jealousy from the other Side; they have lost the Woollen Manufacture, a Fund of immense Riches and Power, a Fund which enabled them to defend the invaded World in Times past; it is taken from their Side of the Ballance, and put into that of *France*, which wanted nothing but Money to enable them to execute their ambitious Schemes on the Liberties of the World, and what the Consequence may be in a very few Years, the present Situation of Affairs in *Europe* gives great Reason to fear: The *French* prevail in all the Councils of *Christendom*, by the Influence of their Money; they kindle Wars and prescribe Peace at Pleasure; they grow still great in Reputation

Reputation and Dominion by every Negotiation; and at this very Instant, are in the Bowels of the Empire, ready to impose an Emperor of their own on the Germanick Body, formerly the Rival, and the Stay of *France*, from Universal Monarchy.

These are dismal Consequences of the ill-judged Policy of *England*, in the Restraints lodged upon us, and of our fatal Resentment thereof, and no wonder if it must cause Jealousies from them in their Turn, to see *Ireland*, whose Liberties they have lately rescued from Popery and Slavery in so bloody and dangerous a Conflict, the Means, and the willing Cause thereof.

Thus stands the unfortunate Jealousy between the two Countries, and it were greatly to be wished, that by Concessions on the one Side and the other, it might be so managed, as to remove the Dispute, and make us one People, with one Interest and one Will. But, until that is done, Prudence must guide, and *England* must give us such Amends as may determine us on the Point of our own Interest (the only infallible Means to do it) to contract our Sheep-Walks, and employ them in the more useful Branches of Tillage and Flax.

This is what they must plainly see to be now their only Remedy; the Lands employed in Sheep Walk are the best in the Kingdom for Corn: Tillage with proper Premiums to encourage the Exportation of Corn, is vastly more profitable to the Occupier, than Sheep, whose Growth we can only export raw and unmanufactured, and if proper Laws are granted us, the immediate Consequence must be, to break up our Sheep Walk for Corn; shortening the Sheep Walk, must shorten of Consequence the clandestine Exportation of Wool for *France*, and by that means, cramp and distress their Manufactures until at last, that Business settles down again on its ancient Basis, and becomes

as it once was, the Staple Commodity of *Britain*; and that it certainly will do, if such Encouragements are given to Corn and Flax, as we in Reason may desire, and they in Prudence grant us.

Now, Sir, on this View of the Affair, it seems to me more than a Probability, that if a Bill is contrived and sent over this Session of Parliament, it cannot fail of a ready Concurrence there; and it may be necessary therefore to consider in what Shape we should prepare it.

In *England*, 'tis true, there are no publick Granaries, every Farmer has one wherein he reserves his Grain for such Markets as flatter him with the most agreeable Prospect of Advantage to himself; he is sure it cannot lye upon his Hands, there is a Medium Price established, at which the Farmer may well live and pay his Rent; if it comes below that, in comes the Bounty to the Exporter, and he by this Premium from the Publick, is enabled to give the Husbandman his Price, and exports the Corn to foreign Countries, by which it immediately becomes an Accession of new Riches to the Country, and repays the Publick manyfold the Premium by them generously advanced for the Exportation; and by this means the Plow is kept always going, there is never a Scarcity or Famine in the Land, but there is a constant Flow of Riches into it, from the Labours of the industrious and painstaking Husbandman: And thus it stands with them.

It may not be amiss for us to consider, whether we shall stop here, and form our Bill on the Plan of the *English* Tillage Act, or go farther, and add to it Granaries for the more present Relief of the Farmer, the more immediate Encouragement of the Plow, and the Encrease of a proper and safe circulating Credit, to supply the great Scarcity of Money, which is occasioned in this Country by the Drafts of Absentees,
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and the sinking Ballance of our Trade : For my Part, I am inclined to believe we should go thus far, and I believe we shall find it one of the most immediate Reliefs that can be contrived for many of the Evils we labour under.

In the first Place, Money is so very scarce in *Ireland*, the Interest so high, and what there is of it, in the Hands of so few People, that it throws a great Damp on every Branch of our Business, and prevents many useful Undertakings amongst us; the Embargo on our Beef, from which so much Money was annually returned into this Country, must very quickly increase this Scarcity, (*especially if we continue to take our Wines from them, which I hope we shall not*) and the clandestine Trade with *France* has grown so fast upon us since they have got into the entire Possession of our Wool, and found the way to furnish the middle Orders of Farmers with such good Pennyworths of Wines, Spirits, *East India* Goods, and other *French* Trifles, instead of the ready Money formerly had for it, that it is much to be feared a very few Years may beat many Undertakers out of the little Manufactures and Business we possess, by the meer want of Money, and by bringing Poverty and Ruin on the middle industrious Part of the People, by this new and unnatural Luxury, lower the Price of Lands, and draw down an universal Distress on the whole Country, if some means be not speedily contrived on one Hand to put a Stop to the clandestine Trade, and on the other to establish a Paper Credit, which may circulate in the Place of Money; and this I must own to you, Sir, is one principal Motive with me, to think that Publick Granaries might yet be an Improvement upon the Tillage Laws of *England*, very suitable, and even necessary for us in our present Circumstances.

There is ('tis true) a Paper circulating Credit already in the Country; but the Basis on which

it is built, is too narrow for the Superstructure ; and we have found by the Experience of some Years, that the best have given way, and suffered the whole Fabrick to tumble down, to the great Astonishment of all, and to the Ruin of many of their airy Inhabitants : And tho' all, which at present subsist, are of undoubted Credit and Utility, it were a Matter much to be wished, to see a Credit established in the Nation, on a Foundation which could not give way, and which must necessarily give Life and Vigour to the Whole.

There was some Years ago a Mention made of a National Bank, and some Subscriptions were taken in thereupon ; but upon a serious Discussion of the Affair, it was determined, that a National Bank might be the means of putting too much into the Hands of a few, and giving them an Opportunity, by getting into the Schemes of a Court or Ministry, to betray the Liberties of the Country, and it was laid aside ; as was, if I forget not, another Scheme for a Credit established on the Lands of *Ireland*, for that or some such Reason ; probably it was a true Publick Spirit, and not the Interest of any particular private Societies, that prevailed on the Occasion : But, if I do not greatly err in my Judgment, a circulating Credit on the Tillage, under a Scheme of publick Granaries might be so contrived, as to be liable to none of those Objections.

Let us suppose then, that a certain Number of publick Granaries were erected in the Sea Ports, or other Towns situated on navigable Rivers, so disposed always, as that one might take in the Corn of two or more Counties, in the whole, to the Number of ten or fifteen.

2d. Suppose that for each Granary there were chosen by Parliament in the Body of the Act, eight Directors, vested with a Power to chose proper Persons as well for the Management of the Corn in the Granary,

nary, as for keeping the Books, &c. these Directors to serve by Turns, two for every Quarter of the Year, and to be worth at least One Thousand Pounds *per Annum*, real Estate, or 20,000 *l.* in Cash, or some such Estate or Fortune, and at the End of every two Years, four of these Directors to be balloted out, and four new ones elected in their Stead, to serve in like manner quarterly, an old Director and a new one every Quarter, and from thenceforth the four old Directors to be out of Course every two Years, and four new ones to be elected in their Stead; so that at all Times, there may be Directors of Experience to assist the new ones.

3d. All Elections for Directors to be by the Proprietors of the Corn Bills, living within the District of the Granaries, as they are the Persons principally interested in the Success, and the fittest therefore to make the Choice.

4th. A Medium Price for Corn to be fixed upon by Parliament; suppose five Shillings per Bushel; and the Directors to issue Promissary Notes for all Corn with them lodged, at that Rate; and all Forgings and Counterfeittings of Corn Bills to be Death.

5th. No Corn to be exported, but what is bought at the Granaries; and whenever the Price in the Country Markets falls below the Medium Price, then the Exporter to have a Bounty by Debenture as in *England*: By this means the Granaries, by giving the best Price in the Country, would be kept full, their Bills would be multiplied, and the Exporter would never be at a Loss where to load his Grain.

6th. All Granaries in selling for Exportation, to sell at the best Price they can get from the Exporter; and every Exporter of Grain in his Invoice, to be obliged by Law, to make Affidavit at the Custom-House, before the Collector or other proper Officer, what Number of Barrels, and of what Specie, and

what Price he payed for the same, and a particular Book to be kept in every Sea Port where there is a Granary, for this Purpose, to regulate not only the Debenture for Exportation, but to be ready to lay before the General Court, and to be a Check upon the Directors in their Accounts before them.

7th. In all Sales of Corn to the Country for home Consumption, no Granary to take or demand an higher Price than one Shilling per Bushel more than the medium Price; and the advanced Price, with the Profit on Sales to Exporters of Corn, to go towards the defraying the Expences of the Granary. By this means Corn and Bread must always continue plenty and cheap, and a Fund may be provided for the Expence of the Circulation, &c.

8th. A General Court of Directors to be held every two Years, or oftener as Occasion calls, to audit the Accounts of the Granaries, see the Salleries of the Officers discharged, pay off the Debts of the Granary for Repairs, &c. state and settle the Accounts between the Circulators of the Corn Bills and the Granaries, and see the Ballance paid; make Bye-Laws for the better Government of the Granaries, and chose new Directors for the ensuing two Years; and every Person who is possessed of 1000*l.* in Corn Bills, to have a Vote at this Court of General Directors

9th. No Director of any Granary to deal in Corn by themselves, or any Person in Trust for them, on the severest Penalty; and no Director of a Granary to lend out Money, discount Notes, take Mortgages, or make any other Use of the Cash in Hand, than as the General Court shall order, on Pain of Death or some other the most weighty Penalty.

And, in order to give a Circulation to these Bills, suppose that 100,000 *l.* worth of Corn Bills may be issued in one Year, by the Granaries in each Province; then suppose, that a Book be opened for a Subscription

tion of 100,000 *l.* for each Province, or more or less as shall be judged necessary, and every Subscriber to pay down into the Hands of *Hugh Henry, Esq;* one fifth Part of his Sum subscribed, in three Days after his Subscription, or his Subscription to be void.

2dly. That no Person be admitted a Subscriber, unless he be really and *bona fide* worth four times more than the Sum subscribed, and obliges himself by such Contracts as shall be agreed upon at the first Meeting after the Subscription is full, to pay in any such farther Sum, not exceeding the Sum subscribed, which the Company shall have Occasion to make a Call for on the Body of the Subscribers.

3dly. That the first Meeting be fixed, as well with respect to Time as Place, so that when the Subscription is full, and proper Advertisement thereof given in the publick Papers, the Subscribers may be at no Loss when and where to meet, and settle Rules and Orders for their future Government.

4thly. That every Corn Bank shall be obliged to circulate the Corn Bills, and pay Cash for them at their respective Banks, in order to give them Credit in the Country, and a free Circulation; and that the Granaries in each Province shall be obliged to pay yearly to such Bank the Sum of three *per Cent.* Discount for such Circulation.

5thly. That the Corn Banks shall issue no Bills, or Notes for Value received in Corn, under the Penalty of Forgery, unless by Law authorised.

6thly. That they shall have some certain Number of Directors, to be chosen from amongst the most weighty of the Subscribers, by the whole Body of them; and one half of them to be changed every two Years, as in the Granaries, still provided that no residing Director shall be a Subscriber or Proprietor of less than 5000 *l.* Stock in the Company.

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Such Banks as these would immediately give a Circulation, and a Credit to the Corn Bills; and the Subscribers could well undertake the Circulation for three *per Cent.* for one fifth Part of the whole issued Credit, in ready Money, must always be sufficient to circulate the Corn Bills: 'Tis the standing Rule in the Bank of *England*, and I believe, in all Banks of good Credit; so that tho' the three *per Cent.* sounds but little in our Ears, the Subscribers would in Effect receive fifteen *per Cent.* for if one hundred Pound deposited does the Business of 500, in this Case, the Subscriber being out of Pocket but 100, receives 12*l.* for his Credit, and three for his ready Money, which is in Effect 15 *per Cent.* for his ready Money; so that the Subscribers at three *per Cent.* must undoubtedly come in very readily, and 100*l.* in this Stock would soon grow probably more valuable, than any so much Money in any Stock now existing; whereas, in reality, 'tis every way as useful to the Publick, to have their Business done by a Deposit of the fifth Part, as of the whole Money, provided the Subscribers have an Estate to answer the Calls (if any should be) upon them; a thing which must be taken Care of on the first Subscription, or might effectually be provided for by a Clause in the Bill for this Purpose, importing, that every Subscriber into the Corn Banks, and every Purchaser of any Subscription, shall at the Time of such Subscription or Purchase, be worth four times more than the Capital subscribed or purchased, on Pain of forfeiting the original Stock subscribed or purchased.

Such a Clause would provide sufficiently against that Mischief; and as the Bills must meet with a ready Circulation, they would soon come into the greatest Credit, and be lent out by the Proprietors as Cash on Mortgages and other Securities: By this means there would be a great Plenty of Money, or Credit equally

equally valuable, the Interest of Money would necessarily be lowered thereby to four or five *per Cent.* all Persons who could make good Securities could readily have it at that Rate, the Manufacturers would no longer be oppressed and eat up with exorbitant Usury, and the Manufactures which they produced, could of consequence be afforded so much lower than they are at present, that it must enable us to undersel the whole World in any Branch of Business we undertake.

This Advantage would reach to all Orders and Societies; the Grower, the Manufacturer, the Exporter, the Tenant, the Landlord, the Creditor, in short, every Man in the Nation, let his Business or Occupation be what it will, must share in the Advantage. And as the Banks and the Granaries are to be two distinct Bodies, they would be for ever a Check upon one another; the Granary could discount no Notes, the Bank could issue no Bills; they would have each of them their distinct Business, and the Books of the Granary would rectify always any Overcharge on the Circulation.

Now, Sir, as to the Objection which was made against the Land-Bank, it could not affect here; the Provincial Banks would keep the Cash of the Nation rather better separated, and more out of the Reach of a Ministry, than it is at present in the Hands of the Bankers of *Dublin*, in which the Bulk of our whole Cash generally lies.

The Conduct of the whole, both Granaries and Banks, would be in the Hands of the Proprietors, who must be the Body of the Landed Interest, and if any Body of People can be safe from ministerial Influence (as it is called) sure they must be the Men.

Then, it would make the Credit of the Nation more equal than it is at present; every Person who could make a good Security, would find Faith in his
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Provincial Bank : there he and his Fortune must be known ; and it would be a great Ease to the Kingdom in general that they could be so provided in their Necessity, without making an expensive Journey to the Capital, where the Money borrowed for more weighty Occasions, is often broke into before they can clear themselves out of it.

And, as to the Gentlemen who are at present engaged in the Bankers Business, the whole Foreign Exchange would be left free and open to them, with as much of the inland Business as their Friends and Customers, and long-known good Credit in the Kingdom could afford them : But, if it should otherways happen, they may, if so disposed, become Subscribers into the Corn Banks, and there, follow the same Business.

I believe, Sir, I need not use many Words to convince you, that such a Regulation as this, must be a great Encouragement to our Tillage ; the medium Price would keep the Husbandman constantly at the Plow, it would then become a Business, which is now but a Shift ; no Plenty, however great, could discourage him, and the consequence would be, that the Sheep Walks which at present afford the Occupier, for Landlord, Labour and Profit, but at a Medium of six or seven Shillings per Acre, would in a short Time be taken into Tillage, and return on the same Articles from fifty Shillings and three Pounds, to six, seven, and eight Pounds per Acre ; Rents must rise, Interest fall, Tythes be punctually and well paid, without any Fear of failing, the Manufactures flourish, Trade revive, with many other Advantages which will naturally occur to you ; and all, without any other ill consequence but this, — the Runners of *French* Goods must betake themselves to honest Business, and the *French* Manufactures, loosing our Wool by the Change of our Oeconomy, must shrink up

up and go to nothing: Evils, which I am sure no Friend of these Dominions, or Well-wisher to the Liberties of *Europe*, can repine at, so that I am in hopes, Sir, you will think that Granaries will be no bad Improvement to a Tillage Bill.

This is certainly the fittest Time for *Ireland* to go upon this Affair, the late Scarcity has given a Spring to Tillage, and in two Years, if a proper Vent is provided for the Labours of the Husbandman, it will make a great Change in our Affairs for the better: Whereas, if neglected, the same two Years must draw upon us such a Plenty of Corn, as must necessarily discourage that Branch of Business, and in a very few Years after, bring about such a Scarcity as we have lately felt.

If then, Sir, it may be thought fit to go upon the Granaries at this Time, a great Difficulty will be in this universal Scarcity of Money, and Decay of Trade, where to find Cash to build the Granaries; but, Sir, I am very much of Opinion, that the Miseries we have lately seen and felt, will be a Spur to every Man in the Kingdom to contribute towards the Undertaking; every one must give chearfully to a Fund, that is to shut our Doors against Want and Famine, and to open new Channels for Plenty and Riches: The Turnpikes have not wanted a Credit to perfect their Roads; 'tis but appointing the Directors, and vesting them with proper Powers, they cannot want Credit: And tho' we should be obliged to appropriate some Branch of our Revenue, a small one will do, sure I am, Sir, it may be as useful a Fund as that for navigating our Rivers, the Concordatum, or the Barrack Funds; but tho' we should not think fit to carry the Scheme so far as the Granaries, it is much to be wish'd that we may not slip this Opportunity to apply for a Tillage Act, when the great and almost unequalled Miseries which we have suffered within this last Year

has moved all the World to compassionate our Distresses and Misfortunes; and when it is so impatiently expected from our Neighbours of *England*, that we should pass some Laws here for restraining the great Export of Wool to *France*, which can never be more effectually done, nor with more real Service both to *Britain* and *Ireland*, than by encouraging our Tillage, and by that means breaking in upon the *French* Sheep Walk.

When, Sir, I took my Pen in Hand, I did not intend to trouble you with more than what related to the Tillage and Granaries, but some other Matters have since occurred, which now, my Hand is in, I shall submit to your Consideration.

The Woollen Manufacture is certainly the Bone of Dissention between *England* and *Ireland*: They have in a manner lost it, and we have not got it; such is the Misfortune of the Controversy between us. The Farmers in all the running Countries have fallen into a new, an unnatural Expence, not from any Increase of Riches, but from the good Pennyworths of *French* Run Goods which are daily offered them by the Persons concerned in the clandestine Wool Trade, and their Under-Agents, which must certainly impoverish and eat them up in a few Years; the fair Traders are every where underfold by the Smugglers, the Revenue is greatly sunk by the Decay of the open and fair Trade, the Nation is run into a Debt, which if timely Care be not taken, must certainly bring upon us a new Land Tax (*for the Quit-rents and Hearth-money are already a Tax of above two Skillings in the Pound, a Matter which at this Time I would have very well understood*) and the *French* are the only Gainers by it; for the Growers of Wool receive not near so good a Price as they did when the *English* Manufactures flourished, the Price of Wool has greatly sunk as they decayed, and at this time the Price

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is lowering so, that the Stock-masters are almost undone too; so that it is very unfortunate for both Countries, that this Affair is not set upon a proper Footing.

The *English* have lost the Woollen Trade, they are no Strangers to our Running Business, they lay all the Blame upon us, not discerning their own unfortunate Incapacity to carry it on in all its Branches; an Incapacity which they must for ever labour under whilst their heavy Debts and Taxes continue; and they vainly imagine, that if our Running of Wool could be prevented, they might again recover that valuable Trade; this has put them upon several Schemes, Guardships to watch our Coasts, penal Laws in various Shapes, all to no Purpose: But the thinking Few amongst them, see plainly the inward Distemper that disables them, and would be very willing to indulge us in the Liberty of certain Branches of the Woollen Manufacture, if they could depend upon us, under the Advantage of such an Indulgence, to guard our own Coasts, and send no Wool to *France*; for it is certain, that the *French* could not extend their Woollen Business to any great Matter of national Profit, without *Irish* or *English* Wool.

They see plainly, Sir, that the Policy of King *Charles II's* Time, and of King *William's*, cannot at all suit with this: In those Days, the *French* had nothing to say to the Woollen Trade, and every Piece of Manufacture which was exported from *Ireland*, was in so much a Loss to them; we were the only Rivals in the Trade; but at present the Case is altered, the Question is not between *England* and *Ireland*, but between the *British* Dominions and the *French*; and in Truth and in Fact, every Piece of Woollen Goods now exported from *Ireland*, far from hurting the *English* Manufacturer, helps him, for it prevents the *French* from working up three times as much (the usual Allowance being one third of our

Wool, to two of theirs, which without our Wool would be perfectly useless) and it at the same time takes from them at foreign Markets (where 'tis well known we undersel them) a Customer for one of theirs; and by this means, *England* has an Opportunity to make a Gain of their Loss, and to find room at the foreign Markets for three Pieces of their Goods in the room of those which the *French* would have been able to send out, had they the Primum of the single Piece we wrought up and exported.

They see also, that where a whole People pique themselves upon exporting a Commodity in which they think themselves unjustly restrained, 'tis impossible for any Power, they can send to watch them, by any threatened Penalties to restrain them from it; but that if they had once given us a reasonable Share in the Manufactures, it would then be our Interest to keep from our Rivals Primum of the Manufacture, and we should every Man in *Ireland* be a *Guarda Costa* to restrain it.

This the Men of Sense of all Sides the Question see and know, and thus they have reasoned in the last Session of Parliament, upon the angry Motion made in their House of Commons for the Repeal of the Act passed the Year before, for taking off the Duties of Yarn exported from *Ireland* for *England*, and for licensing new Ports here.

Now, Sir, it is certain, that on the Coasts of *Spain* and *Portugal*, and the *Mediterranean*, in the Stuffs, &c. which we send them, we, under all the Difficulties of a clandestine Trade, undersel the *French* eight *per Cent.* and it is as certain, that the *French* undersel the *English* as much; it has been said eleven *per Cent.* What room for Hesitation? Can our Trade to those Parts clash with the *English*? Who can suffer but the *French*? If the *French* are beat out of the Trade, we shall gain indeed, but the *English* must gain twice

as much; every Piece we sell, must be a Draw-back of three upon the *French* Exports, because it keeps from *France* a *Primum*, which would give Vent to twice as much of their otherways useless Wool, and *England* would have the Benefit upon that Article; which to be sure, would they consider rightly, must be a sufficient Inducement to them, to set us at work in that Branch of Trade; and if they do so, all Jealousies must naturally subside, the false Patriotism which at present prevails of encouraging the clandestine Wool Trade with *France*, must instantly change it self into a true Spirit against all such Traders, and not one Lock of Wool can afterwards be ship'd from this Country to *France*.

I would submit it to your Consideration, Sir, whether it may not therefore be now very seasonable, to bring in a Bill to prevent the Exportation of Wool, or Woollen Manufactures to *France*, or any other Country but *England*; and in this Bill, to have Clauses of Exemption for such Manufactures as we sell in the Countries abovementioned.

On this Occasion, it will be necessary to be well apprised of what those Goods particularly are, and to take Care not to clash with *England* in such Branches as they are yet able to follow.

If this be done, I have no doubt upon me but the Bill may meet with a ready Concurrence, particularly if it be sent over in the Hands of Persons who have Capacity to reason upon it before the Council, and to conduct it as it should.

And, here, Sir, I must observe to you, a Defect, or what appears to me a great Defect in our Management; we are (whatever our Rights may be) to all Intents a depending Country; all our Laws must have the Concurrence of the *English* Council; we are cramped in several Branches of Trade, in which we might be useful to *England*; our Manufactures, particularly

ticularly the Linnens, want still farther Encouragements; we are the poorest Country in *Europe*, and of consequence can work the cheapest; our Situation, with respect to *England*, which is the Fountain of Pleasure as well as Preferment to all these Dominions, draws our Men of Fortune in such Crowds into it, that let our Acquisitions by Trade and Manufactures be what they will, let our Riches be ever so great, it must all center there; and there never can remain at home so much as to enhance the Price of Labour, or put our Manufactures in such a condition as to become too dear for the foreign Markets, so that *England* must for ever have here between two and three Millions of People, possessed of a fertile Country possessed of infinite Treasure in Wool and Flax, ready and able to beat *France* or any other Country out of those Branches of Trade; and this, Sir, is a Blessing which no other Prince in the World, that I can at present recollect, is possessed of, but our own: But, with all these Advantages, we are neglected by *England*, and suffered to remain idle and unactive, to starve for want of Occupation, whilst we furnish an infinite number of Hands in *France* with Matter to employ them profitably upon, and we remain useless to our Mother Country, which, if well informed of our Circumstances, and their own Interest in us, could never overlook us as it does. I say, therefore, that it is a great Defect in our Management, not to have a Resident at *London*, to take Care of our Interest there, since in reality there is nothing wanting but a good Understanding between us, a proper Ecclaircissement upon the Matter, to convince the Men in Power there, how much it is the Interest of *England* to, and with how much Benefit to themselves they could, grant us many Advantages in Trade and Manufactures, for want of which, we at present languish and decay.

The Linnen Trade is one which is yet capable of
 great

great Enlargements; for there is one single Branch for which *England* pays 500,000 *l. per Annum* to *Germany*; they are a certain coarse brown Linnens, made use of in *England* for Lappings, Packings, Carters Frocks, &c. and in the Plantations, for cloathing of Negroes, Servants, &c. There is, 'tis true, a heavy Duty upon the Importation, so that we can very near undersel the *Germans* in *England*, but all the Duties to a Trifle are drawn back on the Re-exportation to the Plantations, so that there they meet us on a Par, and the Assistance of *England* will be necessary, whenever we are in a Condition to furnish more than their own Consumption requires.

This is a Branch the fittest to introduce the Linnen Manufacture into those Parts of this Kingdom which are at present idle; the Flax of which it is made is coarse, and the Tow is wrought up with it, so that there is no Waste; the Spinning is fit for Beginners, and so is the Weaving; little Art of any Sort is required about it; so that in two Years, a whole Country where there is Flax enough for them, might be called out to work; it would serve but as a School to the People, and in a few Years would necessarily beget fine Yarn and Linnen, and good Workmen from the natural Desire which is in all Men to excel; and this Branch wants nothing to set it on, but a small Premium *per Ell* to the Exporter; for every Beginning is dear, and the natural Indolence of Mankind must be called out, and solicited by Profit to Work and Labour, or it will not do.

I know, Sir, a Gentleman who went upon this Business in *Connaught*, and in little more than a Year, he exported 150,000 Ells; some his Correspondent exported to the Plantations; there he was undersold by the old experienced *Germans*, who met him on a Level by the Benefit of their Drawbacks; the rest were put into the Hands of *Huy* and *Wilcox* in *London*,

don, who lately stopt Payment there, and I fear they are gone to a worse Market.

It is a Pity this Gentleman has not met with the Encouragement such an Undertaking deserved; if he had, the whole Country would have at once fallen into that Business; but he must probably now quit it, and that will throw such a Damp on that Branch, that it will be very hard to bring it to Life again; and could it be push'd on with Success, it would certainly in ten Years, in so short a Time as ten Years, bring us 500,000 *l. per Annum*.

It will be well to consider likewise, Sir, that it is a great Neglect in us not to grow our own Flax Seeds; it is of the greatest consequence to us, in my Opinion, to employ our Thoughts about Means to be furnished with Seed at home; for our great Demands upon *Germany* for Seed, make them grow vast Quantities of Flax which they would not otherways do; there is a Sort of Necessity upon the People to work it up in one Sort or other, when it is once produced; and the Grower has such a Profit on the Seed, that he affords the Flax for little or nothing, so it is no wonder if they undersel us in that Branch; and I am really of Opinion, that could we get the Flax Seed produced at home, it would have the same Effect upon us, we should have a Plenty of Flax sufficient to employ all the Hands in the Kingdom; and if the Flax were plenty and cheap, it would find enough willing to work upon it; there would be a Plenty of Linnens of all Sorts, and they could be afforded in so much the cheaper, as the *Primum* is cheaper: Besides, Sir, as this Sort of Linnen requires the coarse Flax, the People could afford to let the Seed ripen; whereas for want of a Fabrick for it, they at present pull their Flax before the Seed is ripe, that it may be fine enough for their present Business.

In my Apprehension, Sir, this is a Season which
calls

calls upon us very particularly to enlarge our Flax Grounds, and set all Hands to work on that Branch: The *Spanish West Indies* is now open to us, and it is highly probable, at least we have reason to hope, that the Gentlemen at the Helm, whenever there is a Peace, may stipulate for an open Trade for our *Irish* Linnens there; in which case, if we can be ready, the Linnen Trade must be an infinite Fund of Riches to a whole People possessed thereof, in one of the Countries the fittest for it of any in *Europe*.

And, Sir, before I have done with this, I must observe to you, that *England* upon the same Principle on which I expect their Concurrence to a Tillage Bill, must necessarily give us all the Encouragement in their Power. The five Counties of the North, which have effectually betaken themselves to the Linnen Manufactures, have not enough of Wool to cloath themselves: all their Land is taken up for Corn, Potatoes and Flax to feed themselves withal, and far from exporting Wool clandestinely to *France*, they are obliged to buy their Cloathing from the other Provinces; and this would certainly be the case of the whole Kingdom, if the Tillage and Linnen Manufactures were once effectually spread through it; so that if this Matter is once well understood in *England*, we need not doubt of their ready Concurrence with any Request we can make, either for Encouragement of our Tillage or Linnen Manufactures; and if we have all Hands once at work, it matters not whether it be Wool or Linnen they work upon, we shall not need to dispute it with them.

I must observe to you, Sir, that the *Germans* (and their Factors in *England*) have lately got into a Method of counterfeiting our *Irish* Stamps upon their foreign Linnens; and by that Means avoiding the Duty; and, which is almost as bad, by affixing our Seals to the worst of their Linnens, they discredit the

Irish Manufacture there: The *Scotch* too, have got this Policy from the *Germans*, and I have heard several Gentlemen in the *Irish* Linnen Trade make heavy Complaints of this Matter: If I mistake not, there is at present no Law to punish the Proceeding, or if there be, no single Factor will be at the Expence, unless he be assured of Reimbursement from the Linnen Board.

This, Sir, is, I assure you, a great and growing Evil, and ought to be immediately attended to, for the *Scotch* are growing fast in that Manufacture, and if we cannot find a way to punish this their artful way of discrediting our Manufactures, it may be attended with great Evils to our Sales in *England*, which is at present our only Market for Linnen.

I shall detain you no longer, Sir, but just to observe to you, that we have manifested a most unpardonable Supineness, in so many Years as have passed since the Revolution, by our Neglect to put the Properties of this Kingdom upon a Foot of greater Security than it is at present.

We were last Year alarmed with an intended Invasion; and it was so far believed, that the Government was at a considerable Expence to furnish Magazines, and to provide for a Defence. All *Europe* is at this present time in Arms; and in case of a general War, no one knows what Attempts may be made upon these Kingdoms by the Enemies of our Religion and our Liberties. I hope we shall be always safe, but we cannot forget to have seen the Pretender in *Britain*, at the Head of a formidable Number of rebellious Troops: He was defeated, and his Designs were baffled; but had he unfortunately succeeded there, it would have been a very terrible Circumstance, that the Protestants of *Ireland* who were in Arms for all that was dear to them, their Religion, their Property and their Liberty, should be exposed to the same Evils
that

that the Papists of *Ireland* suffered on the Revolution; they did but what we should have done, took up Arms for the King *de Facto*, the Prince to whom they had sworn Allegiance; we should certainly have done so (God avert the Occasion) To-morrow, were there need: And is it not a frightful Thought? Enough to cool the hottest Zealot? That had we failed in the Attempt, we should all of us forfeit our Estates as the *Jacobites* in 88 have done; there is no Law for us; the Statute of *Henry VII.* which provides a Security for all those who take Arms for the King *de Facto*, or fight under their Allegiance, was passed a Year or two after *Poining's* Law, and does not extend to *Ireland*, so that we are left exposed in case of any Attempt upon us, to the greatest Danger imaginable; and 'tis much to be feared, that a Reflection of this Sort might in time of need throw a Damp upon many, who are otherways the bravest and most zealous Protestants amongst us, and leave us a disunited and weak Support to the Protestant Succession.

It is high Time, therefore, Sir, to think seriously of this Matter, and not to lose a Day before a Bill is brought in to this Purpose; we have a Right to expect it, we have fought for the Revolution, and we are no inconsiderable Part of the Protestant Interest; let us be made safe, let us be united in one general Security, and our Lives are ready to stake for the Protestant Succession; his Majesty and his Family will be sure of Friends, that will Man by Man die for him, it will add greatly to his Security, it will for ever disappoint the Hopes of any Popish Pretender to his Dominions, and deter a certain Power (who has for some Years taken upon him to dispose of Kingdoms and Principalities at Will, and to weaken all, that the whole may one Day fall an easier Prey to its Ambition) from saying with an arbitrary Voice, *One of the Infants of Spain must have Ireland.*

Upon

Upon the Whole, Sir, you may easily see that there are many Things of great Importance to the Welfare of this Country, that call upon you, and the rest of your Brethren in Power, for your speedy Attention; 'tis a Pity to waste much Time upon Trifles, when weightier Matters call upon us: *Ireland* is but an Infant in the Manufactures; we must not lie under a shameful Despondency; and because a Rumour is spread, that *England* is no Friend to *Ireland*, (which is in itself an unnatural Falsehood) make no Tryals of their Friendship and Regard to us; the Attempt can cost us nothing but a Portion of that Time which is spent upon Enquiries into over Drawings, controverted Elections, and Party Disputes: What is it to *Ireland* who is the Great Man, if neither the one nor the other will labour in its Interest, let us not be divided upon it, but let every Man lay his Head and his Heart to the Good of his Country, and pursue with a steady Attention the greater Matters, the Increase of our Manufactures, the Inlargement of our Trade, the Encouragement of our Tillage, the Security of our Liberties and Properties, and the Welfare of the whole Kingdom.

This is what I wish you may all do; and if you resolve upon it, the Face of this poor Country will be soon changed from what it was the last Summer, and put on an healthy and florid Complexion.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

Nov. 15,

1741.

and most humble Servant.