

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PRESENT STATE

OF THE

Linen Manufacture.

Humbly addressed to the

TRUSTEES

OF THE

LINEN-BOARD.



D U B L I N :

Printed in the Y E A R, M D C C L I V.



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ON THE

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LINEN MANUFACTURE

IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES

OF THE

LINEN-BOARD.



DUBLIN

Printed in the Year 1800



TO  
The Right Honourable and Honourable,

THE

TRUSTEES

OF THE

LINEN MANUFACTURE.

*pre* THAT general Silence, which prevails amongst Men, whose Pens might perhaps better suit the Task, has induced me to reduce into some Order, such Remarks, as my Experience as a Manufacturer, and Advantages in conducting the Linen Manufacture in general, has qualified me to make; and I take this Method of referring them to the Consideration of your Honourable Board: Should they appear to deserve your Attention, and in any Respect, promote the true Interest of the



# DEDICATION.

Linen Manufacture of this Kingdom, it will sufficiently repay my Pains. Who am, with the greatest Respect, Gentlemen,

Your most Humble,

And most Obedient Servant,

*Rob. Stephenson.*

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CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
PRESENT STATE, &c.

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In Relation to FLAX-SEED.

**A**S I purpose treating of several Branches of the Linen Manufacture *in Course*, this properly is the first Article, and shall take up less time under this head than it may be supposed from its Importance to require, as I believe the many Experiments you have made in this Article, must have given you a very good opportunity of judging what Steps are most salutary to be taken for the future.

The Improvement, Extention, and Support of our Linen Manufacture necessarily depend on the providing Materials of the best Quality, and on the cheapest Terms, consequently the Importation of Flax-seed of a proper Age and Growth to suit the various Demands of the Public, must always be well worthy the Inspection of your honourable Board. It's to be hoped experience will inform you, that it is very injudicious to embark in any Branch (particularly this) of the Linen Manufacture, at your own Expence, as the Public can reap no Advantage from thence, for the following Reasons: Whatever Encouragements you may propose to the Farmer, or



Flax-Grower, will not induce him to sow that Country Flax-feed he does not find from Experience to agree with the Nature of his Soil ; and the cautious Merchant will decline giving his customary Orders for that sort of Flax-feed he finds you engage in, lest the Market should thereby be over-stocked ; altho' it is reasonable to suppose his Experience might inform him how, and from what Place, to import on much better Terms.

However, suppose your Adventure is attended with neither of those national Disadvantages, the evil Consequence to the Public may still be the greater ; for, should the poor Farmer quit that certain Path which experience has taught him, by sowing Seed that doth not agree with his Soil, the Loss of his Labour, his Land, and first Cost of Flax-feed, may reduce his industrious little Family to Beggary for want of that Material, which was the Security of the Landlord as well as their own Provision. The Merchant likewise, should he give Orders for his usual Quantity, may find the Market glutted with that particular kind of Seed, and is thereby discouraged from ordering any the succeeding Year, whereby the Farmer that used to sow that Sort annually, finds himself distressed in not being able to procure the Kind of Flax-feed that has always answered his Purpose. These Considerations should guard you against interfering in *that* Branch of the Linen Manufacture, lest you should endanger the throwing it out of the natural Channel, and you will think the Scheme of importing Flax-feed less interesting to embark in, when you are informed, that there is sufficient Store and to spare, annually imported of every Country Growth we use, and the Farmer's Experience directs him best what Country Flax-feed to sow ; and the Demand on the Merchant what Country Seed, and the Quantity he is to import.



## In Relation to F L A X.

**Y**OUR honourable Board have always been very attentive to this Article; but it is presumed through want of Information, and by pursuing the Plans of such as only consult their own Interests, you have been greatly misled, as will appear in a few Instances following; however, you will think all your Encouragements in raising Irish Flax well disposed of when you are informed of its Merits.

The Quality of Irish Flax is of a very different Nature from that of *Russia*, or almost any other Country from whence we, at any time, import.

It is a Maxim amongst Manufacturers, founded on Experience, That Yarn made of Irish Flax is superior in Quality, and more useful to the Manufacturer by one sixth part of the Value, than that of equal Appearance made of Foreign Flax: But to make this more clear, thirty-six pounds of Yarn spun out of Irish Flax, will run as far as forty-one to forty-five Pounds of Yarn made of Foreign Flax, and at the same time the Yarn made of Irish Flax, shall cloath and skin, better in the Linen than that made of the Foreign Flax, by which Means the Linen will bring a better Price, and the Experience of each Market, to which we export our Linens, sufficiently evidence the Quality of our Flax being better by our Linens out-wearing that of every Nation whatever, where there is at first an equal Appearance of Strength: And there is a still greater Disadvantage attends the making Use of Foreign Flax in our Manufacture, when laid on the Bleach-yard, its almost a Certainty that it turns out full of Rows, like a striped Ticken, never to be bleached out; and at best it requires double Stuff and Labour to bring it to a tolerable Colour. This I have experienced to be Fact, and can give the fullest Demonstration



monstration of it: And this alone disqualifies us from carrying on the finer Branches of the Manufacture, which require Colour, with any certainty of acquiring Reputation, where there is any Foreign Flax whatever vended.

I shall now endeavour, in some measure, to account for that native Advantage which Experience manifests to us in Irish Flax over the Foreign, and it will appear, at least, as considerable as I have represented it, to every minute Examiner.

Irish Flax, in every Degree of Operation, is remarkable for its Silkeness and kindly manner of working; and its being pulled generally before the Seed is thoroughly formed, whereby the Juices are exhausted from the Stalk, and the Coat, or Harle, more parch'd with the Sun, contributes not a little to this, as well as its Fineness. It easily Splits on the Hackle into a greater Multiplicity of Harles or Fibres, than the Foreign Flax, and from its Silkeness arises a Down that cloaths the Linen, and its requiring a greater Number of Harles to compose the Thread makes it the less solid, and consequently lighter than the Yarn made of Foreign Flax of equal Appearance in Fineness.

The Foreign Flax we import is of a firm and solid Quality, and compared with Irish weighs heavy to its appearance, its Coat harsh and staring, and will not easily split on the Hackle; and there are evidently some Particles or Salts in it, contracted from the Soil in the East Country, and the intense and scorching Heat of the Sun, they are subject to in the Summer Months, which, joined with that Solidity in the Harle, prevents the Materials in bleaching from operating with that ease as on Irish Flax, and, as I have before taken Notice, it's too often found that our Linens are made of such Flax as no Ashes, or Sours, will bring to a Colour: And this is certainly owing to their having a Mixture of Yarn made of Foreign Flax in them; for it's observable, that



that you will rarely meet with a roey Piece of Linen brought from any part of the Country where there is not a Vent for Foreign Flax.

These Considerations should induce you to leave no Scheme untried, until the Public are put in a proper Way of supplying themselves with a sufficient Quantity of Flax of our own Growth. And in doing so, you would, in a great measure, remove the many Complaints attributed to Rubbing-boards, as I am of Opinion the greater Part of our present Damages are occasioned by the bringing Linens (where any part is composed of Foreign Flax) to a proper Colour.

I will now venture to give my Opinion, in respect to such Measures as might probably have the desired Effect, in promoting the Growth of Irish Flax, without being so liable to Impositions, as the present Way of distributing Premiums.

In the first Place then, I would recommend the striking off all Flax-shops, and every Encouragement whatever in the Kingdom for vending Flax; and, when you set about this useful Work with Spirit, so as effectually to encourage the raising a sufficient Quantity for our own Consumption, the Continuation of any Encouragement in Favour of Foreign, or whomsoever shall manufacture Foreign Flax, must be judged imprudent, as that would be giving Premiums in direct Contradiction to each other, which should always be carefully avoided. By this Means you'll add a Saving to your Fund that, with proper Care, may be sufficient to execute the Plan I would recommend, which is no other than a saving Improvement on a Scheme laid down to you by a worthy Member of your honourable Board, in a Letter to the Rt. Hon. the Speaker of the House of Commons, by appointing a Premium to be given at so much *per Cent.* on the Value, on all the clean scutched Flax produced before an Inspector, appointed by you and



and the Magistrates of each County at the Quarter-Sessions, or such central Town, and at such Time as you should think proper to appoint, and leave it to the Owners and Growers of the Flax to find a Market for it.

*Additional* Suppose you begun by giving 10 *per Cent.* on the Value of the clean scutched Flax produced, then a Premium of 5000*l.* which is not a great deal more than Flax-shops have cost you in a year, would produce 50000*l.* value of Flax, which of Irish Flax, according to our usual Prices of three Pence to four Pence half-penny *per Pound*, would be a Quantity sufficient to supply the whole Kingdom. However, this is supposing every one to produce their Flax for the Premium, which could never be the Case, as it would only be worthy the Attention of Flax Farmers to apply for it, and by this Means you might be enabled with Safety to increase your Premium the second Year, if you found the first not a sufficient Encouragement.

Under this Restraint no one could possibly claim but from Merit, nor would you be subject to a greater Premium than the Value of the Flax produced, as has been the Case heretofore, as the same Author very clearly represents to you in his Letter, *Page 6*, where the Board, in the Year 1753, paid 2000*l.* premium for raising Flax, where the full Value of all the Flax produced, as appears by their own Certificates, would not amount to 1000*l.*; and this Scheme will be thought the less expensive and troublesome to execute when you observe, that it is only changing the Manner of applying the same Sum for the same Purpose; and, if by striking off a Parcel of Flax-shops that are, at present, evidently of very little Use, (and but too many of them appointed to Wretches that think of nothing more than making Affidavits annually conformable to your Orders, so as to obtain your Premiums,) and applying the Fund, according to the above Scheme, you can obtain the desired Effect, it will be a most whole-  
some



some and advantageous Plan for the Public, in adding a great Saving to the Nation in providing our own Material, employing our poor, cultivating our Lands, and preventing many Wretches being guilty of willful Perjury, as is daily the Case at present.

I cannot, however, pass this Article without taking notice of your established Encouragements for Flax-dressers. You have Salaries appointed for them to the Amount, I believe, of upwards of 500*l. per Annum*, beside the great Encouragement given to support the Poor-house Scheme, which the last mentioned Author values at 850*l. per Annum*, by which means you have created a number of this Trade, at least three Times as many as is necessary. Pray, would it not be more adviseable at this time, to carry this Part of your Fund into some other Channel, that may be thought more useful to the Public.

In Rela-



## In Relation to SPINNING, and SPINNING-SCHOOLS.

**I** Believe this Article has been the most expensive of any Branch of the Linen Manufacture to your honourable Board, and that in a great measure owing to your not putting your Schools at first under proper Regulations, so as to terminate at a certain Period of Time, when that Part of the Country, where they were appointed, might be supposed to have acquired a sufficient Knowledge in Spinning. It is true, nothing could be more conducive to the Advancement of the Linen Manufacture, and Improvement of the Country in general, than forwarding this useful Scheme, in pointing out the Way for each poor Family to employ themselves to the greatest Advantage for their mutual Support, without danger of exceeding the Consumption.

However I am of opinion you'll now observe your attention has been so close to the Article of Spinning, that you have in some measure neglected the Weaving Branch, which in a manufacturing Country should rather lead, as Weavers will create Spinning, but Spinners will never lead the Country into Weaving, as may be instanced in the County of *Mayo*, and many other Counties, where the Women are generally Spinners, and scarce a Weaver to be found.

I shall under the Title of Weaving give my Reasons why the creating of Weavers has not increased as quick as Spinners, and shew, that the disagreeable Situation of a Manufacturer in not having his Property secured, so as to carry on the Weaving-Branch without an infinite deal of Trouble, is the sole Reason, why Men of Property and Fortune very rarely embark deeply in the southern Provinces of this Kingdom, but leave the now troublesome  
Situation



Situation of conducting and employing Weavers to People of narrow Circumstances, who can the better attend the few they employ, and thereby for want of Capital, subject the weaving Branch to the many Vicissitudes that Trade is liable to, and by this Means the poor Weaver is turned Idle when there is not an immediate Demand; which alone is sufficient to discourage poor People from breeding their Sons Weavers; but now, to return to Spinning.

I am of Opinion, there is not now Occasion for one Spinning-school in the Kingdom, and I have good Reason to found my Opinion on, having made a general Enquiry where I have not been personally. I believe it will be readily granted to me, that there is no Occasion for appointing Spinning-schools to instruct such Children in Spinning, whose Parents are professed Spinners of Linen Yarn, and yet, almost all your Spinning-schools are filled with such Scholars; and what is still more Extraordinary, many of your Spinning School-mistresses, pay Girls a small Premium to come and Spin for themselves in those Schools, so as to put it in the Power of the School-mistress to make an Affidavit, agreeable to your Regulations to receive your Bounty.

The Acquisition of the Art of Spinning is not so difficult a Task as to require any School being appointed in any Neighbourhood, or even County, where the spinning of Linen-yarn is in Practice; and, it is to be observed, that the many Improvements made daily in the Linen Manufacture, greatly vary the Necessities of it's Encouragements; and I am humbly of Opinion, if you were more sparing of your establishing Grants for a Course of Years to Flax Factories, Bleach-yards and Spinning-schools, and only assist them as their immediate Merits deserve, you might avoid being at any Time stinted in your Fund, and apply your Savings to more useful Purposes, many of which, I shall point out in the Course of my Remarks.

There



There is another Consideration I would have you take in, with Respect to the spinning of Linen-yarn, you are not at present under a Necessity of enforcing Spinning, but leave it to make it's own Way ; as we have nearly as much Yarn to spare annually, as we manufacture into our exported Linens ; and Women might be more advantageously employ'd in weaving up some of the Yarn we have to spare, into some of the lighter Branches of the Manufacture, such as Buckrams, Britannias, &c. And it is very well known, the *English* Manufactures can be supplied with East Country Yarn on as reasonable Terms, and the Duties on foreign Yarn imported into *England* have been taken off within these two or three Years, in Expectation that we should weave up all our own Yarn ; and indeed, it is a very favourable Circumstance, by which Means we have an Opportunity of carrying our Linen Manufactures to the highest Degree of Perfection, and adding to our national Wealth by the Encrease and Employment of our Workmen.

I cannot pass over this Article, however, without taking Notice of one Rule that never should be neglected, always to avoid the drawing Flax beyond the Staple ; for, by this ill-judged Maxim, of thinking the finest Spinners the most estimable, the Progress of learning to Spin, and the Trade of Weaving have been greatly retarded ; besides, that general Prejudice (drawing Flax beyond the Staple) must naturally do the Manufacture, and the spinning School-mistresses have been rather more culpable in this last mentioned Article, than any others in the Kingdom.



## In Respect to W E A V I N G.

**T**HIS Branch of the Manufacture, will upon Examination, appear, to deserve your Attention and Assistance in a much greater Degree than any yet mentioned ; for it is your Province to learn from Men of the greatest Experience and Knowledge in the Linen Manufacture, in *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, what Species, or Kind of Linen, the Yarn spun in the several Counties of this Kingdom, may most usefully and properly be converted to, and then, by a Small and well regulated Premium for that County, or District, lead the Inhabitants into that Branch which shall appear most suitable to the Nature of their Yarn and Spinning, by which Means you would remove two great Inconveniencies that at present injure the Public.

The First is, manufacturing our Yarn into extraordinary Quantities of particular Kinds of Linens, thereby overstocking and clogging the Markets with that Article, whilst other Branches of the Manufacture, that Part of the Yarn might be more properly applied to, lie totally neglected. And, in the second Place, leaving the unexperienced Parts of the Kingdom where the Manufacture is extending itself, to fall into such Branches as are most commonly known, without enquiring into the Quality of the Yarn made there, and considering what Species of the Manufacture it would most properly suit.

For want of such timely Information, so as to represent in the plainest, and the easiest Way, the Nature of conducting such Manufactures, as from the Quality of their Yarn, and the Genius of the People they shall be aptest to succeed in, Manufacturers in the southern Provinces of this Kingdom, generally meet with the most discouraging Circumstances ; in their Efforts to vie with the Province of

*Ulster*



*Ulster* in the few Branches the People of the *North* have by unwearied application become Masters of.

The Reasons will be obvious to any that make the least Enquiry, and are these, the Spinning is not so smooth or well twisted, the Workmanship, altho' not executed with that Dexterity and Neatness, much dearer, and the Colour (tho' not obtained on such easy Terms) for want of Experience, much inferior, by which Means the Disparity between the Manufactures of the North and South of the same Species or Denomination of Linen are frequently so great, that it is impossible to vend them either at Home or Abroad for the same Uses.

Whereas, apply the Yarn and Genius of the People of the southern Provinces of this Kingdom, to such Branches of the Manufacture, as from the Quality and Cheapness of their Yarn, and Inexperience of the People best suits them, and they will be put in as Successful and Profitable, a Way, as the Manufacturers and Drapers of *Ulster* are, in those Branches they are at present possessed of.

It would take up too much Time to enumerate the various Sorts of Linen that the Spinning of the different Parts of this Kingdom would suit, and it would require a considerable Time, and many Experiments, to determine, the most useful and safe Application that the Spinning of the several Counties might with the greatest Convenience and Advantage be applied to, however, such a Task executed with Judgment, and by Men of Experience, must be of the greatest Utility to the Nation.

There is a Plumpness and Fullness in the pound Yarn of the southern Provinces, that best suits the Manufacture of Sheetings, and Dowlas, and of these many different Sorts should be made, both in Breadths and Fineness, to supply the different Demands at Market; and it is only in the Southern Provinces you can get Yarn fit to make Oznaburghs.  
And



And the statutable Yarn of *Connaught*, *Munster*, and *Leinster*, might be used to the greatest Advantage (both from it's Cheapness and not being hard twisted) in the Manufacture of low Yard-wides for printing, for which there is an extensive Demand in *England*, and we have almost lost this Branch of late Years, by the Yarn in the North, where they were manufactured, becoming too dear, and being now made of Tow, in the Place of good Flax, which was the Case formerly. Here likewise might be opened a large Field to work in, if we consider the various Species of Linen Manufactures which might be introduced of Buckrams, Linens for half stifning, from the lowest to the highest, both White and Gray, and the different Kinds of Linen for staying, Linings, and glazed Linen, and a coarse stout Sort of twill'd Linen called Drabbs for Mens Frocks, with various other Kinds that would take up too much Room to mention here, of which there is a most extensive Consumption in *England* and the Plantations, but which is now entirely supplied by the *Germans* or *Scotch*, although I am certain considering our advantages in the Flax, and Spinning, &c. we might beat all Competitors out of the *English* Markets; and in those low priced Articles, the Duties on foreign Linens fall much heavier (as they are mostly at so much *per* Yard) consequently more in our Favour than in the Branches we now so much encourage and pursue.

I have made many Experiments in these several Branches, and am satisfied the Introduction of them here would be attended with Success.

The Manufacture of the different Kinds of *Britannias* for the Consumption of *Spain*, *Portugal* and the *West-Indies*, would very well suit the Spinning of the Counties of *Cavan*, *Fermanagh* and *Donnegall*, and many other Parts of the Kingdom, which would take up too much of my Time to enquire into here; and, as they require to be light made, and a high Colour is not necessary, the



Inhabitants of those Counties might be easily led into the Manufacture of them, and it is very well known, that the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*, would give a Preference to our Linen Manufactures, before any Nation whatever.

If my Business allowed me that Leisure I could wish, I should before this time have executed a Scheme, I have long been of Opinion must answer a most useful Purpose, in forming slaying Tables in the plainest intelligible Way for all the courser Branches of the Linen Manufacture, that we could possibly hope to fall into, as they are executed in any Part of *Europe*, but such a Design as this, must have the Sanction and Support of your honourable Board, before it could effect that general Good I would purpose from it.

Was this properly done, so as to give a true Idea of the Quality, Colour, Breadth, Length, &c. of each Sort of Linen, and the Uses they are applied to, Manufacturers and such Gentlemen as were desirous of promoting the Interest of this Kingdom in the extension of the Linen Manufacture, would be induced to make Experiments agreeable to those slaying Tables; and no Doubt many Improvements might be made by the superior Genius of our Workmen, and the native Advantage in our Flax which I have set forth under that Head.

By pursuing such Steps, our Linen Manufacture might be extended to the greatest Degree of Perfection, without the Appearance of over-stocking the Market with any particular Species of Linens, as hath been the Case frequently of late Years.

And, if our Gentlemen residing in the Country would take some more Pains, and pursue some of the Plans of Encouragement laid down by Sir *Richard Cox*, in a Letter to Mr. *Prior*, and put them in Practice, they would encourage the Poor to manufacture our Yarn into the various Sorts of Linen it would admit of, and turn to Account. And I am of Opinion, if a consider-  
able



able Number of Looms were disposed of in such new Branches as should be thought most expedient, and under proper Regulations, such as giving Security to keep them employed, and making an annual Return of the Work done in each Loom, it would be a strong Incentive to Industry, and a Means of creating so many Weavers in a short Time, as must necessarily throw them into the different Channels I point out.

We might, by these Means, see Gentlemen as well as Manufacturers, in a very few Years well repaid for their Pains, in having their Lands improved and peopled; and our Poor, who are now obliged daily to fly to *England* and *France*, to obtain the common Necessaries of Life, decently cloathed and maintained at Home; besides, that secret Satisfaction must arise in every good Mind, of having promoted so sensibly, the Wealth, Honour, and Prosperity of their Country.

However, before there can be a Probability of Success in the Introduction of those, or any other Sorts of Linen not common amongst us, some new Statutes must be provided, so as to regulate Workmen, and preserve the Property of the Manufacturer, which at present is on a very precarious Footing. There is a Statute in Force “Whereby any  
“ Person stealing by Day, or Night, the Value of  
“ five Shillings or upwards out of a Bleach-yard,  
“ of Yarn, or Linen, is guilty of Felony without  
“ Benefit of the Clergy.” But if a Workman undertaking a Piece from a Manufacturer, carries off, or embezles the Work entirely, which is frequently the Case, the Remedy to be had, is to recover treble the Value from a Wretch, who, it is more than probable is not worth one Shilling; or, as Magistrates generally order Security to be given, to make good the real Damage the Manufacturer has sustained; if the Weaver can be secured who has embezled the Work; and the Receiver, who is generally the Principal in the Villainy, and without



whom, there cannot well be a Thief, is in this very material Case entirely neglected.

This, in Fact, is not a Law provided to secure the property of the Manufacturer, and remedy the aggrieved; for, where the Trouble and Expence in Recovery, is of infinitely more Value, than the Damage sustained can be supposed commonly to amount to, the Law will never be executed. And, this Advantage in Favour of the Weaver, over the Manufacturer, is very well known by all the Linen Weavers in the Kingdom, and is sufficient to vitiate the Principles of this Class of Men, and make even the bad worse.

If the Embezzlement of Yarn or Linen, was put on the same Footing as stealing it out of a Bleach-yard, and the Receiver made guilty of Felony, as well as the Weaver, I am of Opinion it would have the desired Effect, without making above one Example, as I believe has pretty nearly been the Case with Respect to stealing out of Bleach-yards, and for an Offence under five Shillings Value, I would recommend the Punishment's being made corporal, (except the Receiver) who I would have still liable at least to Transportation.

Another Grievance the Manufacturer labours under, and particularly all Gentlemen introducing the Linen Manufacture on their Estates, is Combination amongst the Workmen, the Tendency of which is of such dangerous Consequence, that, if not provided against by a Statute, that may put an effectual Stop to such Combinations, it is a Matter of Doubt, what Branches of the Linen Manufacture we may be allowed by the Weavers to carry on the succeeding Year: And, I now find this Method of associating and swearing into Combinations, is making its Way amongst the Bleachers and Calender-men or Lappers; from such Law-givers, what terrible Effects may not be apprehended.

If



If a Manufacturer wants to engage in any new Branch of the Linen Manufacture, there must first be a Consultation among the Weavers, to know if they will allow him to carry it into execution; for, in the southern Provinces, they are to a Man sworn into a Combination to support a Bill of Prices they have made; and their Method of rating the Prices of Workmanship, is not according to the Quality of the Goods to be made, but to the Demand or Necessity there is for a Quantity.

It is thus that Gentlemens Estates are often robbed of the useful Workmen settled on them, without even the Inhabitants under the same Roof being able to Account for it; and, it is thus, Manufacturers are often prevented from carrying into Execution, Schemes that might be of the greatest Utility to the Publick.

TO REMEDY WHICH, I would humbly recommend the following Clause being inserted in the next Linen Bill, to stop the present Combinations, as well as prevent the further spreading of them.

THAT any Weaver, Bleacher, Calender-man, or Lapper that acknowledges himself sworn into a Combination, or unlawfully meets with others to settle Prices, or is found in the Mobb, on what is deem'd by the Linen Weavers a Turn-out Day, or collects or pays Money for any such Purpose, shall be liable to six Months Imprisonment and publicly whip'd; and any One putting himself at their Head, and administering an Oath, or being present at, or giving, or any Ways aiding, assisting, or requiring the Oath of any of the aforesaid Workmen, shall be deemed guilty of Felony.

THIS DONE, Manufacturers may carry their Schemes into Execution, without having any more to agree with than the Workmen employ'd, and without being subject to the Threats and Menaces



of Thousands, as is often the Case at present; and the Poor and Industrious, will be left at Liberty to work for the Support of their Families in such Branches of the Manufacture, and for such Prices as best suit their Purposes, without endangering their Lives by the Insults of lawless Miscreants, as is the general Case now, under Pretence of their working (at what they term) Under-prices.



## In Relation to BLEACHING and ASHES.

**Y**OUR honourable Board have not been wanting in your Encouragements, to promote the Interest of the Publick in this Particular; and it must be confessed, the Linen Manufacture has received the greatest Advantages thereby.

I believe we now prepare our Yarn for the Weaver, and Bleach our Linens on as cheap Terms as any Country whatsoever; but this Cheapness is owing to our Conveniencies of Fire and Water, and the many useful Engines invented from Time to Time, that are apparently of the greatest Consequence to the Publick, in expediting our Bleaching and saving Hands, and it will appear on Enquiry, that this Article will still admit of considerable Improvements in the Materials for Bleaching, and some other Regulations I shall take Notice of.

It is now become a Sort of Maxim amongst Gentlemen, that the first Step to be taken in the Introduction of the Linen Manufacture, in any Part of the Kingdom, is to make a most expensive Bleachyard, and to have every part of the Apparatus suited to an extensive Manufacture; and as it is often the Case, without having either spinning or weaving of any Sort fit for Bleaching, or otherwise, carried on in any Part of the Neighbourhood. This Sort of Proceeding (although the Expence is generally placed to your Account) is very detrimental to the Progress of the Linen Manufacture, in the southern Provinces of this Kingdom, as discouraging Circumstances in the first Out-set of any Manufacture, are frequently found to have the worst Consequence in dulling the Edge of Application: Whereas, if attended with Success, it creates an Emulation in others to follow the same laudable Example, and even stimulates the most alert.



A true Knowledge of the Art of Bleaching is easily acquired, and is simply this, to consider well the Quality of your Kelp or Ashes, so as not to overcharge Yarn or Linen with too strong Lees in boiling or bucking; the same Caution is to be observed in Sours, and always prefer a Butter-milk Sour to any other, preserve proper Distances between the Courses of boiling or bucking, so as not to expose Linens to the Weather without Stuff in them; and above all, keep them clean and neat during the whole operation, there is no farther Mystery necessary among honest Men.

I would therefore recommend to you, to be more sparing in your Bounties for Bleach-yards, unless, you are very well satisfied there is a Manufacture set on Foot equal to the Improvement required; and the Quality of the Linens made, should be inquired into, to know what Improvements there is a Necessity for, as the Misapplication of Rubbing-boards, in Bleaching the Article of Printers, and many other Branches of the Manufacture, in the low Way, is productive of the worst Consequences to the Kingdom in general; and I should think, an annual attested Return of the Goods, and Quality, whitened in such Bleach-yards, as you contribute to would be very proper, to prevent the Abuse daily committed in receiving your Bounty for Bleach-yards that are entirely waste, and some of them in Ruins, and strike off those that do not appear deserving.

The Path is very plain to a Man of Experience and Knowledge, that should be pursued in the Article of Bleaching, and by attending to the Rules I lay down in this Article, you will easily perceive where, in my humble Opinion, your Bounty is bestowed to the best Advantage.

That Man who has made any new Discovery, in preparing Yarn better, or in a speedier Manner for the Loom, has Merit, and is worthy your Favour.

That



That Man who discovers any Ashes, Material, or Engine, whereby Linens may be bleached with Safety cheaper, or brought sooner to Market, is likewise well deserving of a Premium; and those, or any other Discoveries that may be of Use to the Public, should be first carefully examined, and if approved made public; and I cannot omit observing, in this Place, you have granted a Salary for a new Method of preparing Yarn for the Loom, without making use of Ashes; and as this is still kept a Secret by the Proprietor, notwithstanding your Bounty for the Discovery, I apprehend the Salary should be withdrawn.

I do not know any Thing could be more necessary and valuable, at present, in the Linen Manufacture, as all Sorts of Kelp and Ashes we have been accustomed to are adulterated and advanced in Price to an intolerable Degree, than a Discovery of any new and more useful Sort of Ashes, or Material, than what we commonly use.

I have made many Experiments, in boiling with the Ashes of every Country I could procure, and I could find none hitherto so useful and cheap as the *Barilla* of Spain: The best Sort of it may be imported here on as easy Terms as the Cashob we commonly use; and by the Accounts I have had this Year from Spain, it will be purchased much cheaper as the Crop is plentiful. *Barilla* is in Appearance like Kelp, and cultivated from Seed of the same Name, sown annually, much the same as our Oats here, and gathered in, and burned in a Kiln at a proper Season. There are three Sorts made there, and I have only used the best, and find the Quality of *Barilla* superior to the best Cashob (I could procure) almost beyond comparison, as the Cashob gives only a dead Colour, and evidently impairs the Strength of the Yarn; whereas, less than half the Quantity of *Barilla* is sufficient, and it gives a bright silky Whiteness to the Yarn, or Linen, at the same



same time, preserves Strength and that mellow Fullness that always attends good Materials, and proper handling.

You have here an Account of *Barilla*, so far as I have been informed from those who have seen it cultivated in *Spain*, joined with my own Experience in the use of it; And I have employed a Friend to procure me some of the Seed, and hope to be able to inform you, next Season, that some Part of this Kingdom may not be an improper Climate to raise it in. But should this last mentioned Attempt fail of Success, it surely is our Interest to encourage the Importation of that Sort of Ashes, which (from Experience) appears to be most deserving and useful, and the Public need only have the Way pointed out to them, and Self-interest will soon enlarge the Channel.

There is another Consideration should weigh with us. The *Spaniards* are very inclinable to promote and encourage our Linen Manufacture, and by taking every Opportunity of cultivating a Correspondence with them, we shall enlarge the Vent of our Linens among them; and it is but too well known, that the Reverse of this Argument will be good against the *Germans*, as they are our greatest and almost only Competitors in the Linen Manufacture. And the Ashes we import from the different Parts of *Germany*, and the North, are not only advanced in Price, but adulterated and depreciated in Quality, insomuch, that they are become less portable to the inland Parts of the Country, and in many Respects useless; and our own People, and the *Scotch*, from whence we get our Kelp, have followed the Example of the *Germans* so effectually as to render it almost useless to the Bleachers, by the extraordinary Quantity of Sand and Stones mixed with it.

I can.



I cannot, however, omit one thing that occurs to me. Was there a small Premium published, annually, (suppose 20*l*.) to be given to the Person who should discover the most useful Improvement in Bleaching, we might, perhaps, have some greater Improvements made in this Article, both in respect to Expedition and Cheapness.

There might be a large Field of Improvement opened, by procuring a Statute for the free Importation of Ashes from *North America*, as thereby we should be enabled to procure the Ashes cheaper, and assist the Inhabitants in improving the Country by cutting down the Woods, and, at the same time, extend the Vent of our Linens amongst them.

Upon the whole of this Article of Bleaching, I don't see any Scheme can be proposed in procuring Ashes, but is more promising and advantageous to the Public, than that we at present encourage and pursue.



## In Relation to CORDAGE.

**I**T may be thought unnecessary in me to make any Observation on this Article, but I am satisfied the pointing out any Particular that may advantage the Public, and add to your Fund, will be well received.

In the fourth Year of the Reign of King *George* the First, there was a Clause enacted in the Linen-Bill (to continue in full force for seven Years) laying an additional Duty of five Shillings *per* hundred, over and above the then and present duty, on all Cordage, or Twine, imported, (except of the Manufacture of *Great-Britain*) the Duty arising therefrom to be applied to the Encouragement of the hempen and flaxen Manufactures of this Kingdom, which Clause was not since revived.

And, in Consequence thereof, there has been a large Import of Foreign Cordage into this Kingdom, to the Detriment of the Public, without your honourable Board receiving any Advantage therefrom.

I believe reviving the same Clause next Session of Parliament will be a sufficient Remedy, and I am of Opinion it will be thought expedient to extend the Clause before-mentioned respecting Combinations to Rope-makers, Flax, and Hemp-Dressers.



## *The* CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now given a cursory View of the different Transitions through which the Linen Manufacture is conducted, with such Remarks on the several Parts as I apprehend require Amendment; and, was I capable of representing the Importance of those Alterations in such manner as their Necessities require, you would be astonished at the supine and dormant Disposition of those immediately interested in the Manufacture, which may proceed from an Opinion I know prevails amongst many, that we may extend our Linen Manufacture, beyond the Consumption that can be expected for it Abroad; and some even go so far as to say, it is done already.

These sort of Inuendo's (however meant) are destructive Maxims to infuse in the Minds of the People in this Kingdom, as they have a most dangerous Tendency to dull the Edge of Industry, which it's but too obvious requires the contrary Spirit to prevail.

It is easy to confute such Opinions by having recourse to Reason and Facts. Our Exports in Linens are not yet computed at so much as one Million yearly, and the Consumption of *England*, by the Weekly Observations of the *Dublin Society*, Number 7, is accounted to be four Millions a year in Linen, allowing 10s. *per* Head; and this will be thought still more moderate, when it is considered, that the Number of Inhabitants in *England*, by the latest Surveys are computed at twelve Millions, which must add two Millions more to the amount of their Consumption, on the same reasonable Computation.

It's true, there is a very considerable Linen Manufacture carried on in *England*, but I do not think  
their



their own Manufacture will exceed, in Amount, their yearly Exports of Linens to the Plantations and elsewhere: Hence we may conclude, that our Exports in Linens are not yet sufficient to supply a fourth Part of the Consumption of *England*, nor indeed do I believe a Sixth.

It is a Manufacture we have all the Advantages in, that it is possible for the most sanguine Friend of *Ireland* to pencil to himself. It is free from all Taxes both at Home and throughout his Majesty's Dominions. It is peculiarly adapted to the Nature of our Climate from the Conveniencies of Fire and Water with which we abound, and particularly from the native Usefulness of our own Flax, as I set forth under the said Article.

And the principal Obstacles that appear to me, at present, to impede the Progress of the Linen Manufacture, in most Branches, are the Want of a sufficient Quantity of Flax of our own Growth to supply our Consumption, and making the pretended Mystery of a Weaver a less penetrable Secret, but particularly in the coarse, and more bulky Way, which is the more desirable to encourage, as it is the easiest executed, as well as the most extensive and useful Part.

By doing so, it would employ and provide for the Poor, increase the Number of Inhabitants, improve our Lands, and add to our Wealth.

The Linen Manufacture of this Kingdom is the most interesting for us to encourage, had we a free Export, even for our Woollen Manufacture into *England*; for this Reason, the Duties paid at present, by the *Germans* and *Dutch*, on their Linens imported into *England*, are computed at 22 per Cent. on average, which tho' imposed, from time to time, to supply the Exigencies of State, as it cannot be supposed the Inhabitants of *England* would tax themselves so much on our particular Accounts; yet, however,



ever, as our Linens are imported free into *England*, it certainly creates a Monopoly in our Favour, if by a timely Application we could be persuaded to make use of these Advantages we are possessed of.

And whenever such Part of the national Debt is paid off, as has its Interest secured by those Duties, we must then expect to lose those Advantages; therefore to make use of an old Phrase, (let us make Hay whilst the Sun shines) for if we don't now establish ourselves in every Branch of the Linen Manufacture we are capable of, Posterity may justly accuse us of having betray'd our Trust, as they will find it a Task impracticable to beat the *Germans* out, when on an equal Footing, which may one Day be the Case, and particularly in the coarser Branches on which the Duties paid by them in *England* at present fall heaviest.

Well-disposed Premiums (there is no doubt) will Spirit up the Public to Industry and Application, and Industry and Application will surmount all Difficulties; but there should be the greatest Care constantly taken, lest a Monopoly be thrown into the Hands of any Individuals, of which some Instances may be produced, thereby leaving the most ingenious and industrious unrewarded.

Suitable Encouragements, conducted with that care its Importance to the Public requires, must be productive of every useful Improvement that could be wished.

Experience shews what surprizing Advantages Arts and Sciences have received from Honours and Rewards conferred with Judgment, in former as well as latter Ages: And you, Gentlemen, have the Means provided by the Legislature, in such a way as is suited to the noble Design.

I have here represented to you some of those Alterations, that appear to me deserving of your most  
immediate



immediate Care, and I could advance many Arguments, perhaps some more cogent than those made use of, to enforce the Necessity of your Aid in executing them; but having the highest Sense of your ready Attention to whatever tends to promote the public Utility, shall conclude here, and hope, if I may have appeared too free in giving my Opinion on any particular Head, that a true Zeal for the Welfare of my Country, and the Honour, and Influence of your honourable Board, will be allowed to plead in my Favour.

F I N I S.