SOME

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

Present State

OF

IRELAND, &c.

(Price Six Pence.)

80

SOME

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

Present State

OF

IRELAND,

Particularly with Relation to the

Woollen Manufacture.

In a LETTER

To his Excellency the Duke of

DORSET.

By J R Cocks

Timeo Danaos, & Dona ferentes. Virg.

Printed at *DUBLIN:*

And Re-printed at *LONDON,* for *J. Roberts* at the *Oxford-Arms* in *Warwick-Lane.* 1731.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE Present State OF *IRELAND.*

MY LORD,

IN the extreme Diſtreſs, and miſerable Uneaſineſs, under which the People of *Ireland* at preſent labour, I know no Perſon more proper to be applied to than your Grace: Your known Humanity and Juſtice, joined to the Dignity you now

 poſſeſs

poſſeſs in this Kingdom, gives us certain Aſſurances that you will *aſſiſt* us under our Misfortunes to the utmoſt of your Power. I need not mention how *neceſſary* ſuch a Compaſſion is to your own Reputation; you muſt be very ſenſible of that: Beſides you have no need of a Motive of that kind, where there are others of ſo much *greater Weight*; the Honour of his Majeſty, and the Intereſt of *England*.

THE lamentable Decay of Trade with us, and the Hardſhips we ſuffer, not only for *want of Money*, but alſo for want of a proper Regulation of the *little* we have, are Grievances which torture us beyond what any one out of the Kingdom can conceive.

IT is impoſſible for you to comprehend, at the Diſtance you are at, the Miſeries of this People. It would be difficult for you to come at a *true* Senſe of them, though you were here. You would ſee no other Part of the Kingdom, but that which, by its being the Capital, and the Place of

of your Reſidence, engroſſes the *whole* Wealth of the Country: And you would be ſurrounded by a Croud of *hungry* Courtiers, whoſe Intereſt it is to repreſent their People as flouriſhing as they can, that the more Taxes may be *raiſed* upon them, becauſe they imagine the more will fall to their Share. You would likewiſe meet with Men of Quality and Fortune, whoſe Vanity would make them endeavour to deceive you, and who are aſhamed to confeſs *their Country's Poverty*, leſt it ſhould be a Reproach to them for their *own Extravagance*.

BUT I am certain your Grace will not be miſled by *falſe* Inſinuations of this Nature. You will examine into the *Condition* of our Eſtates, into the *Deficiencies* of our Taxes, and the *Decay* of our Trade. From hence you will be convinced of the *Miſeries of the People*.

OUR Eſtates, 'tis true, are raiſed near One Third all over the Kingdom within theſe Seven Years. But yet this Circumſtance is no Argument that

we are in a flourishing Condition; on the contrary, it is one of the *principal* Causes of our Calamities. It proceeded only from hence, that *most* of the Estates of *Ireland* were set, soon after the Revolution, and that infinitely below their *real Value*, on account of the *unsettled* Condition of that Kingdom. They were generally set for 31 Years, so that no Gentleman could make any Advantage of the Quiet we have since enjoyed; the Tenants got *all the Profit*, and lived almost as well as their Landlords: But the Case is now altered, and the Tenants are obliged to pay the *full* Value of their Lands, which it is not easy for them to do, when they have used themselves so many Years to all manner of Extravagance.

THIS is what has, in a great Measure, driven so many out of the Kingdom. They could not support the Shame of altering their Way of Life at Home, and chose rather to quit their native Soil for another they knew nothing of, and where they themselves were likewise unknown.

BUT

BUT this is not the *worst* Circumstance attending on it; the *Grand Evil* it has occasion'd, is the *Drain* of our Species. Before this new Rise of Lands, the Remittances to our *Absenters* abroad did not exceed the Balance of Trade in our Favour; so that for many Years we remain'd pretty nearly in the same State with a current Cash of about 600,000 *l.* which was sufficient for the Inland Trade of the Kingdom. But the Lands of the *Absenters* being risen a third Part, there is just a third Part more drawn from us, than there was *seven* Years ago; which third Part is so much every Year out of the current Cash of our Kingdom.

NOW let us suppose our Remittances abroad, which have been with great Accuracy calculated last Year, to be near 600,000 *l.* to have been no more, seven Years ago, than 300,000 *l.* By the *rise of Lands* those Remittances are increas'd 100,000 *l. per Ann.* And let us suppose the Advantages of our Trade to be 350,000 *per Ann.* which is

is *more* than they can be *justly* reckon'd at, our current Cash must be diminish'd every Year 50,000 *l.* which in twelve Years must leave us without a Shilling in the Kingdom. But if we proceed upon the most exact Calculations in both these Particulars, the Evil advances upon us by much larger Strides, and our annual Loss will appear to be near *Treble* what we have computed it.

THE last Calculation will meet with some Difficulty to be believ'd; for were that the Case, *Ireland* would have been *entirely drain'd* in four Years time, whereas there is *still* Money in the Kingdom. But in answer to that, I say, that *Ireland* is actually already so far drain'd, that at present there does not remain 400,000 *l.* Besides, the Evil has been *continually* growing, and *never* arriv'd to a considerable Height, till within these three last Years. It is now, indeed, come to that pass, that if we continue three Years longer in the *same Way*, we must be utterly undone. Our Army is at present many Months in Arrear, our Revenues fall infinitely short; and two

two Things must inevitably happen in a very short time: The *Charge* of our Establishment must be defray'd by *England*, as it was in the Infancy of our Government: And our *Absenters* must return and live upon their Estates, which will pay them only in Corn and Cattle.

THIS will, no doubt, be terrible upon the whole Country; but it will be much more so upon the People of *England*; they will lose 500,000 *l.* a Year *clear* Profit from our *Absenters*, besides an annual Charge of 500,000 *l. per Ann.* more, which is expended on Account of our Government: And the Expence may be, perhaps, *greater* in that Case than it is at present, since the People will be desperate, and not so easily kept in Order.

THESE Considerations, we are told, have had *great Weight* with the People of *England*. They begin to wear off the *unjust* and *unreasonable* Suspicions they entertain'd of us formerly, and are at last become sensible, that it is of Advantage to *England* to *encourage*

encourage Ireland. They perceive, that whatever we get by Trade, centers with them at laſt, and conſequently are *now* employ'd in giving us all the Encouragement they can, without prejudicing themſelves. We are very thankful for their intended Kindneſs; but we are afraid, that not being thoroughly apprized of our Circumſtances, they may take Meaſures prejudicial to *both* Kingdoms.

WE have been long deſirous to have two Things allow'd us: The one, a *free Trade* to the Plantations for the unenumerated Commodities: The other, ſome conſiderable Encouragement with relation to our Wool. The *firſt* of theſe being a thing allow'd to all *other* Nations in the World, and being far from *prejudicing England*, we do not doubt but we ſhall obtain, whenever it ſhall come under the Conſideration of the *Britiſh* Parliament.

THE *other* is now in Debate, and muſt be a Buſineſs of greater Difficulty, becauſe it is an Affair which infinitely

nitely concerns the People of *England.* They are very jealous, and very reaſonably ſo, leſt any thing ſhould be done that might hurt the antient and important Staple of their Country. I hope their Jealouſy, however, will not *now* carry them ſo far as it has *formerly* done, and lead them to ſtudy more how to do *Miſchief* to their Neighbours, than *Good* to themſelves.

THE preſent *declining* Condition of this Branch of their Trade is principally owing to this *unfortunate* Jealouſy. When *Ireland* and *England* together poſſeſs'd the ſole Benefits of this Manufacture, the *Gain* of both Kingdoms was *exceedingly great*, and *England* finding ſo much Advantage from a Part of the Trade, were deſirous of engroſſing the *Whole*, they forgot the Fable of the *Hen* and the *Egg*, and precipitately paſs'd an Act to prohibit the *Iriſh* from ſharing that Trade with them.

THAT Act laid the Foundation of *all* the Misfortunes of *both* Kingdoms. It drove abroad all our Wool-

len Manufacturers, who set up in different Countries, and taught our Neighbours to steal from us a Manufacture we entirely engross'd before. The Consequences of this were not foreseen, nor were they soon discover'd. There requires much time to bring to Perfection any thing of this Kind; and till it was brought to Perfection, the *English* flourish'd by their *new* Law, and no doubt thought themselves *deep Politicians* for having made it.

BUT Experience has taught them, that *Injustice*, in the long run, will never thrive. I need not mention the Right that all Nations have to make Use of the Advantages Nature has bestow'd upon them, I shall only observe, that it was extremely severe to hinder them not only from *exporting* their Manufactures, but also from *sending abroad* their Wool. They suffer'd them to export it no where but to *England*, where they set a *Duty* on it, which amounted almost to a Prohibition. It was certainly a Notion of those Times, that the *Irish* were a different Species of Animals from other Men, and that their

their Stomachs were formed to digest their Wool.

It would be past the Art of Man to *remedy* this Misfortune, if Nature had not been more liberal to us than we deserve; but she has been so particularly indulgent to the Islands to which we belong, as to give us a *different* Wool from the rest of the World, and *that* necessary to the Manufactures of all Countries.

BY this Means we have it any time in our Power to re-engross to ourselves the Woollen Trade whenever we please. We have nothing to do but to keep all our Wool *at Home*, and the foreign Manufactures must fall to the Ground. The *English* have *often* endeavoured to effect this, but *always* without Success, because they have never made use of the *proper* Method. They have pass'd the most severe Laws against *clandestine* Exporters of Wool; they have gone so far as to make the Punishment Death itself: But they *never* considered those Laws could not have any Weight with

 us,

us, ſince it is as well to be hang'd as ſtarv'd.

THEY have found however *at laſt*, that there is no Poſſibility of hindering us from running our Wool, but by making it our Intereſt to *keep it at Home*, or to *export* it only to *England*. They are now endeavouring to do the laſt, by *taking off* the Duty upon our Yarn, which will have ſome Effect, by *raiſing* the Price of it to the *French*, and *lowering* it to the *Engliſh*. They imagine that by this Means the *Iriſh* Exporter will prefer a *certain* moderate Gain, to an *uncertain*, tho' *greater* Profit. But I am afraid the Remedy will be very imperfect, becauſe the *French* can afford to give us ſtill *a much greater* Price than the *Engliſh*. For *One Third* of our Wool ſufficing to make up *Two Thirds* more of theirs; and theirs being infinitely *cheaper* than either the *Engliſh* or the *Iriſh*, they will ſtill get their Materials at a *lower Rate* than we can have them, beſides the Advantage of *manufacturing them likewiſe cheaper*.

THE

THE *Engliſh* are ſuſpicious of this, and therefore are deſirous that we ſhould take ſome Method *ſtronger* than has yet been taken to prevent the running Practice. We ſhall certainly do our utmoſt to prevent it, as it will be our Intereſt, and as it will be the only way to make a *ſincere Union* between the Two Nations: But at the ſame time it may perhaps be impoſſible; and if that ſhould be the Caſe, it will be hard to expect it of us. I hope the *Engliſh* will make a *better* Uſe of the Reformation, and of the Liberty of reading the Scriptures, than to copy after *Pharoah*, and expect us to make *Brick without Straw*.

IF we are rightly inform'd, they have already thought of a Scheme for us. They propoſe a Regiſtry for both Kingdoms, and we are very much oblig'd to them, for *deſiring from us*, only what *they will do by themſelves*. They act likewiſe very prudently in leaving it to ourſelves; becauſe as ſuch a Thing could not be done without *raiſing Money*, I am afraid, if it were done

done by an *English* Act, it would have no Effect. The Privilege of taxing ourselves being almost the *only* one left us, we are extremely jealous of it, and an Attempt of that Kind, might have Consequences too *terrible* to be mentioned: At least, if such a Scheme *was* to be put in Practice, it would be more effectually done by an *Irish*, than by an *English* Act, which the People of *Ireland* do not think of the same Force here, as the People of *England* would have it.

HOWEVER, we cannot imagine that the Scheme will be pursued either in *England* or *Ireland*. The *English* are jealous of their *Liberties*, and tho' they are not so anxious about the *Freedom* of their Neighbours, abhor any thing in their own Country that has the least Appearance of Slavery. A Registry will not only have *something* of that Air, but may in reality occasion a *very great* Dependance on the Crown. The People will not readily bear to be harrass'd by a *New Set* of Officers, to whom their Houses must be open at all Hours of the Day and Night: And

And the Influence those Officers will have in all *Boroughs*, and upon all *Elections*, may be of very ill Consequence. Besides, the Expence would be upwards of *Threescore* or *Fourscore* thousand Pounds, which would be a *great Weight*, added to the other vast Sums they raise.

IN *Ireland* I believe it would be very difficult, for all the Reasons mentioned in the Case of *England*; but for the last (the Expence of it) utterly impracticable. The *least* that a Registry would cost with us, would be 40000 *l. per Annum*; and how is it possible for a Nation in so *miserable* a Condition, whose Revenues are at present in so *bad* a State, to think of bearing so *great* an additional Charge. Besides, it would be ineffectual there on this Account, the *Irish* Country Gentlemen are all concerned in the clandestine Trade; they would get the Officers to their Houses, and make them drunk, whenever they intended to run. Those Sort of Fellows were *never so true* to their Trust, as to prefer their *Duty* to a *good Supper* and their

Belly

Belly full of Wine. But if they ſhould be diligent, and make frequent Seizures, the Juſtices of the Peace are all the ſame Gentlemen, who would hardly be induced to puniſh their *own Servants* for the Execution of their *own Commands.*

THE *Engliſh* have not only been ſo kind as to put us into a Way to *prevent* our clandeſtine Trade, but they have likewiſe *pointed out* to us the Method to *raiſe* the Money neceſſary to complete their Scheme. There is a Duty upon Wool in *Ireland* call'd the *Licence Duty*, which produces 4000 *l. per Annum*, and has been from Time immemorial appropriated to the Lord Lieutenant. This Duty, they propoſe we ſhould tranſmute into a kind of Exciſe upon Wool, which every Grower of Wool muſt pay upon the ſhearing of his Sheep. Either this Duty will ſuffice to *defray* the Expence of a Regiſtry, or it will not: If it will not, which it is utterly impoſſible it ſhould, becauſe the Number of our Sheep is much ſmaller than is imagin'd, the Project is at an End for want

want of a Fund to ſupport it: If it ſhould, that can happen no other Way than by ſetting ſo *high* a Duty on the Wool, as will make it infinitely too dear for the *Engliſh* Merchant *to buy*, which will effectually fruſtrate it in another Shape.

I CANNOT help obſerving farther, that a Tax of this kind, tho' it might anſwer in all *other* Reſpects, would ſtill be inſupportable, from *this* Conſideration, That it would raiſe the Price of our Home Conſumption to an extravagant Degree. The Licence Duty is very different; for that only affects exported Wool; whereas this is an equal Load upon that which we manufacture at Home, and will make our *Stuffs* ſo dear, that our own People cannot afford to wear them.

FROM all theſe Conſiderations I think it evident that a Regiſtry will be *impracticable*, as well as *ineffectual.* And I believe there is but *one* Method in Nature which in the End would not be found the ſame. This is the allowing us to manufacture our own

Wool. I do not desire that we should exercise the Woollen Trade in the same free Manner that the *English* do. But were *that* allow'd us, I am convinced, it would be for the Benefit of *England*: Not only from this general and serious Consideration, that they will *get all our Profits*, let them be what they will; but from this Assurance, that such a Liberty would *utterly confound* the foreign Manufactures, and that without *lowering the Price* of the *English* Commodities. It is certain indeed, that our Manufacture would be *cheaper*, and might have the *first Vent*; but it is as certain, theirs would meet with as sure a Market. When the whole World could be supplied *only* with the Product of the two Islands, the Demand for their Goods would infinitely exceed what they could possibly answer, and consequently *raise their Value*.

BUT because some Persons are dubious whether *our Wool is absolutely necessary to the foreign Manufactures or not*, I shall beg Leave to enter a little into that Affair. Let us state the Case which

which Way we please, it still appears the *Interest* of *England* to encourage the *Irish*: If the foreign Manufactures cannot be carried on *without Irish* Wool, then surely it is the Interest of *England* to take any Method to *keep it from them*; and they have no Reason to fear being *rivall'd* by us, if *that* could be effected, because, as I observed before, there would be Work enough for *both*. But if they can do without *our Wool*, the Pains we take to keep it at Home, are to very little Purpose. All we could do in that Case would be, to strive to under-sell our Neighbours; which we could *never attain to* without employing the People of *Ireland*. As for *England*, 'tis so loaded with Debt, and oppress'd with Taxes, that no Manufacture can hereafter flourish there.

I HAVE enter'd the more into this *last* Particular, tho' it will bear but little canvassing, in Hopes of giving a *more general* Satisfaction. For as to this Point itself, it is past all Doubt, that *our Wool is absolutely necessary to the foreign Manufactures*.

 And

And this *one* Circumſtance, that they pay ſo *high* a Price for it, is the ſtrongeſt Proof of it that can be urged.

THIS being the Caſe, I think it would be no unreaſonable Petition, if we deſired to have the Woollen Trade allow'd us without any Reſtriction. But ſurely we do not ask too much in deſiring Leave to manufacture a *particular* Species of Stuffs, which interfere *very little* with the Manufactures of *England*, ſuch as Frizes and Flannels. Nay, if it ſhould appear *too great* an Indulgence to ſuffer us to carry on a Trade Abroad, with *any* Species of the Woollen Manufacture, tho' it would be a *conſiderable* Advantage to *England*, becauſe we muſt Traffick in *their Bottoms*; yet we are contented if they will ſuffer us to *work up* our Wool, only to export to *England*, where they may make the *farther* Profit upon it: And this will take away the common Clamour, that *We ſhall under-ſell them in foreign Markets*; for in that Caſe they may ſet what Price they pleaſe on *our Manufactures*, and

and ſell them Abroad as dear as *their own*.

BUT if *every one* of theſe Requeſts ſhould be deny'd us, we ſhall then be under a Neceſſity of *recalling* our Gentlemen who live among you, or we muſt confiſcate their Eſtates. This has been formerly done, and the Neceſſities of our Country were *never* more preſſing than they are *Now*. If this ſhould happen, the *Engliſh* would loſe more *that Way*, than ever they could gain by *engroſſing the Woollen Manufacture*. And that it muſt happen if Things continue in the ſame Train, is paſt all doubt, for we muſt be Beggars in a *very few* Years.

In ſhort, my Lord, the *Engliſh* muſt do one of theſe Two Things, they muſt either *ſend us back our Abſentees*, or allow us to *manufacture our Wool*. We cannot ſubſiſt, *cramp'd* in our Trade, and *drain'd* of our Specie too. The *firſt* of theſe would be moſt advantageous to us, becauſe without it the *other* would loſe of its Effect. With what Comfort or Spirit can we labour, when it is to no other End than to enrich *a Set*

Set of Men, who deſervedly have the Curſes of a Nation they endeavour to ruin, and to whoſe Support they do not ſo much contribute, as the *meaneſt Shoe-boy* in *Dublin*.

YOU may tell me, perhaps, that I ought to apply to my Countrymen in *England* to remedy the Evil, who, as they *caus'd* it, and as they muſt *ſuffer* by it in the End, are the *propereſt* Perſons to remonſtrate to. But what can we expect from Men who have *loſt* all Senſe of the ſtrongeſt Ties of Nature, who have *abandon'd* their Country in its laſt Agonies, who are ſo *ſtupid* as not to foreſee the *inevitable* Beggary and *total* Ruin of their Families; and laſtly, who are ſo *abandon'd to Shame*, that they can *live in a foreign Country* diſtreſs'd, abhorr'd, and deſpis'd, when they can *return to their own*, where they would be lov'd, fear'd, and reſpected?

BUT my Reſentments have carry'd me too far, and made me ſpeak with a Warmth, which nothing but my Country's Diſtreſs could juſtify; however,

ever, I ſhall make this Uſe of it, to let you know, that a *much greater* Spirit boils in the Heart of every *Iriſhman* at this Juncture: A Spirit which has *united* all Parties, *Whig* and *Tory*, *Proteſtant* and *Papiſt*, and which may be very troubleſome to your Grace the next Seſſion of Parliament, if ſomething effectual is not done to relieve us. I ſpeak it not by way of *Threat*; for it would be as much *below you* to regard ſuch a Behaviour, as it would be *above us* to be guilty of it. I ſpeak it not with Haughtineſs or Pride, but with the *greateſt Dread* and *Horror*, that I am convinced if we continue long in ſo wretched a Condition, we ſhall be plunged into a Scene of the utmoſt Confuſion. *Poverty* and *Deſpair*, the Conſequences of it, may drive us terrible Lengths: They will take away our Reaſon, and we ſhall then have *very little Regard* for our own Preſervation. As it is at preſent, we very little care what comes of us, and wiſh ourſelves as heartily at the Bottom of the Sea, as *England* ever did. All that may follow from hence I dare not ſuggeſt. One Conſequence, which

which is the *least terrible* that can happen, will be, that all the *Proteſtants* of the Kingdom, in a few Years more, will leave it for *New-England*, a Countrymuch more likely at preſent to ſhake off its Dependance on the Crown of *England* than ever we were. The *Papiſts* will then be left Maſters of *Ireland*, and, if *unaſſiſted*, may perhaps employ the *Engliſh* another 400 Years before they are ſubdued; if *ſupported* by a foreign Power, as it is probable they will be, it will be improbable they ſhould be *re-ſubdued at all.*

THESE Conſiderations ſhould induce the *Engliſh* to uſe us with all *Indulgence* inſtead of *Reſtraint*. The very Argument they uſe againſt it, is a ſtrong one on that Side the Queſtion. If they are afraid we ſhould *rebel*, which I am ſure has been a *barbarous* and an *unjuſt* Suſpicion, they ſhould uſe us ſo as to make us run ſome Riſque in doing it, they ſhould allow us ſomething that we might *fear* to loſe; inſtead of that, they leave us in a State, which we run no Riſque in *changing*, becauſe there cannot be a *worſe.*

worſe. We are deſtitute of the *Neceſſaries of Life*, and we have loſt thoſe Liberties which are deareſt to Mankind. There remains *nothing* but Life, which in ſo calamitous a Condition is worſe than Death. Examine antient Hiſtory; obſerve whether the moſt *frequent* Cauſes of Revolutions have been *Opulence* and *Plenty*, or *Poverty* and *Oppreſſion.* Reflect on the *laſt* remarkable Revolution of theſe latter Ages, and ſee whether it was Power and Riches that enabled the Low Countries to ſhake off the *Spaniſh* Yoak. If this ſhould appear, then I ſhall never trouble your Grace more, nor deſire your Aſſiſtance.

BUT as I am convinced the Caſe is otherwiſe, and *England* acts a very *imprudent* Part in oppreſſing this Country, I boldly venture to give you my Thoughts upon their *preſent* Condition; and I do it with greater Confidence, becauſe my Stake is not only very ſmall here, but likewiſe of ſuch a Nature, that it would not be prejudiced by any Miſfortune that can probably happen to us: What principally engaged me in

 this

this Affair, was that which has as *great an Influence* upon your Grace as upon any Man living, a tender Compaſſion for the *Miſeries* of our Fellow-Creatures. I am,

Your Grace's, &c.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Page 5, *&c. for* Abſenters *read* Abſentees.
P. 9. l. 21. *for* the Egg *read* the Golden Egg.