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A SHORT
V I E W
OF THE
ADVANTAGES
Which probably may arise from the
S C H E M E
FOR ENCOURAGING
Flax - Husbandry
IN
I R E L A N D.



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A SHORT
VIEW, &c.

HAVING lately seen a small Pamphlet, printed by Mr. George Faulkner, intitled, *Remarks on the present State of the Linen Manufacture of this Kingdom, and Queries relating to the further Improvement thereof, addressed to the Right Hon. Henry Boyle, Esq; Speaker to the Commons of Ireland*; it gave me much Pleasure and Satisfaction, because the Author's Sentiments coincide and are intirely conformable to mine, as to the main Points he treats of: He calls this a poor Kingdom, distressed by the Luxury of the Great, and almost ruined by the Slothfulness of the Poor.

As for the first of these Mischiefs which he complains of, I shall not trouble myself with so sublime a Subject; for Discretion will teach Men of inferior Rank always to speak respectfully of those of high Birth or Quality: But for the second Mischief he mentions, I shall not scruple to declare, that it is a Pity there are no Laws in Force to oblige such to some Degree of Industry, and not suffer the Indolent and Lazy so much as to hope to live by begging, if they are able to work; and it is a Justice we owe to the Commonwealth, not to suffer such as have Health, and who by Industry might maintain themselves, to be like Drones; and to live upon the Labour of others. Of these we may reckon there are two Sorts of People; one of which, by reason of our slack Administration, are permitted to remain in Sloth; and the other, thro' a Defect in our Constitution and polity, continue in wretched Poverty for want of Employment.

In order to remove these Mischiefs, Materials, in the first place, ought to be provided for their Employment; and this can't be in any one Branch of manual Occupation

Occupation so easily come at, nor made so extensive; (by reason of our free Commerce) as in the Flaxen Manufactures, which the above-recited Author so warmly recommends: Agreeable to which Subject I have formed a Plan, shewing the Advantages that may arise therefrom, and how Industry may be introduced in the most expeditious, most safe, and most effectual Manner. But, first, I shall beg leave to premise, that the most sure Way for a Nation to increase in Wealth and Power, is to enlarge and extend its Trade and Manufactures, to find full Employment for the Indigent and Lazy, and to prevent the Importation of such foreign Commodities as may be raised and procured at home.

The Flax-Seed and the Flax of the Growth of this Kingdom, when judiciously sown and properly manufactured, are capable to answer all the abovesaid Ends and Purposes; therefore that truly worthy Design, now under Consideration of Parliament, to encourage the raising and manufacturing both these Commodities among ourselves, will, it is hoped, be considered as the only Source from whence our future Happiness may flow.

I. By our having sufficient Quantities of Flax to work upon may allure and invite Men, well skilled in Flax-Husbandry, and Artists in Flax-Dressing, to come and settle among us, and find full Employment for those of that Profession we already have; which, together with those we may hope in Time the Charter-Schools will furnish us with, will be capable to supply all the Market-Towns in *Ireland* with ready heckled Flax of all Sorts and Prices, made up into Pounds, and sold in Proportion to its Fineness, by the Shopkeepers, in the same Manner they sell Sugar, Soap, or Candles.

II. The Shopkeepers, who are conversant in Trade, very well know the Goodness and Value of Yarn, will not only buy the Yarn from the Spinners, and give them a Market Price; but at the same Time also furnish them with fresh Flax to work upon: From which new Custom the industrious Poor will never want

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want Employment; and the Care and Caution they will observe in buying their Flax, will certainly be a Means to make our Yarn much more sortable, and improve our Linens in their Strength, Evenness, and Colour: and consequently their Credit will thereby be retrieved, and acquire a Reputation both at home and abroad.

III. But this is not all the Good that may be expected from this Scheme; for the indigent Poor will find their Condition much better'd and improv'd by pursuing the Methods here recommended, than by practising their old Way of sowing Flax-Seed, which takes up so much of their Time in preparing the Ground, in sowing, weeding, pulling, rippling, watering, grassing, beetling, cloving and heckling, together with the Smallness of their Produce, which, after all their Pains and loss of Time, is not sufficient to give them past four Months Employment at the Spinning-Wheel; so that the Residue of the Year they are unemployed for want of Materials to work upon: That, I say, when they find this to be the Case, and that they can be furnished as above, they will leave off sowing their own Seed, which they have erroneously pursued to their great Detriment, and which has likewise been so very pernicious to the Credit of our Linen Manufacture. For when they had the intire Management of their own Flax, many of them were so unjust, as to incorporate both the Flax and Tow together in Spinning, and consequently made our Linens both weak and unfortable.

IV. But as no People are more tenacious of their Customs, nor worse Reasoners than the vulgar *Irish*. It is expected that many of them will not come into these Measures, nor take this Advice. But admit it to be so, yet when their Produce of Flax is worked up, and they find that the Country Markets are so stocked as to furnish them with cheap Flax, ready prepared for the Spinning-Wheel, they will be left without Excuse and without Pity, if they remain still in Sloth and Idleness,

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V. This Scheme, it is further hoped, will effectually put a Stop to the Spinning of Flax beyond its Nature; for if we once are so happy as to procure Plenty of Flax, that pernicious practice of over-spinning it will most certainly cease; as it is chiefly owing to our Scarcity; so that if the Cause is removed, the Effect will follow; for it is the Scarcity of Materials that makes the Spinner endeavour, with all her Skill, to draw the Flax as far as ever she can, in order to make as much Yarn out of it as possible. Hence she makes but little Rid of her Work, consequently earns very small Wages, and therefore employs her Time to little Advantage to herself, or Profit to the Publick. But this is not all the Mischief, for the Weaver is likewise greatly hurted thereby, because he cannot be supposed to perform the same Quantity of Work as might be expected, were his Yarn so strong as not to delay him by frequent Breakings. Therefore whoever work their Flax and Yarn in this injudicious Way, must necessarily be poor; they conspire to promote their own and others Poverty; they lessen the Quantity of Goods which otherwise might be manufactured, and at the same Time bring them into Discredit in foreign Markets, by making them less serviceable.

VI. Another good Effect, which the encouraging the raising of Plenty of Flax in this Kingdom will, it is hoped, likewise have, is by preventing the Practice of shooting down fine Linens with Tow Yarn, which is owing to the afore-mentioned Cause, and is a Mischief very sensibly felt, and loudly complained of. To prepare such Tow for spinning requires great Skill and Labour, and likewise great Art in spinning it sufficiently fine to answer the Purpose, which must make it very tedious to the Spinner; and the Weaver into whose Lot it falls, must also be a very expert Workman, that can save his Web from Breaks in the Selvedges, or the Bleacher from Rents that is shot down with such Yarn; whereas if we had Flax in Plenty, we should dispise those baneful Practices, which is attended with so much illjudged Skill, loss of Time, and Difficulties, and so hurtful to our Trade both in the present and the future.

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VII. The next Advantage that may accrue from the aforefaid Scheme, is the easy Manner we may introduce Industry all over the Kingdom, especially in thofe Parts where Flax is plenty.

The Manufacturers both of Woollen Cloths and of Goods made of Worsted, have their Material spun either by collective Bodies of People in Cities and Towns, or carried out into Villages in the Country: They pay for spinning in Proportion to the fineness, it is spun to, and have a statute Reel (especially in spinning Linen Yarn) and count of Threads as a standard to direct them what to Pay. Why might not then Persons of Ability be found, if Flax were Plenty, to employ the laborious Poor, in the same Manner and under the same Regulations, and thereby Procure us such stocks of Linen Yarn, as to enable us not only to carry on some of the many Branches of Linen Manufacture, which we are yet Strangers to. But also to export the Redundancy of Yarn, if any we have and so of course Extend and Inlarge our Trade.

VIII. Further, this Scheme may become advantageous both to this populous City, and to the Manufacturers in the North: For when Flax shall be allowed such a Premium, as shall be found sufficient to give the Undertaker's Spirit to carry it on, it will be brought to Dublin Stores, in order to Obtain it, and then put into the Hands of a Factor or Factors, who shall have a Power to sell the same: These Premiums it is to be hop'd will in Time cause great Abundance of Flax to come in, and being Deposited in proper Ware-houses to be Built for that Purpose near the Linen-Hall, may there be sold out to City or Country Dealers, by Wholesale.

IX. It may further be expected, that Plenty of Flax will (as has been observ'd before) be a Means to bring Artists in the Heckling Trade, to come and settle about the Linen-Hall, and especially as it is probable they may by the Trustees be thought worthy to be Accommodated with Shops for working and selling their Flax, in and also be furnished with Hackles and other Tools proper for that Employment. On the usual Terms, these

these Shops being constantly well stock'd with Flax of all Prices, and of all Degrees of fineness, ready prepared for the Wheel, and to be sold in small Parcels, will invite all People who want that Commodity, to come there, being much more Convenient then to ramble over the City, as they now do, when they want to buy this Material to Work upon.

X. Many of the Dealers who bring Cloths to sell at the Linen-Hall, keep Shops in the Country, and among other Goods they buy here, often deal in Flax. This Commodity they may conveniently Purchase, for as they generally give Credit with the Cloths they sell, they may as securely have Credit with the Flax they buy, and consequently find their Account whether they deal in ruff, or heckled Flax. As that which is heckled is ready prepared for coarse Yarn, those who make Use of such, has it without any Trouble or loss of Time, and those who wou'd have it finer, may heckle it again which will greatly Improve both the Flax and the Tow, and thereby make both of them better and more serviceable, and further by their buying Flax which is heckled, makes the Carriage easy, because the Flax is then purg'd and clear'd of all its grossest Parts.

XI. By the Spinners buying their Flax ready heckled; and taking Care not to spin it finer than its Nature will allow, will certainly cause both her, and the Weaver to perform at least one Third more Work, and consequently earn more Money in a given Time than they otherwise cou'd, which will greatly contribute towards a more comfortable Subsistence for them both, and at the same Time multiply our Linens and encrease our Trade.

XII. Upon the whole, were the Scheme of raising Flax in this Kingdom so far encourag'd, as to Incite proper Persons to put it fully in Execution, and all the abovementioned Observations methodically Practiced, and diligently Pursued, they wou'd make us less Anxious about Flaxseed. For if the Flax-growers cou'd once but find their Account in their Flax, they wou'd take all proper Care to Improve that Article, and not be so solitious about the Seed, as to endanger or Hurt their
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their Flax; which when they have a good Crop turns to much greater Profit than the Seed. For instances might be produced of People in this Kingdom, that have sown Flaxseed, and have had a Produce of 14 pounds of brak'd and scutch'd Flax for every Pottle of Seed they have sown.

XIII. Lastly, this Project therefore wou'd as it were, strike out a new Trade to us, by enabling us to undertake to make Goods in Imitation of the *German* Linens; by being a Means of bringing greater Quantities of our own Cloth and Yarn to Market, and consequently, by lowering the Prices: For as was before observed, if both Spinners and Weavers can hereby make greater Dispatch in their several Occupations, they both will find their Advantage, as they are paid by the Number of Dozens they spin, and Yards they weave, and this they may do with less Art and Labour, than by the Methods they have hitherto Practiced.

To Conclude, as *Leinster*, *Munster*, and part of *Connaught*, has made the greatest Progress in raising Flaxseed, it is to be hoped on due Encouragement, they will embark in the raising and manufacturing of Flax, which will create a greater Intercourse of Trade among ourselves, by one Part of the Kingdom supplying the other, with their distinct Manufactures to their mutual Gain, and thereby shed forth an universal Chearfulness and Content among all Degrees of People. For the Industrious Poor, are never happier, nor their Minds easier, than when they have full Employment, and their Labour afford them a comfortable Subsistence. Therefore, it is earnestly to be wish'd, that the Scheme for raising Flax and Flaxseed in this Kingdom, which so nearly effects the Prosperity and wellfare thereof, will meet with due Regard: As it will make us Independant of Foreign Nations for those Commodities. As it will furnish us with Materials to set to Work some Thousands of vagrant indolent Wretches, whose Time is now spent in corrupting the Industrious, or begging from Door to Door, and Finally, as it will undoubtedly Improve our Manufactures and Extend our Trade.