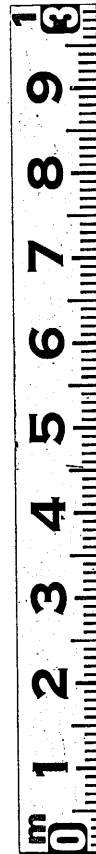


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A WORD OF ADVICE

TO THE
 TRADING AND MONIED INTERESTS
 OF
 IRELAND,
 UPON THE MOMENTOUS SUBJECT
 OF THE
 ALARMING SCARCITY
 OF THE
 SMALLER DENOMINATIONS
 OF
 SILVER COIN. *By M. Lefane*

With some suggestions upon the most feasible mode of regulating the Application for a New Coinage, so as permanently to secure the people of Ireland from a repetition of this calamity.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY J. SHEA, 42, COLLEGE-GREEN.

1804.

W. M. G. W. A.

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A Word of Advice, &c.

WHEN matters of vital consequence threaten the very existence of the community, it is the duty of every member of it, who is capable of just judgment and serious reflection, to suggest to his fellow-citizens whatever may have occurred to him as likely to remove the dangerous grievance. Of such a nature most eminently is the dearth of small silver and halfpence, under which the people of this country at present labour—and I take notice of it myself, and recommend the notice of it to others, not with any view to embarrass or disturb, but really and sincerely from a firm conviction, that unless it is speedily remedied, the most serious and alarming consequences may ensue. Nor let it be supposed that what I am going to urge is the offspring of despondency or prejudice;—I am supported both in my apprehensions and deductions by that Committee of the House of Commons, who were recently appointed to take into consideration the high and ruinous state of Exchange between Ireland and England; the investigation of that question naturally led them to take notice of the miserable state of the silver coinage in Ireland; and after maturely considering the subject, they declared it to be their opinion, that it entirely originated in that unfavourable state of Exchange, for which it was their object to discover a remedy. What has baffled their keen and industrious research, it would be presumptuous in me to attempt the solution of.—I shall therefore confine myself to a brief survey of the consequences

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quences that may be expected to follow one of the *most alarming results* of that prime grievance, the unfavourable rate of Exchange, and to the suggestion of what I conceive an adequate remedy, in the actual relative situations of the two countries; and I shall felicitate myself indeed upon having urged it, if the discussion of its eligibility should excite in the public mind, a determination, by all wise, temperate and constitutional means, to obtain that species of redress which I am about to propose, or any other that may be deemed more effectual, of this enormous mischief.

The situation of the poor, at all times difficult, is now marked by peculiar hardship—the ingredients of their scanty meals they are obliged to purchase from a description of men, who take advantage of the present dearth of small change, to force upon them every trash, deleterious in quality and deficient in weight, which they dare not *refuse*, bound as they are obliged to become to the *Huckster*, by an *encreasing score*—not possessing the power of applying to another shop, from the want of the small sum essential to their purchase, they are compelled to endure every species of insolent and rapacious extortion; or if they murmur, are exposed to all the horrors of arrest and imprisonment, a situation, at least to those confined for small debts, of very acute suffering, since added to the pangs of want and of captivity, the remission of punishment under the present regulation, is only in the creditor's power, who thus converted at once into judge and executioner, too often regardless of clemency, becomes a monstrous species of despot, whose arbitrary will can only be restrained by the unanimous concurrence of the legislature, who it is to be hoped will annul (at the same time that they abolish the slave trade) this impious tyranny, exercised, with legal sanction, by one subject over another, so utterly inconsistent, in almost every other instance, with the humane and equitable spirit of the laws of England.—The poor man thus forced into the toils of the

extortioner,

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extortioner, from which it is the bounden duty of a good government to protect him, feels intensely the smart of this grievance, while the rich and the prosperous, who experience little comparative inconvenience, and assert that Bank tokens and silver notes are adequate to the purposes of Exchange, pass the sufferers by, and treat their complaints as groundless murmurings—but this is unjust—the better classes should consider that the measure of convenience which which applies to them, by no means suits the shrunk dimensions of struggling poverty—the humble, minute, daily wants which halfpence and farthings are essential to satisfy, are hardly known even to the middle classes, much less to the higher ones; but their ignorance of these wants is no proof of their non-existence;—if they persist in believing that the scarcity of a permanent abundance of circulating medium does not exasperate these wants, they are mistaken;—and it is high time they should be cured of this mistake, and take that lesson from experience, which they have hitherto refused from humanity, for it is incontrovertibly true, that the genuine prosperity of every country is built upon the well-being of the *labourer* and the *manufacturer*, and that the security of the rich is problematical in every society, where the poor are wretched.

This is a commercial country, and much of its prosperity is said to be derived from the extensiveness of its trade, and the revenue it produces;—but the most opulent merchant, who stores in his ware-houses the produce of distant countries, or awakens by his capital the industry and resources of his own, has no security for his profits—nay his profits are a nullity, *unless his property passes freely through the smallest channels* of society.—Every obstacle thrown in the way of retail;—and what greater obstacle can there be than a total want of small silver and halfpence?—fatally injures the wholesale merchant, and in him *the vital existence of commerce*;—and he must indeed shut his eyes to conviction, not

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to see, that unless there exists permanently in the country an abundance of a circulating medium of the *smaller* and the *smallest* denomination, issued and sanctioned by supreme authority, the whole system of trade is menaced by a destruction which though slow and almost imperceptible in its progress, is yet fatally certain in its result, whether ultimately induced by the inability of the lower classes to pay, or their impatience to suffer.

The difficulty of effecting small purchases amongst the poor, while it has enriched fraudulent and rapacious hucksters, who have just capital enough to permit a score, which they afterwards inhumanly convert into an instrument of ruinous despotic extortion, has materially injured the respectable and industrious shop-keepers of this city, and in general of Ireland.—But before I state the nature and consequences of this injury, it will be necessary to do away some absurd reports that have been spread with regard to the silver, once current in this country, and to account *really* for its disappearance.

It has been industriously circulated that timorous persons at the time of the rebellion had hoarded up large quantities of silver, which must soon appear, and contribute to the public accommodation—but this assertion is highly false and dangerous, arising from a total or wilful ignorance of the of the real cause, and tending to lull the people into an indifference to those exertions from whence they can alone expect redress.

The truth is, and the Committee confirms the opinion, that the miserable deficiency of the silver coinage is owing to the high rate of Exchange, the state of which causes the *the silver currency in Ireland*, which passes indifferently in either country, to be transferred to England, where it bore, in proportion to Irish paper, the same premium as gold, and was consequently employed for the similar purposes of a lucrative traffic;—when this country was thus completely

drained

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drained of all the good and sterling silver circulating in it, the retail trade suffered a very severe shock, and the shopkeepers, though at an evident risk, (which they of course charged upon their goods, to the additional loss of the public,) were constrained to accept and to pay a *quantity of base silver*, and the commercial domestic intercourse was for some time upheld by this almost *valueless coin*, till an inundation of counterfeit shillings, poured into the market by English and Irish coiners, obliged all persons, with one accord, to refuse this trash, and to carry on their business by the means of *silver notes*;—but soon this miserable and hazardous resource they were deprived of, by numerous forgeries and repeated bankruptcies, and were finally obliged after considerable loss, to resort to the cumbersome and tedious expedient of halfpence, to carry on their respective callings;—but here again the ingenious villainy of coiners robbed and defeated the public:—a torrent of base imitations of our multifarious halfpence rushed in on every side, and, sweeping away the last possibility of adjustment, which the removal of all our mint silver to England had occasioned, left the community in the present distressed, and I believe unparalleled situation; whether we consider the magnitude of the collective loss, and the enormity of the grievance so long endured, or the ease with which a single word from authority could remove the one, and in some measure compensate the other, by the accommodation of the poor, and the consequent revival of trade.

Such are the great and prominent evils arising from the want of a small circulating medium.—*The distress of the poor, and the stagnation of trade*, From whatever cause the unfavourable rate of the exchange proceeded, to that unfavourable rate is certainly and solely ascribable the disappearance of our sterling silver currency; and while it continues thus unfavourable, and there is every reason to believe it will remain so, it will be found impossible to retain in this

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country

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country a moiety of any silver or copper coinage, adequate to its exigencies, that passes indifferently in both countries, though the currency should be equalized, and the bank restriction generally removed, a most unlikely event under our present circumstances.

This complete abstraction of the smaller denominations of current coin, producing as I have endeavoured to prove, the direst effects upon the necessities of the lower classes, and the total check given to all commercial interchange, make the discovery of an adequate, tho' but a temporary remedy an object devoutly to be wished for; that which I would suggest, with the greatest deference to superior knowledge, and more enlarged experience, as alone competent at the present juncture, to shield the inhabitants of this country from the hardships, delays, losses, and uncertainty that will otherwise be inflicted on them in the forms of *base silver* and *paper money of small denomination*, is a new coinage of small silver and halfpence under certain restrictions; my reasons for the enforcement of which I shall minutely detail.

But whatever may be the form of the relief that shall be graciously granted to us, I warn my countrymen against sanctioning the currency of small silver notes, one of the greatest curses that can blight a commercial community, from their insecurity and the prodigality of their issue, tacitly raising the prices of the prime necessities of life, irritating, plundering and alienating the poor by the frequency of loss resulting from bankruptcy and forgery, and in the event of any political convulsion or hostile attack, opening a door to confusion and distress, by which the public suffering would be considerably and designedly exasperated.

Under every view of this very complex and important case, I am persuaded of the necessity of a new coinage expressly made and issued for this country, and so regulated as to meet those existing exigencies, and that peculiar situation

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tion, which, not perhaps eternally the fate of Ireland, must yet be its portion for many years. Why, placed as she now is, under the same legislature with England, her metropolis not so distant from London as Newcastle or Durham, she should labour in her pecuniary intercourse under disadvantages which the others are free from, is a question which the deliberation of a committee aided by the wisdom of commercial experience and sagacity, was neither able to solve or to remedy. It requires, however, little understanding to conceive the various and fatal hardships a country must labour under, stripped of its small silver and copper currency, and that the only feasible remedy for such a calamity is a new coinage so constituted as to answer *permanently* the necessities of the people, and not liable to be gradually withdrawn, leaving this country a second time exposed to the misery it is now experiencing.

We stand now in a most critical predicament—at a moment of threatened invasion, when every possible facility should be granted to internal accommodation and intercourse. What would be our situation if the enemy landed on our shores, and a temporary check were given even to the circulation of the Bank paper, *our current coin of every denomination made a traffick of, and transferred to England, from whence it can never return, while the exchange is unfavourable to Ireland*, what remains to the father of a family to purchase food for his wife and his children? a token or a dollar will not meet every exigency, and in a state of confusion and alarm how can petty differences of sale and purchase be adjusted? Not by the intervention of silver notes—at present they are depreciated—they would then be valueless. Not by personal security or I O U—such expedients would then avail nothing. What are the poor to do whose wants, equally imperious, do not rise to the amount of the very smallest existing denomination of the present silver currency, or even of silver notes. Are they to per-

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rish for want—or if famine stimulates them into excesses, are they to be massacred because they are guilty of hunger, at the same time that they have been deprived of the means of acquiring or purchasing the necessaries of life? The committee declare that the copper coinage of Ireland is so defective, that there is scarcely a mint halfpenny in circulation—would the shopkeeper *then* in the event of invasion, or even the rumour of it, accept adulterated coin, when *now* he so scrupulously examines, nay in some instances *weighs* the few halfpence, that still pass current—or in the event of a justified refusal on the part of the shopkeepers, are they to suffer from the unlicensed and frantic violence of an enraged and famishing populace, whose despair may lead them into the most direful excesses;—the enemy with whom we have to deal, and who themselves suffered so acutely from the embarrassments of a paper currency, are not ignorant that it is in that very particular we are chiefly vulnerable—an expedient in times of tranquillity tolerable adequate to the necessities of the community, but in a period of disturbance, peculiarly subject to interruption and distress;—and shall we in this country, where the first attack may be made, or where at least the effects of any attempts will from many causes be most sensibly felt, admit an inundation of silver notes to be poured in upon us by every speculator who has money enough to purchase a copper-plate and to hire a clerk, and tamely suffer the moment of our exertions to repel the enemy, to be impeded and overloaded by the reflection that we leave our families exposed to the risk of not having bread to eat, though they may have large nominal sums of paper money to purchase it with—this is no fancied exaggeration of our probable fate, but a true picture of what may occur from one instant to another. The effects of famine are proverbial; and those who go forth to fight the enemy upon the shore, may return in triumph to behold their wives and their children

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dren overwhelmed by the mad and ungovernable excesses of a famishing mob, whom the enormous rate of Exchange and its consequences have stripped of their last halfpenny, and the perilous juncture of invasion has deprived even of the destructive privilege of running in score with a huckster, to suspend the gnawing of hunger.

What is then the remedy for this and a thousand other horrors, that in peace spring out of the sudden resentment, and in war the exasperated outrage of a starving commonalty?—from a crippled and declining trade, and the ruinous currency of paper money of a small denomination, subject to the attempts of the commonest counterfeiter, and holding out almost irresistible temptation to the commission of forgery:—*an immediate coinage and issue of small silver and halfpence, made especially for this country, and not current in England, so alloyed as to be more absolutely below the possible average price of bullion or copper than the present denomination of English shilling and halfpenny are, or shall in future be, and so much enhanced in intrinsic value by exquisite workmanship as to counterbalance the deficiency of intrinsic value by the security it will afford against the attempts of counterfeiters:—a coinage thus constituted will meet every possible grievance under which we now labour; the exclusive confinement of its circulation, together with the decided diminution of its relative value to the shilling that does or shall hereafter circulate in England, (at least till the improved resources of this country shall equalize the rate of Exchange, whenever that may occur, whether in the course of a century, or longer) will prevent its transfer thither, where it would infallibly return, without such a precaution, in less than three months after its issue;—its inferiority, from the proportion of its alloy to the lowest possible average price of bullion, will prevent its ever being melted down, while the exquisiteness of the workmanship, will disappoint the ingenious fraud of coiners, who will then find it doubly difficult to elude the vigilance*

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gillance of the public, rendered more than usually cautious from their recent losses.

A number of arguments, and some possessed of irresistible authority, when applied to the topic upon which they can be legitimately brought to bear, may, I know, be urged against the introduction into any country of a degraded currency; but those who urge them, forget that almost every general principle of political or commercial policy, that may with truth be predicted of other countries, uniformly fails in their application to Ireland.—Berkeley and Swift have confirmed this opinion by several very curious instances;—in their powerful minds it was founded upon an anxious and accurate study of the interests of this country, which they were wisely, sincerely, and disinterestedly desirous to promote; upon the broad principles of civil prosperity, they would doubtless have repelled the introduction of a currency considerably inferior to positive and legal value, but Berkeley when he gave his sketch of a national bank, never conjectured, that its payments in cash would be restricted, nor did Swift, when he resisted the importation of Wood's halfpence, form an idea, penetrating as was his sagacity, that a time would come, when the whole authentic circulation of small silver and copper was to be transferred to England, and it was considered a subject of impenetrable embarrassment and lingering hesitation, to contrive or to grant another, as it was apprehended, and with justice, *that the same cause inevitably and permanently operating, the rate of Exchange uniformly in favour of England, the same effect must be necessarily and eternally produced, the unavoidable transfer of our moiety of every coinage of every species, passing indifferently in the two countries, to England, in the course of a few months after its issue.*

Nor let the public mind be deceived by the notion attempted to be imposed upon it, that the equalization of the currency in the two countries is by some magical power to

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cure either instantaneously or remotely the miseries the country is suffering from a dearth of small silver and halfpence; the grievance we smart under, arises *not from the difference of currency, but the difference of Exchange, which must continue* (for many reasons, the chief of which shall be detailed,) *permanently in favour of England; the rate of Exchange favourable to England, is the cause of the transfer of our current mint coin to England:—this, the genuine source of the calamity, is perfectly distinct from, and but little influenced by, the equalization of the currency, which in my mind so far from healing the calamity, would rather increase it, by the removal of this difference of currency, which in this singularly-fated country, operates as a slight check upon the transfer of our revenues to England, and becomes more and more operative as the prosperity of the country advances, and the rate of Exchange consequently approaches nearer to equality.*

The great objection to the introduction of a degraded currency confined to this country in the manner I have suggested, is the *positive loss* that would accrue in the event of a future equalization of the exchange—but may it not also be urged with truth, that *the Irish public must sustain in the interim a positive loss, arising from the counterfeit silver and valueless silver notes that must necessarily force themselves into circulation to sustain the intercourses of trade, or in the event of their refusal, from the ruinous stagnation of trade, periodically occurring, when the transfer of our moiety of any coinage common to the two countries, necessarily arising from the rate of Exchange that is, and will continue, indefinitely favourable to England, shall be as in the present instance completed; the question is not then the positive loss which the people of Ireland must sustain from the evil of a degraded currency, but which of the two losses is the greatest, that arising from the remote chance of an equalization of the Exchange between the two countries, which would alone*

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render the depreciation of our circulation positively injurious, or the hourly and daily losses, delays, and vexations every individual in Ireland is now subject to *and must continue to be subject*, in consequence of the inevitable abstraction of our moiety of current coin and its transfer to England, in consequence of the *permanently operating* cause of its removal thither, *the favourable rate of Exchange*.

There are many persons too, of sanguine minds, who waving the cold consideration of profit and loss, and who wish as long as possible to defer the evil day of patient examination and cautious probing of this political abscess that is wasting Ireland with the secret minings of hectic consumption, the blush of hope in the cheek, and the canker of decay at the heart; these individuals affect to build considerable expectation, and to lay peculiar stress upon the supposed beneficial operation of the removal of the Bank restriction in the two countries upon the rate of Exchange, and consequently upon the state of our currency of small denomination;—that this circumstance, the accomplishment of which I believe at present impracticable, and at all events very remote, would have some effect in diminishing the rate of the Exchange, I do not deny, but that it would ever operate so far as to equalize it, and so *permanently cure the evil* we are now smarting under, *the want of a small medium of current coin*, I never will believe, when I consider the powerful obstacles to the advancement of Ireland in agriculture, manufactures, and civilization, that must for a very long period indeed render the balance both of trade and remittances favourable to England, and consequently confer upon her lastingly *that advantageous rate of Exchange*, which must as lastingly subject the population of this country to the complicated miseries we are now subjected to, by gradually extracting from Ireland what is vitally essential to its political or commercial existence—*an adequate, permanent and authentic circulation of the lower and lowest denominations of silver and copper coin*.

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Those who have followed me thus far, and impartially weighed what I have stated, will do me the justice to be convinced, that the remedy I have recommended, I do not urge as eligible, upon the general and broad principles that are found in the invaluable treatises of our political economists, but necessary and expedient, only as it is applicable to the peculiarly singular state of Ireland, which in its internal polity and external relations exhibits an hitherto unexampled instance of dissimilarity to all existing societies of men, and whose grievances must be consequently removed, in modes which other nations more happily constituted, would reject as temporary and inefficient;—it must equally be perceived, that the arguments I have chiefly insisted upon in my recommendation of its adoption, are founded upon my conviction, that even supposing the currency equalized, and the Bank restriction removed in both countries, *the rate of Exchange must for an indefinite period of time remain notwithstanding, unfavourable to Ireland*; and that *unfavourable rate of Exchange* being avowedly the cause of the transfer of our moiety of the mint coinage that has been issued, or that hereafter under the same circumstances shall be issued, out of this country and into England, *as long as that unfavourable rate of Exchange continues, we shall be eternally subject to periodical repetitions of our present sufferings*, commencing whenever the temptation of the premium upon its exportation, arising out of the permanently favourable rate of Exchange, shall have completed its transfer to England, and terminating for a short interval; when the sufferings of the Irish people and the approaching ruin of their trade, are sufficiently poignant to induce authority to grant a coinage.

My recommendation of the suggested remedy being thus founded, it will not be deemed irrelevant to offer a few observations upon the causes that in my conception, will for a long period, render the rate of exchange unfavourable to Ireland, tho' to investigate deeply the many abstruse and re-

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note sources of this evil is as much beyond my ability as my limited opportunities of information. Upon the obvious springs of this calamity it requires but little instruction to comment, and they are sufficient to the present purpose without profanely unveiling the hidden sanctuary of finance.

Wishing to avoid every topic whose discussion might contribute to inflame, I shall not dwell upon one of the elementary foundations of a favourable rate of exchange to England, the balance of trade uniformly advantageous to her, commanded by an overbearing weight of capital that inundates our market with her produce, and by long credit and superior manufactures, overwhelms our infant efforts towards a rivalry in home made productions of every species, from the needle that costs the fraction of a farthing, up to the steam engine worth many hundred pounds—but there is another balance, *the balance of remittances*, no despicable co-operator with the balance of trade, in sustaining the rate of exchange which has so sorely afflicted us: The Union in its effects by drawing over to England *necessarily*, so many men of the first rank and fortune to attend their duty in parliament, and swelling, by the allurements it holds out to others of profit, advancement or pleasure, the contemptible band of *voluntary* absentees, contributes every year more and more to the impoverishment of this country, and the delay, if not the total ruin of the amelioration of the lower classes. This is a drain which no tax upon the income of this latter description of deserters could replace, and an injury to the poor which no liberality on their part can compensate. As this is a grievance increasing with alarming rapidity, and especially conducive *to the evil of this favourable and permanent rate of exchange*, I shall perhaps be pardoned for taking a brief notice of it, and endeavouring to do away some arguments speciously urged in favour of absentees and founded upon an alleged right of permanent residence

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residence remote from their estates in Ireland, and their tenantry who starve upon them.

Men of landed property are placed in a situation the most truly enviable, that of ministering to the wants and illuminating the ignorance of their fellow creatures—undisturbed by professional cares, or the anxieties of a narrow income, between the individual who cultivates his estate and the proprietor of it there exists a mutual bond of obligation which no circumstances can dissolve; the former have a claim upon his justice, his superintendance and humanity, while he has a right, in consideration of the advantages which he imparts, to their obedience, adherence, and an adequate proportion of their productive labour; this is the true state and condition of the connection, undisguised by sophistry or palliation, and upon those principles, as absence persevered in cancels this bond, absentees neither possess, nor ought they expect to possess the affection or the fruits of the encouraged and cherished industry of their tenantry, however their incomes may be secured to them by the laws of the land: the idleness, drunkenness and knavery of the lower classes are certainly considerable drawbacks upon a residence amongst them, yet when we consider that these characteristic vices are merely superinduced and would be dispelled in the course of time by the fostering influence of a resident gentry, doubly bound, under all the circumstances of the country, to remain in it, we must the more poignantly deplore the selfish attention to present convenience, and culpable indifference to remote consequences which have banished, from various motives of interest, amusement or prejudice, those individuals from Ireland, upon whose vigilance, humanity and enterprize, *alone*, the real well-being of the community is founded, for surely it will be granted by the most violent advocates for what is so falsely called, the inherent depravity of the Irish, that national character is ever regulated by national virtue; and that where the

landholders

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landholders are eminent for morality and for benevolence, the poor will be distinguished for industry and for regularity.

It is in vain to urge that a steward can accomplish every arrangement essential to the comfort and prosperity of an English yeomanry, how much less that of an Irish tenantry? A power of attorney dated at a watering place in England can indeed enable the agent to sign a lease, but it cannot check the spirit of subinfeudation so generally and fatally extended, and which, by perpetuating a system of rapine in the hands of middle men, has done more to alienate the minds of the commonalty, and to exasperate their turbulence, than even difference of religion, enflamed by political rancour—no delegated authority can enter into the feelings and the wants and the prejudices of the poor cottager. Nothing short of the spirit of resident humanity will submit to the drudgery of a Sunday school, or the details of a village shop—no feeling inferior to the animation of patriotic hope can arm patience against the disgusts to which benevolence is ever exposed in the first efforts toward the reformation of a people night-mared by superstitious ignorance—yet it is to these minute persevering attentions we must owe our return to the blessings of order, industry and honesty—from the gradual instilling of appropriate instruction we can only expect the dispersion of that thick gloom which has so long obscured and perverted the faculties of the people. An agent cannot effect this—he may drive the tenantry, but he cannot instruct them. A steward may watch the toil of the labourer, but should sickness assail the labourer's family, no superintending mercy—no lady of the manor dispenses medicines or comfort, cheering by her support, and dispelling by her smile the sinkings of dejection and the pangs of regret: a projector can with the quickness of enchantment, pile up hills and level mountains; he can build a steeple to terminate a view, or level a church that impedes a prospect—but his powers of improvement stop there

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there—the true charm of the landscape, the real riches of the land—the cultivators, still remain fettered in the trammels of sloth and barbarism. Nothing can lastingly remedy these radical cankers in the social frame but the residence of the proprietor, whose presence like that of the soul in the human body—animates every member—invigorates every motion—accelerates the circulation of wealth and happiness, regulates the temper—harmonizes the manners—meliorates the heart. A prospering tenantry is the wholesome blood of the state; their well-being restores to the merciful landlord the blessings he imparts, sanctified by industry, and sublimed by gratitude, as the veins reconduct to the heart the life-preserving stream, which its generous vigour had propelled to the extremities.

If such had been the conduct of the great landed proprietors, we should not in Ireland have endured many of the miseries we have felt and are daily experiencing—this criminal desertion of the better classes, whose minds were opened by education and raised by generous liberality of sentiment above the atrocious expedients of the

Iron scourge and torturing hour,

while it tended to make the peasantry dissatisfied; deprived them at the same time of an asylum against seductive treason and merciless bigotry—of this the traitorous agents availed themselves, poisoning the ears of the poor with promises of assistance from the French; and artful exaggerations of grievances, imputed to government, which it is impossible for any government unassisted as ours is by the influence and example of a resident nobility and gentry completely to obviate—the hovel was compared with the more commodious habitation of the nobleman, who had probably never traversed even upon a shooting party the lands, whose produce supported his idle state in another country, and its miserable filth and abjectness ascribed to ministerial oppression—but

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can ministers frame acts of Parliament in whose preamble, the duties of mercy are set forth, and make inhumanity penal by a statute? the only hope of amelioration in this as well as in other points, where the prosperity of the great body of the people is concerned, rests upon the higher classes;—it is not the mandate of government, but the virtues of individuals silently operating, and gradually diffusing instruction, comfort and independence; that can improve permanently the condition of the mass, for the happiness, and consequently the stability of societies depends ultimately upon the disposition of the landed and monied interests to promote by pecuniary aid and persevering example, the moral, physical and political improvement of the country in which they reside, in providing those local encouragements which may have escaped the extensive and general views of legislation, and in obviating offences by mild reproof and judicious encouragements to virtue, which the austere scythe of penal punishment can indeed mow down, but so far from being able to extirpate, only renders like other noxious weeds, more luxuriant, from casual and inefficacious repression.

But to the non-attainment of this object and many other of high national import is opposed, the magnitude of the greater evil that impends—and every question of reform is resolved into the paramount necessity of resistance to a foreign enemy, actually meditating our subjugation, not under the specious pretext of assistance to shake off the yoke of England, but with the avowed intention of conquest—of reducing us to the state of a tributary horde, doomed to fill their granaries with our labour, and victual their fleets with our provisions—all this is most certain, and such dreadful calamities as have fallen upon Switzerland, Holland, Italy and Germany we should strain every nerve to avert from our shores, but with how much more energy and effect could we accomplish this essential purpose, if, by a judicious reform of many grievances, for the existence of which the exigency of the juncture

is pleaded, which very exigency is the strongest reason for their correction, the many clogs and impediments were removed, which now encumber our exertions. England has prepared for the contest, and to preserve her subjects from the calamitous consequences of the French revolution, has engaged in a war the most perilous and expensive in which she has ever been involved. Ireland too has armed to repel the invader, but without possessing that cordial unanimity, which, on this subject pervades every rank in Great Britain, and harassed by local obstacles and irritations, which weaken her strength and paralyze her efforts; amongst the chiefest of these ranks, the total want of a small currency to carry on the pecuniary intercourses of all, but especially of the poor, who at this portentous moment should be deprived of every cause of either real or imaginary discontent; those who enjoy the comforts of competency, and who have never had the opportunity or inclination to investigate the humble concerns of the lower classes, can hardly form a conception of what they suffer from the extortion which the want of a small denomination of currency exposes them to, in their struggle to obtain the necessaries of life.

Tea, or an adulterated imitation of it, is in Ireland, not the superfluous supplement to the comfortable meal of the poor, but the staff of their life, and the support of their existence—nor must we be indignant at their preference of this beverage, when we consider that for the moment at least it diffuses a glow through their half-clothed bodies, is palatable and enlivening, and costs but the fourth part of the price of an adequate quantity of adulterated milk, from its various impurities, equally destructive to the health.

A quarter of an ounce then of this deleterious mixture of leaves called tea, with an ounce of black sugar, a bit of rancid butter and a loaf made of damaged flour grossly deficient in weight, are the general ingredients of the dinner of a poor family; all these materials (or should they prefer

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fer stirabout, the oatmeal that composes it, are purchased at the hucksters, a denomination of the most fraudulent insolent rapacious retailers in existence, who wring

From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash,
By every indirection.

The wretched victim of their extortion has no alternative but famine from their pillage, and is compelled to pay double price for the very worst articles without the possibility of application elsewhere, scorebound as the present dearth of change has left him, he must submit or perish.

Surely this is a grievance of such alarming extent; a hardship so irritating and fearful—such an additional stimulus to murmur—such an instrument for the disseminators of discontent to mine the very foundations of allegiance; as to require, nay to command the most speedy and effectual removal. If it be considered inexpedient to issue a coinage so degraded as to be limited as I have suggested, in its circulation to this kingdom, at least an abundance of a legal and indisputable copper currency may be afforded to the pressing necessities of the lower classes, to shield them, by its authenticity, from the caprice of the sellers who refuse the coin to-day they received but the day before. I do not now call upon the great landed proprietors to live upon their estates to send forth their wives and children amongst their tenantry, to let them feel that they are considered as human beings; but I do supplicate them, as many as possess *station*, according to Bacon, “the vantage ground to do good, the approach to kings and principal persons,” to use that benevolent influence to procure for their countrymen even a temporary redress for this grievance. I do not now enjoin upon them the necessity of their return to Ireland, or insist upon the advantages that would accrue from it: in every thing that relates to the heart compulsion is vain; where the feelings do not prompt, their constrained efforts are valueless—when the love of our country ceases to animate a sentiment, it will never govern

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as a precept. I will not detail to them the many sources of national calamity, which their presence, influence and humanity might for the present palliate; and in progress of time permanently cure, the undiminished Tyranny of superstition over the poor; the cheapness and diffusion of spirituous liquors—the orgies of pay-tables, tempting to the consumption in an hour, of the earnings of a week, the crapulence and the disorder of jails, where all degrees of enormity are indiscriminately huddled together, and treason, vice and rapine impressed and circulated to an indefinite and a fatal extent, the leaven of French principles fermenting the gross and thick ignorance which no national system of appropriate instruction combined with industry has been yet established to dispel, engendering wild and sudden emotions of precipitate revenge and indiscriminate fury, and tho’ last not least, the wide extending and fatally operating grievance of a want of small currency, springing out of that unfavourable rate of exchange, founded on the enormous sums the absentees drain out of this ill-fated country, a grievance felt by every individual in every transaction, but by the poor most sensibly, who from the nature of their purchases are most peculiarly obnoxious to its baleful effects—These primary and elementary causes of disturbance I do not now call upon them to remove—causes which have so long and so often disgraced the common people, and induced their calumniators to stigmatize them with the appellation of sanguinary savages, their minds are indeed sunk in the lowest depths of superstition and sloth, but of the human mind we must never despair. God has implanted in it a redeeming spirit which, rightly invoked, will lead it safe through the abyss, and restore it to society in all its brightness and utility—but this cannot be done until the fetters of bigotry are broken, and the fervours of party spirit are allayed—till the poor are awakened by appropriate instruction from the debilitating stupor in which for years they have been involved—till they are vouchsafed

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the means of industry and rescued from the temptations to vice—till in a word the great and the petty hardships they are labouring under are removed, and a system of humane, liberal and enlightened policy adopted in their stead—unless this is accomplished, and except by the residence of the gentry it can alone be permanently effectuated, our hopes of internal security and peace can never be rationally founded; the bow will continue to be bent, the arrow ever ready to fly—it is unjust, it is ridiculous to expect from the mandates of government, what no government is competent to accomplish unaided by the co-operation of a resident landed interest—all that mildness, confidence, and conciliation could secure, has been attained under the liberal and humane government of our present Viceroy—the lash of the whip and the clankings of the chain are no longer heard, but justice in her tribunals speaks the words of law and exerts her constitutional and appropriate influence—but this is not all, the gradual melting of the different classes into one another, and the mutual confidence arising from their commixture, upon which alone the well being and tranquility of communities ultimately depends, is still wanting. Laws may be enacted to repress crimes, but the repression of crime is not of itself adequate to establish order—every class into which the people is divided must contribute to this important end—the great landholders especially—they are placed by providence between the poor and the law to render by their wise and benevolent interference its rigours in frequent, and when necessary to explain and reconcile its ordinances to the offender—when they withdraw themselves, as they have criminally and basely done, ignorance and credulity are left the victims of seductive treason, and Justice assumes the form of an avenger instead of appearing as otherwise she would do, the reluctant and compassionating vindicator of the offended laws, and thus are the morals and opinions of the people of Ireland warped at this perilous juncture, and their hearts estranged from

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from an allegiance, which in a right and natural course of things would be converted into a service of perfect freedom.

Imperfection is the fate of all human institutions, but to have those imperfections encreased by neglect is I am sorry to add, a characteristic of the establishments of this country—how far the general excellence of our penal jurisdiction, which in its original intention is calculated to reform through punishment, is obstructed, and rendered in some cases totally inefficient by the defective Oeconomy of our jails and the omissions and carelessness of Grand Juries and magistrates, is obvious to the most casual observer. In the same manner the benevolence of government and individuals who have made a provision for the wives and children of the brave men who fall in the present contest is considerably shaded by the hardships that description of persons, and the poor in general must now, and are in future destined to suffer from the distressing (and in a country said to enjoy the blessings of a participation in the legislature of her sister, England) scandalous want for years of an authentic sanctioned medium of small currency by which the poor are enabled, to exist in all the scanty comfort their station allows them, and trade, one of the greatest supports of these countries, is carried on with that celerity and vigour so essential to its success.

The corporation of the city of Dublin have taken cognizance of this grievance, and have petitioned for its redress. Every individual in the kingdom should combine with them in a jealous and persevering endeavour to obtain a permanent remedy for this evil which they all feel in a degree, and the poor most acutely—their memorials may be framed at parochial meetings and presented to the Lord Lieutenant (as in the progress of obtaining redress of the calamitous want of pipe water the citizens so long laboured under) by the Minister and Church-wardens of the respective parishes, or petitions stating the grievance to the imperial parliament,

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and praying relief, may be left at all places of public resort to be signed, and transmitted through our representatives. This, or any other mode of application equally efficient, expressive of the general sufferings of the community and their general prayer for relief, would, I have not a doubt, speedily and certainly procure a removal of the calamity we at present labour under, by a substitution of whatever means the government would in its wisdom and humanity deem most expedient to restore the current of trade, and to relieve the necessities of those numerous classes whose daily existence in any degree of comfort and independance results from the possession of an *authentic denomination of small currency.*—To that wisdom and humanity we must refer our sufferings; one of the highest situations in the government of Ireland is at present filled by an individual who has endeavoured in many instances to assist this country, and in many has succeeded; much is expected by his fellow-countrymen from his talents, his knowledge, and his patriotic zeal; the momentous subject I have stated has of course occupied much of his consideration and it was with the hope of ranking it still higher upon the list of those reforms he meditates for this country, that I have thus called the public attention to it, and originated an enquiry that will, I trust, in its circulation create *that general expression of the public wish, constitutionally demonstrated,* which will speedily, I trust, be acceded to in the most satisfactory manner. I lament that some abler hand did not anticipate my sentiments, still more do I lament the want of public spirit that has so long postponed the discussion of it. Under whatever other defects it may labour, I have at least endeavoured to preserve it free from every topic that might enflame or disturb. I have pointed out the possible consequences of longer withholding what the inhabitants of this country have an undoubted right to—*a currency of small silver or copper for the indispensable accommodation of our daily and hourly*
wants

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wants, and I have adverted generally to those means I thought most conducive to obtaining relief. One very great grievance has been redressed by the interference of our excellent viceroy—this still more enormous, because more generally extended evil, will surely excite his most powerful mediation and influence, when earnestly petitioned to exert them towards its removal; and when the prayer of the people of Ireland, enforced by the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant and the Chancellor of the Irish exchequer is laid at the foot of the throne, it will indubitably be followed by that immediate relief, in whatever shape may seem most expedient, which we have always received under every calamity, from the gracious humanity and wisdom of our Sovereign.

F I N I S.

I have been thinking of you very much
 lately and wondering how you are getting on
 in your new home. I hope you are all well
 and happy. I have been very busy lately
 but I will write to you again soon.
 I have been thinking of you very much
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Yours truly,
 [Name]