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LETTER

FROM THE

Revd. *J. S. D. S. P. D.*

TO A

Country Gentleman

IN THE

North of IRELAND.



Printed in the Year, MDCCXXXVI,

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LETTER, &c.

S I R,

I Am a Country Gentleman, and a Member of *Parliament*, with an Estate of about 1400 *l.* a Year; which, as a *Northeren* Landlord, I receive from above two Hundred Tenants: And my Lands having been let near twenty Years ago, the Rents, until very lately, were esteemed not to be above half Value; yet by the intolerable Scarcity of *Silver*, I lie under the greatest Difficulties in receiving them; as well as in paying my Labourers; or buying any Thing necessary for my Family from *Tradesmen*, who are not able to be long out of their *Money*. But the Sufferings of me and those of my Rank, are Trifles in Comparison of what the meaner Sort undergo; such as the *Buyers* and *Sellers*, at *Fairs* and *Markets*; the *Shopkeepers* in every *Town*; the *Farmers* in general; all those who travel with *Fish*, *Poultry*, *Pedlary-ware*; and other Conveniences to sell: But more especially *Handicraftsmen*, who work for us by the Day; and common Labourers whom I have already mentioned. Both these Kind of People I am forced to employ until their Wages amount to a *Double Pistole*, or a *Moidore*, (for we hardly have any *Gold* of lower Value left us) to divide it among themselves as they can: And this is generally done at an *Ale-house* or *Brandy-shop*; where, besides the Cost of getting drunk, (which is usually the Case) they must pay *Ten Pence* or a *Shilling*, for changing their *Piece* into *Silver*, to some *Huckstering Fellow*, who follows that *Trade*. But, what is infinitely worse, those poor Men for want of due Payment, are forced to take up their *Oat-meal*, and other Necessaries of Life, at almost double Value; and, consequently, are not able to discharge half their Score; especially under the Scarceness of *Corn*, for two Years past; and the melancholy Disappointment of the present *Crop*.

The Causes of this, and a Thousand other Evils, are clear and manifest to you, and all thinking Men; although hidden

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hidden from the Vulgar: These indeed complain of hard Times, the Death of Corn, the Want of Money, the Badness of Seasons; that their Goods bear no Price, and the Poor cannot find work; but their weak Reasonings never carry them to the Hatred and Contempt born us by our Neighbours and Brethren, without the least Grounds of Provocation; who rejoice at our Sufferings, although sometimes to their own Disadvantage. They consider not the dead Weight upon every beneficial Branch of our Trade; that half our Revenues are annually sent to *England*; with many other Grievances peculiar to this unhappy Kingdom; which keep us from enjoying the common Benefits of Mankind; as you and some other Lovers of their Country have so often observed, with such good Inclinations, and so little Effect.

It is true indeed, that under our Circumstances in general; this Complaint for the Want of *Silver*, may appear as ridiculous, as for a Man to be impatient about a *Cut-finger*, when he is struck with the *Plague*: And yet a poor Fellow going to the *Gallows*, may be allowed to feel the Smart of *Wasps* while he is upon *Tyburn-Road*. This Misfortune is so urging, and vexatious in every Kind of small Traffick; and so hourly pressing upon all Persons in the Country whatsoever; that a Hundred Inconveniences, of perhaps greater Moment in themselves, have been tamely submitted to, with far less disquietude and Murmurs. And the Case seems yet the harder, if it be true, what many skilful Men assert, that nothing is more easy than a Remedy; and, that the Want of *Silver*, in Proportion to the little *Gold* remaining among us, is altogether as unnecessary, as it is inconvenient. A Person of Distinction assured me very lately, that, in discoursing with the *Lord Lieutenant*, before his last Return to *England*; his *Excellency* said, *He had pressed the Matter often, in proper Time and place, and to proper persons; and could not see any Difficulty of the least Moment, that could prevent us from being made easy upon this Article.*

Whoever carries to *England* twenty seven *English* Shillings, and brings back one *Moidore* of full Weight, is a Gainer of Nine Pence *Irish*: In a *Guinea*, the Advantage is Three Pence; and Two pence in a *pistole*. The *BANKERS*, who are generally Masters of all our *Gold* and *Silver*,

* Lord Carterot.

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ver, with this Advantage, have sent over as much of the latter, as came into their Hands. The Value of One Thousand *Moidores* in *Silver*, would thus amount in clear Profit, to 37*l.* 10*s.* The *Shopkeepers*, and other *traders* who go to *London* to buy Goods, followed the same Practice; by which we have been driven into this insupportable Distress.

To a common Thinker, it should seem, that nothing would be more easy, than for the *Government* to redress this Evil, at any Time they shall please. When the Value of *Guineas* was lowered in *England* from 21*s.* and 6*d.* to only 21*s.* the Consequences to this Kingdom were obvious, and manifest to us all: And a sober Man may be allowed at least to wonder, although he dare not complain, why a new Regulation of *Coin* among us, was not then made; much more, why it hath never been since. It would surely require no very profound Skill in *Algebra*, to reduce the Difference of *Nine Pence* in *Thirty Shillings*; or *Three Pence* in a *Guinea* to less than a *Farthing*; and so small a Fraction could be no Temptation, either to *Bankers* to hazard their *Silver* at Sea, or *Tradesmen* to load themselves with it, in their Journeys to *England*. In my humble Opinion it would be no unseasonable Condescension, if the *Government* would graciously please to signify to the poor loyal Protestant Subjects of *Ireland*, either that this miserable Want of *Silver*, is not possible to be remedied in any Degree, by the nicest Skill in *Arithmetick*; or else, that it doth not stand with the good Pleasure of *England*, to suffer any *Silver* at all among us. In the former Case, it would be Madness to expect Impossibilities; and in the other, we must submit: For, Lives and Fortunes are always at the Mercy of the CONQUEROR.

The Question hath been often put in printed papers, by the *DRAWER* and others, or, perhaps, by the same *WRITER*, under different Styles; why this Kingdom should not be permitted to have a *Mint* of its own, for the Coinage of *Gold*, *Silver*, and *Copper*; which is a Power exercised by many *Bishops*, and every petty Prince in *Germany*. But this Question hath never been answered; nor the least Application, that I have heard of, made to the *Crown* from hence, for the Grant of a *Publick Mint*; although it stands upon Record, that several Cities and Corporations here, had

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had the Liberty of *Coining Silver*. I can see no Reasons, why we alone of all Nations, are thus restrained; but such as I dare not mention: Only thus far, I may venture; that *Ireland* is the first Imperial Kingdom, since *Nimrod*, which ever wanted Power, to *Coin* their own *Money*.

I know very well, that in *England*, it is lawful for any Subject to petition either the *Prince* or the *Parliament*; provided it be done in a dutiful and regular Manner: But what is lawful for a Subject of *Ireland*, I profess I cannot determine: Nor will undertake, that your *Printer* shall not be prosecuted, in a *Court of Justice*, for publishing my *Wishes*, that a poor *Shopkeeper* might be able to change a *Guinea*, or a *Moidore*, when a customer comes for a *Crown's* Worth of Goods. I have known less Crimes punished with the utmost Severity, under the Title of *Disaffection*: And I cannot but approve the Wisdom of the *Ancients*, who, after *Astrea* had fled from the Earth, at least took Care to provide three upright Judges for *Hell*. *Mens Ears*, among us, are indeed grown so nice, that whoever happens to think out of Fashion, in what relates to the Welfare of this Kingdom, dare not so much as complain of the *Tooth-ach*; lest our weak and busy Dabblers in *Politics*, should be ready to swear against him for *Disaffection*.

There was a Method practised by *Sir Ambrose Crawley*, the great Dealer in *Iron-works*; which I wonder the Gentlemen of our Country, under this great Exigence, have not thought fit to imitate. In the several Towns and Villages where he dealt, and many Miles round; he gave *Notes* instead of *Money*, from two Pence to twenty *Shillings*; which passed current in all Shops and Markets, as well as in Houses, where Meat or Drink was sold. I see no Reason, why the like Practice may not be introduced among us; with some Degree of Success; or at least may not serve as a poor Expedient, in this our *blest Age* of *Paper*; which, as it dischargeth all our greatest Payments, may be equally useful in the smaller; and may just keep us alive, until an *English Act of Parliament* shall forbid it.

I have been told, that among some of our poor *American Colonies*, upon the Continent, the People enjoy the Liberty of cutting the little *Money* among them into Halves, and

and Quarters, for the Conveniences of small Traffick; How happy should we be in Comparison of our present Condition, if the like Privilege were granted to us, of employing the Sheers, for want of a *Mint*, upon our *foreign Gold*; by clipping it into *Half-Crowns*, and *Shillings*, and even lower Denominations; for Beggars must be content, to live upon Scraps; and it would be our Felicity, that these Scraps could never be exported to other Countries while any Thing better was left.

If neither of these Projects will avail, I see nothing left us, but to truck and barter our Goods, like the *wild Indians* with each other; or with our too powerful Neighbours; only with this Disadvantage on our Side, that the *Indians* enjoy the Product of their own Land; whereas the better half of ours is sent away, without so much as a Recompence in *Bugles* or *Glass* in return.

It must needs be a very comfortable Circumstance, in the present Juncture, that some Thousand Families are gone, or going, or preparing to go from hence, and settle themselves in *America*. The poorer Sort, for want of Work; the Farmers whose beneficial Bargains are now become a Rack-Rent too hard to be born. And those who have any *ready Money*, or can purchase any, by the Sale of their Goods or Leases; because they find their Fortunes hourly decaying, that their Goods will bear no Price, and that few or none have any *Money* to buy the very Necessaries of Life, are hastning to follow their departed Neighbours. It is true, *Corn* among us carries a very high Price; but it is for the same Reason, that *Rats*, and *Cats*, and dead *Horses*, have been often bought for *Gold* in a Town besieged.

There is a Person of Quality in my Neighbourhood, who twenty Years ago, when he was just come to Age, being unexperienced, and of a generous temper, let his Lands, even as Times went then, at a low Rate to able Tenants; and consequently by the Rise of Land since that time, looked upon his Estate to be set at half Value; But Numbers of these Tenants, or their Descendants, are now offering to sell their Leases by Cant, even those which were for Lives, some of them renewable for ever, and some Fee-Farms, which the Landlord himself hath bought in at half the Price they would have yielded seven Years ago. And some Leases

let at the same Time for Lives, have been given up to him, without any Consideration at all.

This is the most favourable Face of Things at present among us; I say, among us of the *North*, who are esteemed the only thriving People of the Kingdom. And how far, and how soon this Misery and Desolation may spread, is easy to foresee.

The vast Sums of *Money* daily carried off, by our numerous Adventurers to *America*, have deprived us of our *Gold* in these Parts, almost as much as of our *Silver*.

And the good Wives who come to our Houses, offer us their Pieces of Linnen, upon which their whole Dependence lies, for so little Profit, that it can neither half pay their Rents, nor half support their Families.

It is remarkable, that this Enthusiasm spread among our *Northern* People, of sheltering themselves in the Continent of *America*, hath no other Foundation, than their present insupportable Condition at home. I have made all possible Enquiries, to learn what Encouragement our People have met with, by any Intelligence from those Plantations, sufficient to make them undertake so tedious and hazardous a Voyage in all Seasons of the Year; and so ill accommodated in their Ships, that many of them have died miserably in their Passage; but could never get one satisfactory Answer. Somebody, they know not who, had written a Letter to his Friend or Cousin from thence, inviting him by all Means, to come over; that it was a fine fruitful Country, and to be held for ever at a *Penny* an Acre. But the Truth of the Fact is this: The *English* established in those Colonies, are in great want of Men to inhabit that Tract of Ground, which lies between them and the *wild Indians*, who are not reduced under their Dominion. We read of some barbarous People, whom the *Romans* placed in their Armies, for no other Service than to blunt their Enemies Swords, and afterwards to fill up Trenches with their dead Bodies. And thus our People, who transport themselves, are settled in those interjacent Tracts, as a Screen against the Insults of the *Savages*; and may have as much Land as they can clear from the Woods at a very reasonable Rate, if they can afford to pay about a *Hundred Years* Purchase, by their Labour. Now, besides the *Fox's* Reasons, which inclines all those who have already ventured thither, to re-

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present every Thing in a false Light, as well for justifying their own Conduct, as for getting Companions in their Misery: The governing People in those Plantations, have also wisely provided, that no Letters shall be suffered to pass from thence hither, without being first viewed by the Council; by which, our people here are wholly deceived, in the Opinions they have of the happy Condition of their Friends gone before them. This was accidentally discovered some Months ago, by an honest Man; who having transported himself and Family thither, and finding all Things directly contrary to his Hope, had the luck to convey a private Note, by a faithful Hand, to his Relation here; entreating him not to think of such a Voyage, and to discourage all his Friends from attempting it. Yet this, although it be a Truth well known, hath produced very little Effect, which is no Manner of Wonder; for as it is natural to a Man in a *Fever* to turn often, although without any Hope of Ease; or when he is pursued, to leap down a Precipice, to avoid an Enemy just at his Back; so, Men in the extreme Degree of Misery and Want, will naturally fly to the first Appearance of Relief, let it be ever so vain or visionary.

You may observe, that I have very superficially touched the Subject I began with, and with the utmost Caution: For I know how criminal the least Complaint hath been thought, however seasonable, or just, or honestly intended; which hath forced me to offer up my daily Prayers, that it may never, at least in my Time, be interpreted by *Inuendo's* as a false, scandalous, seditious and disaffected Action, for a Man to roar under an acute Fit of the *Gout*; which, beside the Loss and the Danger, would be very inconvenient to one of my Age, so severely afflicted with that Distemper.

I wish you good Success; but I can promise you little, in an ungrateful Office, you have taken up, without the least View, either to Reputation or Profit. Perhaps your Comfort is, that none but *Villains* and *Betrayers* of their Country, can be your *Enemies*. Upon which I have little to say, having not the Honour to be acquainted with many of that Sort; and therefore, as you easily may believe, am compelled to lead a very retired Life. I am, Sir, Your most Obedient, humble Servant,

A. NORTH.