

referred to, and entitled "Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufactures," excited the alarm of the English Government, and Whitshed, the Chief Justice, was directed to take proceedings against its printer—the author being anonymous. "The printer was arrested. The trial came on, and a disgraceful scene ensued. The jury acquitted the prisoner. The Chief Justice refused to accept the verdict, and the jury were sent back to reconsider their decision. Again they found the man not guilty, and again Whitshed declined to record the verdict. Nine times was this odious farce repeated until the wretched men, worn out by physical fatigue, left the case by special verdict in the hands of the judge." The result, nevertheless, proved to be a popular victory, for so great was the disgust occasioned by the affair that the Lord Lieutenant at length granted a *nolle prosequi*—a concession to popular feeling never before made by the English Government. Swift used his victory wisely, and refrained for the time being from following it up, awaiting a crisis, which he foresaw must occur before very long, and which actually did occur in Wood's contract for the supply of copper money.—A scarcity of such money had long prevailed, and on a petition's being presented to the Lords of the Treasury in 1722, the petitioners were informed that their request would immediately be granted. "Such courteous alacrity had not been usual with the English Government in dealing with Irish grievances, and excited, not unnaturally, some surprise. But it was soon explained. In a few weeks, intelligence reached Dublin that a patent had been granted to a person of the name of Wood, empowering him to coin as his exclusive right £108,000 worth of farthings and half-pence for circulation in Ireland. As less than a third of that sum in half-pence and farthings would have sufficed, and more than sufficed, for what was needed, the announcement was received with astonishment. And astonishment soon passed into indignation. For it appeared on enquiry, that the patent had been granted without consulting the Irish Privy Council or any Irish official, nay, even without consulting the Lord Lieutenant, though he was then residing in London. It appeared on further enquiry, that the whole transaction had been a disgraceful job, and that the person to whom the patent had been conceded was a mere adventurer, whose sole care was to make the grant sufficiently remunerative to indemnify himself for a heavy bribe which he had paid for obtaining it, and to fill his own pockets. The inference was obvious. As the profits of the man would be in proportion to the quality of copper coin turned out by him, and in proportion to the inferiority of the metal employed in the manufacture, his first object would be the indefinite multiplication of his coinage, and his second object would be its debasement." Protests were therefore made, but in vain. "Meanwhile the mint of Wood was hard at work. Several cargoes of the coin had already been imported, and were in circulation at the ports. Each week brought with it a fresh influx. The tradespeople, well aware of the prejudice against the coins, were in the greatest perplexity. If they accepted them, they accepted what might very probably turn to dross in their hands; if they refused them, they must either lose custom, or receive payment in a coinage no longer current." Under such circumstances Swift undertook his series of Drapier's Letters, by which he aroused the country against this great injustice. "The opening Letter is a model of the art which lies in the concealment of art. We have not the smallest doubt that Swift designed from the very beginning to proceed from the discomfiture of Wood to the resuscitation of Ireland, and on in regular progression to the vindication of Irish independence. But of this there is no indication in the first Letter. It is simply an appeal purporting to emanate from one M.B., a draper, or, as Swift chooses to spell it, drapier, of Dublin, to the lower and middle classes, calling on them to have nothing to do with the farthings and half-pence of Wood. In a style pitched studiously in the lowest key, and with the reasoning that comes home to the dullest and most illiterate of the vulgar, the Drapier points out to his countrymen that the value of money is determined by its intrinsic value; that the intrinsic value of Wood's coins was at least six parts in seven below sterling; and that the man who was fool enough to accept payment in them, must to a certainty lose more than tenpence in every shilling. 'If,' he said, 'you accept the money, the kingdom is undone, and every poor man in it is undone.'" This letter, as it was intended, set the whole country in a blaze, and men of all parties and shades of opinion for once united to cry out against the insult and injury offered to them. "On the 4th of August appeared a second Letter from the Drapier. In substance it is like the first, partly a philippic and partly an appeal, but it is a philippic infinitely more savage and scathing, it is an appeal in a higher and more passionate strain. This Letter was addressed to Harding, the printer, in consequence of a paragraph which had three days before appeared in his newspaper." The paragraph being to the effect that while Wood was to retain the right of mintage, the amount coined was to be reduced to forty thousand pounds. "But Swift saw at once that if the compromise were accepted, the victory, though nominally on the side of Ireland, would in reality be on the side of England. In essence England had conceded nothing. Wood still retained the obnoxious prerogative; England still assumed the

right of conferring that prerogative. A particular evil had been lightened, but the greater evil, the evil principle, remained. But this was not all. We have already expressed our conviction that it was Swift's design from the very beginning to make the controversy with Wood the basis of far more extensive operations; it had furnished him with the means of waking Ireland from long lethargy into fiery life. He looked to it to furnish him with the means of elevating her from servitude to independence, from ignominy to honour." He was afraid, then, that the spirit he had awakened would yield to the concession made by the English Government, and his second letter was written to prevent this. It preceded the report of the Master of the Mint announcing the concession, and this document was followed by a third Letter—addressed to the nobility and gentry. The contents of this Letter were a repetition in effect, but more emphatic, of those of the second Letter, but its distinctive character was otherwise obtained—"It is here that we catch for the first time unmistakable glimpses of Swift's ultimate design. The words of the fourteenth paragraph could have left the English Government in little doubt of the turn which the controversy was about to take. 'Were not the people of Ireland,' asks the Drapier, 'born as free as those of England? How have they perfected their freedom? Are not they subjects of the same king? Am I a freeman in England, and do I become a slave in six hours by crossing the Channel? In another passage he adverts to some of the principal political grievances of the kingdom, sarcastically remarking that a people whose loyalty had been proof against so many attempts to shake it was surely entitled to as much consideration on the part of the Crown, as a people whose loyalty had not always been above suspicion. The remark was as pointed as it was just. The events of 1715 and 1722 had left a deep stain on the loyalty of England, but Ireland had never wavered in her fidelity to the House of Hanover." In every other form of political literature Swift was at the same time working out his end. "In every form which political literature can assume, from ribald songs, roared out by thieves and harridans over their gin, to satires and disquisitions which infected with popular madness the Common Room of Trinity, and the drawing-rooms of College Green and Grafton Street, he sought to fan the tumult into rebellion. He even brought the matter into the pulpit. In a sermon, which Burke afterwards described as 'containing the best motives to patriotism which were ever delivered in so small a compass,' the Dean called on his brethren to remember that next to their duty to their Creator came their duty to themselves and to their fellow-citizens, and that, as duty and religion bound them to resist what was evil and mischievous, so duty and religion bound them to be as one man against Wood and Wood's upholders."—The agitation was, besides, kept up in every manner possible, and Walpole at length perceived the necessity of taking some decisive step. The Duke of Grafton was accordingly recalled, and Carteret came over as Lord Lieutenant in his place—having a discretionary power to suspend, and even withdraw Wood's patent as he judged prudent. "And now the fourth Drapier's Letter appeared. In this discourse Swift threw off all disguise. The question of the patent is here subordinated to the far more important question of the nature of the relations between Ireland and England. Contemptuously dismissing a recent protest of Wood 'as the last howl of a dog who had been dissected alive,' he goes on to assert that the Royal prerogative, the power on which, during the whole of the struggle with Wood, so much stress had been laid, was as limited in Ireland as it was in the Mother Country. He comments bitterly on the so-called dependency of Ireland; on the injustice of legislating for her in a Parliament in which she had no representatives; and on the fact that all places of trust and emolument were filled by Englishmen, instead of being filled, as they ought to have been filled, by natives. But the remedy, he said, was in their own hands; and in two sentences, which vibrated through the whole kingdom, he suggested it: 'By the laws of God, of Nature, of nations, and of your country, you are and ought to be as free a people as your brethren in England.' Again: 'All Government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery,'—'though,' he added, with bitter sarcasm, 'eleven men well armed will certainly subdue one single man in his shirt.'" In consequence of this Letter a reward of £300 was offered for its writer, and Harding, the printer, was arrested and put in gaol. But Swift now came forward boldly. He immediately presented himself at the Lord Lieutenant's levee, and upbraided him. "'Your Excellency has,' he thundered out with a voice and manner that struck the whole assembly with amazement, 'given us a noble specimen of what this devoted nation has to hope from for your Government.' He then burst out into a torrent of invectives against the proclamation, the arrest of Harding, and the protection given to the patent." The Lord Lieutenant answered with the urbanity of a trained diplomatist, and the interview terminated. But the struggle with England now reached its climax. The Bill against Harding was thrown out by the Grand Jury, and the jury were dissolved by Chief Justice Whitshed, another being immediately summoned. "The Bill against Harding was again ignored, and, to complete the discomfiture of the Government, the rejection of the Bill was coupled with a formal vindication of