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A  
LETTER

TO THE

GENTRY, CLERGY, FREEMEN  
and FREEHOLDERS,

OF THE

CITY of DUBLIN.

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D E L I T E R

TO THE

G E N R Y , G E R G Y , M E M B E R  
A N D F E R N O L D

O F T H E

C I T Y O F D U B L I N

A

LETTER

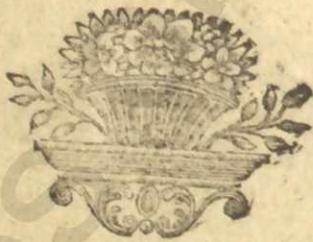
TO THE

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CITY of *DUBLIN*.

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DUBLIN:

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M,DCC,LVIII.

R T T R

TO THE

Commons, Clergy, Freeman and  
Scholars

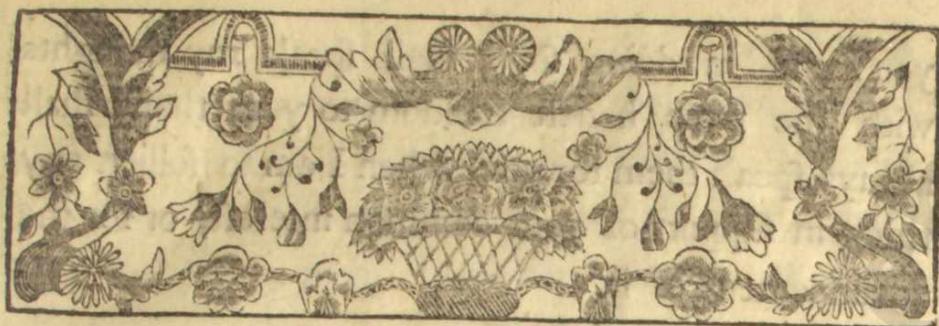
OF THE

City of DUBLIN.

DUBLIN

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Houses of the Oireachtas



A

# LETTER

TO THE

Gentry, Clergy, Freemen and  
Freeholders,

OF THE

CITY of *DUBLIN*.

GENTLEMEN,

**M**Y conduct being such as may be thought something singular, with respect to my present situation; it is necessary, in order to make it satisfactory, that I should explain it to  
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you: and in doing so, I shall speak my thoughts with the same honest freedom to you, that I shall always speak them for you, when I am to solicit any thing in support of your common interest, or for the advancement of it.

I HAVE, you know, declined all personal solicitation, tho' I offer myself as a candidate to represent you in parliament; and do mean, by standing a poll to the last man, to give those of you, who desire that I should represent you, an opportunity of making your choice. The reasons I have for declining a personal solicitation, you are now to be the judges of.

I HAVE often declared, and many have heard me do so, that I never would stand a contested election for this city; tho' I should always think it an honour to represent them, with their general approbation. Upon the occasion of the present vacancy, I did look upon myself as invited to it; not that I should think that the number of those, who took it upon them to make that invitation (of which about a third part were of the board of aldermen) was sufficiently considerable for that purpose, as there were so many who had votes; but as I was conscious of the most sincere intentions to serve the city to the best of my power; and did believe that the citizens were, in the general, convinced that such were my intentions;

intentions; and as I thought it possible that they might look upon it as a thing for their own advantage, that I should be their representative. I did therefore, perhaps too readily, take that for a general invitation, which, from the number of those who made it, tho' all of them very worthy citizens, I could not otherwise have been warranted to take for such. In this, you will say, that vanity had some share, and perhaps it had; for I have not the face to pretend, to be totally exempt from that failing, to which the very best of men have, in some degree, been subject. An opposition very early declared itself in favour of a gentleman, whose merit I shall be most ready to own upon this, and upon all other occasions; and this opposition soon took the appearance of a real contest. From the first moment I perceived it such, I began to be uneasy at my own situation, and to several expressed that uneasiness: and after having tried a little in those methods usually practised upon such occasions, I came to the resolution, which I am now to shew to be reasonable, of declining all personal sollicitation; tho' I am desirous to serve the city in parliament, if they shall think fit to entrust me in that service.

In the course of a personal application, many would refuse the favour I asked of them; and too many, perhaps, accompany their refusal with circumstances and a manner disobliging enough. This would naturally tend to create personal dislikes, and those, perhaps, too strong and too general, to suit with that situation in which I stand among you. Where no request is made, there can be no refusal. One barely giving his vote against me at the poll, does no more than what the law gives him a right to do; and there can be no offence in the asserting of that right. It might, besides, sometimes happen, in such personal applications, that some of those, who were inclined to be for me, might, in granting the favour, indiscreetly give intimation of something expected on my part, which would not be proper in me to listen to, much less to comply with.

These, gentlemen, are the principal of those reasons, which have induced me to take the resolution I did; and, I flatter myself, that my particular friends, to whom I have not already applied, and who have reason to expect my compliments upon all occasions, will not take it amiss, that I adhere to my purpose, even with respect to them: If they are my friends, I am sure they will not. And I still further hope that I shall be so candidly dealt with, that no one  
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will construe this my conduct as proceeding from any thing of arrogance, or from thinking that to be beneath me, which my betters have submitted to. I think nothing below me, that is fit for any man to do, in the same circumstances. *Nil humanum a me alienum puto.*

But lest it should be thought by some, that this is only an artifice to avoid trouble and expence; I will tell you my mind very freely upon those points: Nor shall I be ashamed to own that it was, at all events, my fixed purpose, neither to go to any expence, that either I or my family should feel too sensibly; nor to put myself to such a degree of labour as might endanger my health. I do not love money, perhaps not so much as I should do; but much less do I love a state of dependance; and am therefore determined most carefully to avoid every thing that may tend to lead me into it; and, above all, the being in distressed circumstances, as a thing having the most immediate and necessary tendency that way.

I cannot here omit mentioning what I have often thought of with equal concern and surprize. Formerly, and in times, when constituents did their part in the working of the constitution, their representatives were considered as doing a service for them,

them, and discharging a trust for their benefit; and agreeably to this, they were not only elected without any trouble or expence to themselves; but did also receive a stipend and a recompence from those whose business they were sent about; and who availed themselves of their labour and their attendance. While this was the wise system, how vile a breach of trust was it in those who betrayed the interests of their constituents? and as it was most vile, so it must have been most shameful, and was, probably, but seldom practised. But in this great change of things, which I cannot think for the better, in this respect; the electors have lost that hold upon their representatives, which they formerly had, and have themselves given them, at least, some pretence for their being unfaithful. He who would now stand a candidate for any large county or great town, must put himself to an expence which he will be the worse for as long as he lives, and his family be so after him: and so far is he from benefiting others in the proportion that he himself is a sufferer; that several hundreds of those upon whom it is laid out, are made the worse for it too. Those who come in upon such terms may, some of them, be apt to think that they are warranted in making their money, if they can, of that upon which they had expended it; and

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to throw the blame on those who forced them to it. If they are reproached for this, they have something wherewith to retort those reproaches; they will say, that they ought not to be treated like the children of cruel mothers, to be first whipped till they are made to cry, and then whipped again for crying.

BUT this is not all. Those who, notwithstanding the hard terms of their coming in, do yet keep stedfast to their trust, will be suspected for going astray; as they may be thought to have some cause to tempt them to it. If they, at any time, concur in the measures of government; this is with a view to their own advancement. If they should oppose such measures, when they do not approve of them, this is only to push at some persons in employment, and in order to trust them out, that they themselves may get their places. If they make any mistakes, to which the ablest men are liable, these are imputed to bad intentions. While those who lay such charges upon them, do not consider, how often they have themselves miscarried in their most favourite purposes, in the management of their own private affairs, from a misjudging or misconducting of the means; and yet will make no allowances for the least oversight  
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in those who, in parliament, have the intricate and weighty business of a whole nation to transact; where every thing to be done must first be considered in such an infinite variety of respects, that the clearest head, with the most upright heart, cannot but sometimes fail in so arduous a task. From reflections such as these, no doubt it was, that *Moses* expostulated with his Creator when he said, *O Lord! what have I done, that thou puttest the trouble of this people upon me.*

THIS, there are some of you will say, is talking in a manner too precise and primitive for the fashion of the times; and it may be so. I do not expect that any thing I can say, will have weight enough to bring things out of that course in which they have gone for so many years. But I will, notwithstanding, tell you; as well you, as all others who have the constituting of representatives, both in this kingdom and in the next, that if you do not a little attend to some such considerations as these, when ye go about a work of such importance to you, ye will have yourselves only to blame, as being principally, if not entirely, the causes; if any thing should hereafter go fatally amiss, in the management of your public affairs. You seldom

dom care whom you chuse, when you are reposing the highest trust; and when your choice happens to be right, you but too often make it from improper motives; and in your manner of chusing, you teach your representatives to consider it as an affair of their own, and not of yours. You use them hardly in the chusing, and worse when ye have chosen them; and, by these means, loosen those great ties of gratitude and affection; things of such moment to give strength to an honourable and conscientious obligation. This is speaking very freely to you, but it is speaking very honestly; and I will think so well of you, to whom this address is directed, that I shall hope you will, all of you, take it in good part.

You see, gentlemen, the means upon which I intend to rely for my success, in the present competition. You cannot say but that they are honourable: and if so, I had much rather fail by such, than succeed by any other. Be it your concern, whether the world shall see, that it is possible by such means, to become a representative for your metropolis.

I HAD something further to say to you, which now I have not time for; but shall convey it to you by  
another

another letter, which you shall have in two or three days at the farthest. When I have done that, I shall sit down and put myself entirely upon your affections, and your good esteem; and however you shall think fit to dispose of my pretensions, I pray you all to be assured, that I am your very sincere well wisher,

and most obedient servant,

JAMES GRATTAN.

*Dublin, February*

*20th 1758.*

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