

COUNTERFEIT HALFPEFNIES



THE following, from an early number of the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, relates to the vast quantities of counterfeit halfpence that were issued in England towards the close of last century. When these coins were confiscated, or rather withdrawn from circulation, they were not destroyed, but sent out, or rather imported into Canada. Here, for a quarter of a century or more, they formed the only copper currency. So thoroughly had they become part of the circulation that they became worn out in the service. And what was lacking in quantity was supplied by counterfeits, and these counterfeits were very good imitations of these worn out counterfeit English halfpennies; in fact, these counterfeits of counterfeits at one time found the bulk of the copper change in Canada :

UPON A BIRMINGHAM HALFPENNY.

Hence ! false, designing cheat, from garret vile,
 Or murky cellar sprung ! thy spurious birth
 And mix'd embrace thy pallid hue proclaims.
 Think'st thou 'mongst those of pure and gen'rous

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To pass unknown, and by dissembling face
 And mimic form to gull me credulous ?
 I mark'd thee 'midst thy betters, and with eye
 Distinguishing arrested thy deceit ?
 Dar'st thou confront the envied worth thou ap'st