

AN
ENQUIRY
INTO
THE CAUSES
OF
POPULAR DISCONTENTS
IN
IRELAND.

(Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.)

Houses of the Oireachtas

AN
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POPULAR DISCONTENTS
IN
IRELAND.

BY
AN IRISH COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE CASES

POPULAR DISCONTENTS

J. R. F. L. N. D.

AN IRISH COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

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AN ENQUIRY, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

"SEE NATIONS SLOWLY WISE, AND MEANLY JUST."

JOHNSON.

THE best way to remedy any evil is to remove its cause; it is often a fruitless, and always a laborious undertaking, to combat with its effects. An instance is not the less valuable because it is familiar. I will take one from Mr. ELKINGTON'S method of draining land.

This gentleman, instead of beginning to drain the borders of a marsh, looks for the source of the water that is spread over it; and frequently, by giving vent to a small spring, drains at once whole tracts, that would have required more time and expense to be reclaimed than they were worth, as long as the spring continued to flow upon them.

We hear much of the effects of rebellions in Ireland, but very little of their causes; the material question, why these things are so, has been entirely disregarded; and what has been the consequence? Though Government has been armed with all latitude of power; though it has not been crippled by the want of means, has not been embarrassed by restrictions, has not been stayed by responsibility; though punishment has been urged almost to ruin, though

though blood has flowed profusely; still life is miserable in apprehension, still property is poor in security, the Government is supported only by terror, and this so imperfectly, that the moment an enthusiastic leader is found, a rebellion is organized. Under such circumstances, there is no great presumption in planning a better system of administration, for nothing can be worse than the present: let it be grounded on an inquiry into the causes, into *all* the causes of discontent in Ireland; let us not rest satisfied with adopting any single cause, which has become a sort of favourite. There is ever some prejudice, or some interest, which makes the whole truth unpalatable to the mass of mankind; and perhaps means may be found for securing public tranquillity, equally prompt, and more congenial to the common feelings of humanity, than the double agency of martial and civil law, which in their competition to save the body, seem likely to lop off all the members.

But first it will be useful to show, what are not the causes of rebellion, though often considered as such.

It springs from no accidental cause; it is not the sudden ebullition of individual enthusiasm or popular rage; it does not resemble Lord GEORGE GORDON's riot, or the disturbances in Wales on the introduction of the Winchester bushel. Rebellion has long been active, constant, and uniform; its causes must therefore be also active, constant, and uniform. Secondly, the rebellious spirit of the Irish does not arise from any inherent and insuperable bias in the national character; the Irish are not *naturally* rebels.

We shall have no doubt of this, if we reflect that though the character of the upper ranks may be formed by education and literature, the character

ter of the lower ranks is uniformly such as it is made by laws and government. The boundaries of governments are also the boundaries of the distinguishing features of the nation. ARTHUR YOUNG has remarked, that in passing the boundaries between France and Spain, you do not advance a mile before you observe a complete contrast in the appearance of the inhabitants; the same takes place between Holland and France, France and Switzerland, Switzerland and Germany; the inhabitants of each excel the inhabitants of the rest in industry, morality, and affection to their government, in proportion as the several governments distribute liberty, security, and respectability to their subjects. As a stronger proof, we shall find, that if every thing else were alike, the lower ranks in Ireland would be averse, instead of being prone to rebellion; for in all countries the lower ranks are averse to change and novelty. A peasant lives in a contracted but continued round of the same habits; the few opinions he has, he adopts from his parents, who received them from similar authority: every new light alarms his ignorance, and shocks his prejudices.

Dr. PRIESTLEY has founded a very ingenious train of reasoning on this single principle—that the oldest opinions are always found among the common people. Inquire of any physician where he finds the most opposition to inoculation with the cow-pox, among the rich, or among the poor? Wherever the French armies marched, in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, even in Egypt, the armed peasants were their formidable enemies. Wealth, education, leisure, are the sources of experiment and change; the adversaries of all novelty, whether useful or not are found in labour, ignorance, and poverty.

An equal reason why the Irish peasantry, *cæteris paribus*, should not be rebels, is their religion.

The Roman Catholic religion, in every other coun-

try, has been found the strongest support of arbitrary power. The subjection to the priesthood, the religious terrors, and the self-abasement which form its prominent tenets, are admirably adapted to subdue the mind, and fit it to the yoke of civil tyranny. Since the first rise of the papal authority (a long and a busy period) Ireland presents the only instance where this religion, existing in its full force, has been found leagued with resistance to the civil power, and inculcating, at the same time, the dogmas of religious superstition, and the principles of democratical enthusiasm. No stronger proof can be required, that there is some injudicious system acted upon in Ireland, which forces the order of events from their natural course, and gives to the most important motives that act on national character a bias, directly the reverse to what they have exhibited in all ages, and in every other country.

If, then, the causes of the rebellious spirit in Ireland are neither accidental, nor referrible to any natural disposition of the nation, independant of the common effects of laws and government.

The next step is to show in what they do exist. The following appear to me to be the principal topics, that ought to be well considered, if any sincere effort be made to restore the tranquillity of Ireland.

1. The recollection, which exists in Ireland, of being a conquered people.
2. The great confiscations of private property.
3. The distinctions between the Protestants and Roman Catholics.
4. The distinctions between the members of the Church of England, the Protestants and Presbyterians.
5. Tithes.
6. The degraded state of the peasantry.
7. The

7. The influence of a Republican party.
8. The Union.

First Cause.

THE RECOLLECTION OF THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND BY THE ENGLISH.

If it be true, that old habits and opinions maintain their influence on the minds of the common people for an indefinite length of time, we ought not to neglect the most distant causes in explaining the formation of their present character. Nothing can be more certain, than that a conquered people will hold their conquerors in aversion, till some greater revolution overwhelms the recollection of the distinction that existed between them; as long as a distinction exists, so long will there be a suspicious government, and discontented subjects.

After the conquest of a country, there are but three methods of preventing the constant recurrence of civil commotions. First either to restore the conquered their liberty and independence, for which history has no example; or for the conquerors to embody themselves, and have one common government and interest with the conquered, as the Tartars have done in China, and the Normans in England; or, lastly, to extirpate the conquered with fire and sword, of which history has many examples. The English did not adopt precisely any one of these plans, but pursued that unwise system of government, which leaves the conquered sufficient toleration to acquire force, yet not enough to disarm animosity.

So far from seeking to blend all distinctions between the race of the conquerors and conquered, it became a part of national pride and personal vanity, not to suffer them to mingle. Intermarriages were forbidden; oppression was thought no crime, because it was very little exposed to retaliation; con-

tempt became the sentiment, and contumely the expression to which a nation too easily conquered is always exposed. Moral justice between men and men is only generated by the power which each has of enforcing it; where the power is weak, the sentiment is feeble; where the first does not exist, the latter is extinguished. We dispose of the lives of brutes, and the liberty of negroes, with very little compunction; it was in the same spirit, that it was lawful to kill a wild Irishman; and that neither his property, nor his person, was thought worthy of the protection of the common law.

The hatred which this system of injustice created in the hearts of the native Irish against the English settlers, and the name of Englishman, has been perpetuated by the habit of feeling their very existence, property, and civil enjoyments, resting on the ground of toleration granted to an enemy, rather than on the acknowledged rights of common citizenship. At every period, there has been some distinction or privation, to attach to their feeling the grating recollection of being a conquered people.

Any one may readily conceive, under these circumstances, that the hatred to the Irish Protestants, and the English, still exist among the native Irish, but few are aware of its extent. One great proof of it is, the little progress the English language has made. Travellers generally pass through the wealthiest parts of the country, and the towns where the English have successively settled, and imagine that the language is universal. But in all the north-west and south-west counties, the English language is scarcely known. In the county of Meath, which borders immediately upon the metropolis, a justice of peace must understand Irish, or keep an interpreter; and even where the parties understand English, they pertinaciously adhere to the language the idioms of which they best understand; and say proverbially,
“When

"When you plead for your life, plead in Irish." There is no Irish gentleman who cannot witness the extreme repugnance with which all English stewards, English customs, and English improvements are regarded by the common Irish; and whenever I have heard them speak among themselves of the English, it has always been in terms of the strongest aversion.

To remove this source of discontent, which originates in the resentment of a conquered people, some one of the means must be adopted which would have prevented it. Either Ireland must be restored to unequivocal independance*; or the people of Ireland must be so entirely incorporated with the people of England, that not the smallest civil or religious distinction may remain; or else the great body of the Roman Catholics must, upon every decent occasion, be reduced by military execution, till their numbers and political importance become quite inconsiderable.

Second Cause.

THE CONFISCATIONS OF PROPERTY THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN IRELAND.

The origin of all industry, wealth, and civilization, proceeds from security of property. Wherever men are found without laws to secure the rights of property, they are certain to exist in a savage state, deprived of the necessities as well as the comforts of life. Indolence is the first rude luxury of man; nor will he exchange it for the more varied

* Wherever the word independance occurs, it must be received in the old sense formerly applied to it in Ireland, as consisting in an independent parliament. The Author begs leave to say in this place, that he deprecates all wild ideas of severing the two countries by means of an independent executive.

luxuries that are purchased by industry, till he is certain that the fruits of his industry will be secured to him; that what he has sown another will not reap. Where confiscations of property have often taken place, industry will have little enterprise; and though a few may be enriched by legal pillage, the mass of the people will remain poor and dispirited. Considering a country merely as a source of revenue, it is much wiser to levy a contribution on the profits of industry, than to seize on the capital which supports it. Thus in the late revolution in France, the plundering spirit of its different dictators disappointed itself. Setting up a right to place all the wealth of the country in requisition, they destroyed the sources of national wealth, and found themselves much more distressed for money, than if they had levied a sum one thousand times greater by the equal and regulated mode of taxation. In the same manner it is hardly credible how little revenue England has ever raised in Ireland during the long period it has had it in possession; nay, if a balance were fairly struck, it would be found that Ireland has proved a considerable loss, and that England would have been more rich, and more powerful, if it had never pillaged or ruled in the sister Island.

But in addition to the decline of national wealth, another evil of equal importance is sure to arise from general confiscations, by laying the foundation of civil commotions. Those who have lost their property will still nourish hopes of regaining it, and those who have seized it will always have suspicions of the design; jealousy will be the policy of the government, discontent the habit of the people.

The utility of a permanent security of property is so evident, that there is no stronger idea of right generated in the common opinions of men, than the right to the property that has been con-

secrated

separated to them by long possession; and there is no right which is so reluctantly resigned, or the breach of which is regarded with more animosity.

The Irish Roman Catholics seem never to have lost sight of the hopes of recovering their ancient possessions, or ever to have abated their resentment to the party who despoiled them. If any one will be at the trouble to consult the original grants at the Record-office, in Dublin, he will see that almost the whole of Ireland has been forfeited at different times, on the first conquest, and during all the successive reigns, but particularly under James the First, Oliver Cromwell, and William the Third. As to the mode of confiscation, it was arbitrary and violent in the extreme. The celebrated Earl of Stafford, certainly not the worst oppressor Ireland has experienced, is still familiarly known to the Roman Catholic peasantry in the county of Wicklow, by the appellation of Black Tom; and the instances of his depredations are repeated as circumstantially as if they had taken place only a short time ago. When we consider too the detail of these depredations, and that the lands were mostly subdivided in military allotments, among Protestant soldiers of fortune, who abhorred the natives for their religion, and despised them for their misfortunes, can we wonder that oppression became a habit, or doubt that the early rebellions of the Catholics were justifiable, if injury justify resentment?

It is now too late to propose the plain remedy for the evils of confiscation in Ireland, restitution. This property has now been so long vested in the present proprietors, that the interests of justice and utility would be more offended by dispossessing them, than they would be advanced by reinstating the lawful owners. In all codes of law,
it

it is found necessary to fix a term of prescription which is paramount even to the rights of lineal descent.

Yet much, if not every thing, might be effected by removing all religious distinctions.

It is evident that the recollection of these rights has been very much perpetuated by the claimants being firmly united in a religious sect, and by their still considering the descendants of the original spoilers as their enemies. It is not that the modern Catholics hate the modern Protestants, because they continue to recollect their own title to the forfeited property; but they continue to recollect these claims, because the Protestants have never ceased giving them good grounds to hate them. But once remove these sources of antipathy, once relax the bond of union which unites the Catholics by their common grievances, and we should hear very little regret for the fee simple, which has been out of possession six hundred years.

Terrible as the consequences of confiscation always are, they may be very much assuaged, and in the end entirely obliterated, if no continuance of injuries, if no civil disqualifications unite the sufferers into a corporate capacity, and perpetuate the memory of the original breach of justice.

Bonaparte is entitled at least to this praise, that he has afforded the returned emigrants no means of becoming a party distinct from the rest of their fellow-citizens. An honest descendant of the Montmorencis, who shall make a fortune by trade or manufactures, will trouble his head very little about the demesnes and feudal rights of his ancestors; and we may safely prophesy, that six hundred years hence there will not be a Frenchman, who will feel an interest in the present disposition of the *propriété nationale*.

So would it have been with the Irish Roman Catholics, if an equal participation of the rights and privileges of their countrymen had gradually compelled them to sink the differences of sectarians in the common interests of Irishmen.

Third Cause.

THE DISTINCTIONS CREATED BY GOVERNMENT
IN FAVOUR OF THE IRISH PROTESTANTS, TO
THE PREJUDICE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.

When a highwayman robs a traveller, prudence points out two ways of lessening the risk of punishment: either to murder the person he has robbed, and thus get rid of a material witness; or if he does not choose to plunge so deep in criminality, the alternative is, to soften the outrage by civil language, an anxiety to give no unnecessary alarm, and to throw back a few shillings to pay the turnpikes. A generous man would scarcely feel resentment against so courteous a thief, and certainly would not seek to hang him. But it surely would be the height of infatuation, to rob a man, to spare his life, and yet load him with every injury and insult.

When the English seized upon the property of the native Irish, prudence required them either to exterminate the men they had injured, or if they suffered them to live, to try to efface the recollection of their wrongs by good usage, a forbearance of injurious distinctions, an equal enjoyment of civil rights and privileges, religious toleration, and all those common participations which would gradually have weakened the distinction between the plunderers and the pillaged.

But with equal folly and cruelty they spared the lives of the conquered, yet subjected them to a system of insult and injury, which has existed through six centuries, and is and always has been the fruitful
source

source of rebellion most disgraceful to government, and divisions most fatal to the state.

I should be inclined to pass over those penal laws which attached to the Roman Catholics, and have been repealed, but though their operation has ceased, their effect must still be considered as existing; for as long as the Catholics are treated as a subservient sect, the recollection of former injuries will have almost as great an effect as the suffering from actual grievances*.

To any one of common sense or feeling, it will be sufficient merely to mention the principal penal acts that have been repealed.

Catholics were made subject to a premunire, to a penalty on not resorting to the protestant churches; any one was at liberty to burn their mass houses; their priests were not tolerated, and in the reign of George the First, an act passed the Irish Parliament to castrate every priest found in that kingdom: even in more tolerant times the priests were obliged to resort to foreign countries for their edu-

* Though the letter of the penal laws has been repealed, they exist in fact. The law which prevented Catholics from being justices of the peace, and from sitting on grand juries, has been repealed; but in fact, no Roman Catholic is ever made a justice of the peace, or called to the grand jury, except where the Union has stripped the country of Protestant gentlemen. In many countries Protestants will not visit a Catholic; it is the fashion at all times to speak of Catholics in the most injurious and degrading terms; and every 12th of July, under pretence of commemorating the battle of the Boyne, processions of Protestants parade the country countenanced by government; using every means to insult the Catholics and proclaim their triumph over them. The Orange lodges, those great political blunders of the Irish gentry, are founded on the same principles, while the mystery thrown over their designs adds new apprehensions to the insecurity of the Catholics. Yet at this moment, all this insulting folly is countenanced by the British cabinet, who gravely wonder why the Catholics should be discontented.

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cation. Roman Catholics were not permitted to have schools for their children, nor could they appoint guardians for them; they were deprived of any testamentary power, and their property subjected to the law of gavelkind, in hopes of reducing the whole sect to poverty; they could not lend money on security; they could not purchase lands, and by the celebrated act called the Bill of Discovery, if one of their children turned Protestant, he might dispossess the father of his property. Roman Catholics could not intermarry with Protestants, they were excluded from all civil offices; they could neither vote for a representative, nor could they sit themselves in Parliament. Thus as Creatures of the Divinity, as Fathers, as Men, and as Citizens, they were on all sides persecuted, outraged, insulted and enslaved, by the most flagrant and stupid penal code that ever triumphed over common sense and humanity.

The civil distinctions which now exist call more immediately for our attention. I believe the following may be considered as a correct list*.

Roman Catholics cannot sit in Parliament; they cannot hold any office under the Crown; they have all the burden of supporting their own clergy, while they are obliged to contribute an equal share with the Protestants to the support of the Protestant clergy; their clergy are not paid by government, neither have they any voice in the legislature, whilst the Protestant clergy enjoy very high emoluments, their bishops and archbishops have splendid incomes, and a seat in the House of Lords.

Many people, I am aware, in comparing the present with the former state of this penal code,

* There are still very severe laws against converts from the Protestant to the Popish religion, and against converts from the Popish religion, who relapse into their original faith.

will be apt to feel very well satisfied, and wonder the Catholics should not do so too. "When so much has been done away, they may bear very well with what remains." But topics of consolation drawn from comparative wrong, or misery, though they are great favourites with a certain class of reasoners, those who inflict, are found very delusive when urged to those who suffer. It is very little comfort to the man who has his eyes put out at Tunis, that he might have had his nose cut off too had he lived at Acre.

Injuries are grievous, more in proportion to the sensibility of those whom they affect, than their own intrinsic weight. As civilization advances, the sense of injury becomes more delicate and refined. Homer's heroes could patiently receive the lie; now a man could not honourably support life till such an insult was effaced, though at the risk of life itself.

The most cruel persecution would have been more bearable in the reign of Elizabeth, than the slightest religious disqualification is now.

For this reason, grievances ought never to be removed by halves. For by removing a part, the minds of the aggrieved only acquire more self consequence, and become more susceptible to the grievances which remain. A partial removal of grievance, is like opening a window to a prisoner's dungeon; it is like throwing light upon his bolts and chains. The present distinction which now affect the Roman Catholics are insults rather than injuries. But let it never be forgotten, that in the present state of civilization, insults are far more grievous than injuries. When a government stupidly affixes them to large bodies of men, the social passion agitates, enlarges, and dignifies resentment, and makes things of smallest moment the hinge on which the fate of empire and society depends.

But

But when a government loses all sense, and ventures to insult a sect; when it arrays against itself not only the exaggerated feelings of the social passions, but also of religious enthusiasm; when it makes rebellion appear not only generous, but sacred, can we wonder that opinion, it's firmest and most respectable support, proves visionary, and all it's authority rests upon the odious the disgraceful assistance of the halberd and the sword?

If we consider how prone mankind are naturally to invent distinctions and to separate in parties, and yet what animosities are sure to arise, wherever such parties exist, we should be careful never to give any grounds for distinctions, certainly never such important grounds as arise from civil, or religious privations.

But with us that sect of men, whom, by marking out as distinct from ourselves, we have attached to each other by the bonds of brotherhood, religion, and common suffering; these, whom we have compressed on all sides into a firm phalanx, are the men, whose ancestors our ancestors deprived of property and independence; and that the recollection of the wrong might never be forgotten by their posterity, that hereditary hatred might never be sacrificed to mutual interest and friendship, we have taken care to keep alive their resentment, by attaching to the tenets they hold sacred the most marked and injurious disqualifications*.

But here it may be objected, that it is not against Papists, but against Popery, that these penal laws are intended to act; that the Popish religion weakens and degrades the human mind, and

* The most fatal error in the conduct of the British Ministry towards Ireland, was the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. This, however, was not so wonderful, as that a man of such acknowledged good sense and integrity should ever have been appointed to the office of Lord Lieutenant.

therefore

therefore is unfavourable to civil liberty; that it acknowledges a foreign potentate as it's head, and therefore is destructive of all principles of domestic government. I allow all this; I consider the Popish religion as the most formidable source of slavery and superstition that has sprung from the abuse of religion, and where the destruction of it is the end that government pursues, I would at least be a willing ally.

But are pains and penalties, are civil distinctions, the best means to prevent the growth of a sect? If the Irish Roman Catholics have become numerous and powerful under the celebrated statutes of Queen Ann, if all the powers of bribery failed in gaining one convert from the most corrupt, fear from the most timid, political disgrace from the most ambitious of the Roman Catholics, we may judge of the experiment from the event, and rest satisfied that the severe and disqualifying system is radically wrong.

Let us then examine what a contrary system might effect; and to drop for a time the invidious instance of the Roman Catholics, we will suppose a more extreme, and consequently a more conclusive case.

We will suppose that from some of the innumerable caprices of religious enthusiasm, a sect should arise, which, influenced by the fear rather than by the love of the Author of the universe, should in good earnest worship the Devil. A great alarm would very justly arise, lest such a sect should extend it's numbers and it's influence, and Government might very properly take into it's consideration the means of checking it's progress.

But for this purpose, would it be wise to exclude the new zealots from Parliament and civil trusts; ought they to be marked out as objects of punishment; ought the subsistence of their priests to be

be left dependent on the degree of enthusiasm with which they inspire their followers? If such a line of conduct were pursued, it would produce the same effect that it has done in all ages, and in all countries. The bond of attachment among themselves would be drawn closer, when they were set apart from the rest of their countrymen; their enthusiasm would be inflamed by suffering; their priests would be more zealous than the established clergy, and consequently would make more converts: and a few insignificant fanatics, by being persecuted into importance by the Government, might soon materially influence the opinions of the whole nation. No; I would treat them with all the contempt of toleration; I would admit them to all the rights of citizens, as long as they acted as such; and if they went so far as to offend against the laws, I would punish them in their individual, and not in their corporate capacity; and I would punish them for their acts, not for their opinions. But, above all, I would pay their priests well, and teach them to eat and drink like gentlemen.

Let us ascertain what would be the effect of this line of conduct.

One body of men can never keep themselves much or long separated from the rest, unless Government affords them more durable insignia than mere names and opinions, by marking them with some injudicious distinction. Trade, literature, family connections, public and private interests, powerfully contribute to blend the whole mass of society; and after the novelty of a new sect has ceased, if there be no difficulty to be overcome, no opposition to be encountered, no injuries to be endured; if there be neither glory, exertion, nor resentment to keep enthusiasm alive; there remains nothing to prevent the common character of the
c citizen

citizen from overpowering the assumed distinctive character of the sectarian.

The fate of Free-masonry is a strong instance; notwithstanding it's assumed importance, and it's mysterious rites, it scarcely excites curiosity, and is regarded with no more interest than any common convivial club.

But in order to make religious enthusiasm eternal, give it only the smallest distinction to form a bond of union among it's adherents, and the social passion instantly unites them into a party, feeling a separate and adverse interest from the rest of the nation.

For this purpose, it is not necessary that they should be persecuted; the slightest distinction which is laid on them by government will be sufficient. Pass but a law, that the Methodists shall wear red capes to their coats, and it is a chance but in ten years they overturn the government.

No other reasoning will account for the following very singular circumstance:—Many of the young men of property, who adhere to the Roman Catholics in Ireland, are, in fact, Deists; and yet they submit to all the privations attached to the profession of the Catholic religion; feel a common interest with it, and make a common cause against the government that continues to deprive the Catholics of their rights.

Why is this, but that it is reckoned base and disgraceful to desert a persecuted sect? Where much is to be gained by the sacrifice, there is always a strong suspicion, when old opinions are sacrificed, that it is from interested motives. This is an equivocal situation, which young men of any generosity (and the Irish are at least generous) would be shocked to encounter; and this must be the reason why, when they have really abandoned their old religious opinions, they voluntarily continue to submit

submit to the common disqualifications to which they are subject. But once remove these disqualifications, and these men, when the purity of their motives cannot be called in question, will immediately detach themselves from their sect; for it would then be as base to preserve the name of Roman Catholic, as it would now be to resign it.

If Government would but adopt this mode of proceeding, all the real strength of the Catholic body would be destroyed in the course of twenty years, by the gradual desertion of all the men of property who were it's adherents. If things be left to themselves, the fashionable religion will always be the religion of the wealthy; and even among the poorer class of Roman Catholics, though the same speedy change of opinions cannot be expected, their religious prejudices and antipathies, when no longer shocked and insulted, would gradually subside.

But to produce this desirable effect, Government must not show the smallest preference by which a Catholic may be distinguished from a Protestant; not only restore to them the right of sitting in parliament, but if you pay the Protestant clergy, pay also the Catholic; if you allow Protestant bishops to sit in the house of lords, give the same privilege to the Catholic. In order to weaken the separatist spirit of a sect (and without a spirit of separation a sect is powerless) nothing is done, unless every thing is done.

In whatever light, then, we consider the discontents of the Irish Roman Catholics, the same great rule of remedial wisdom constantly recure. To obliterate the recollection of conquerors and conquered, remove all civil and religious distinctions; to obliterate the recollection of plunderers and pillaged, remove all civil and religious distinctions; to remove the hatred of the Catholics to

the Protestants, and to extinguish for ever their discontents and their rebellions, remove all civil and religious distinctions.

It is fortunate, that no great doubts or difficulties would occur in the execution of this plan; the points in dispute are so extremely immaterial, that if we did not know the natural temper of governments, which will neither lead nor be driven, we should be at a loss to account for the indolence or obstinacy, which has continued these grounds of discontent, at the risk of separating the two countries. The only measure required to redress the civil grievances of the Roman Catholics is, to repeal the act which prevents their sitting in parliament.

I have heard of an obstacle to the redress of their religious grievances, which is rather improbable, and not very important. It has been said, that the Catholic priests, at the instigation of the Pope, refuse to receive a salary. It seems very unlikely that the Pope should have so much influence, or the priests so much disinterestedness; for it is still a custom with many Protestant gentlemen, and formerly was with most, to allow the priest of the parish a small salary, and no scruples were ever made about accepting it.

But allowing the fact to be so, still, if the Government tell the priest, "your draught will be answered at the treasury every year for such a sum," it has fulfilled it's duty; and if the priest refuse to accept it, no discontent can be raised against Government; the Catholics must blame the priests and the Pope, if they be still called on for voluntary contributions.

I rather suspect, that Government has been so imprudent, as to wish to interfere with the mode of appointing the Catholic clergy; if so, it will only make matters worse; it will have to engage in a combat with the main tenet of the Catholic religion, instead of conciliating the heads of that religion,

ligion, and relieving it's followers from the burden of their support. These are the real objects that policy regards. It signifies very little how the Catholic clergy are appointed, as long as they are dependent for their support on the pleasure of Government; and as long as the body of the Catholics are released from the double burden of supporting their own clergy as well as the Protestant. All I can add is, that if the Government attempt to carry the appointment of the Catholic clergy now, they will find it a greater source of delay and difficulty, than they are aware of. The priests are appointed by the bishops, the bishops by the archbishops, and these by the Pope; and I believe popes, archbishops, and bishops, are just as fond of influence and patronage, as the most regular governments. What would be attempted now in vain, might probably be effected a few years hence, when the Catholic dignitaries are better disciplined in the habits of dependence on Government; and therefore it will be doubly judicious not to insist on the appointment to benefices as a *sine qua non*, at present; particularly as it will probably be productive of delay, where there is no time to be spared.

Fourth Cause.

RELIGIOUS DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE PRESBYTERIANS AND THE PROTESTANTS.*

HUME, in his history of England, defends an establishment as necessary to bribe the indolence of the clergy, and reduce religious enthusiasm to that degree of temper, which is consistent with the peaceable management of the things of this world. But if we give these honied cakes to only one head of the Cerberus, it will increase the fury of the rest;

* Protestants, here and elsewhere in this work, is used as synonymous with a member of the Church of England, the members of this church employing this term to distinguish themselves as well from Dissenters as from Catholics.

feed them all, and we may go quietly to Heaven above, or the shades below, in our own way.

There is but a very small distinction placed by Government between the Irish Presbyterians and the Members of the establishment; and yet this is quite sufficient to keep alive the zeal and animosity of a party, and to give it a very pernicious direction in opposition to Government. I say, sufficient to keep alive, because it certainly is not the whole cause of that zeal and that animosity. The ancestors of the modern Presbyterians were all commonwealth men; and as the bad policy of Government has made their descendants a kind of separate school, the old opinions and feelings have been preserved in a great degree of purity, and certainly have not been found at all uncongenial to the modern principles of the French revolution. The Presbyterians in Ireland lately succeeded in procuring a repeal of the Test act; but it had continued sufficiently long to make them feel the separate interests of a sect. That they still continue to feel them is very evident, and sufficiently proves, that in order to weaken the force of a sect, you do nothing unless you remove *every* distinction.

It is not generally understood in England how formidable the body of Presbyterians is in Ireland, and how active a part it took in the late rebellion. The six northern counties are almost entirely composed of this class of men; they are much more industrious, more wealthy, and more intelligent than the Roman Catholics. They very early adopted the principle of a reform in parliament; and had that salutary measure been granted to the wishes of the people, there never would have been a rebellion in Ireland. In fact, the Presbyterians were the real strength of the late rebellion. The Catholics,

• Namely, the manner in which the clergy of each are paid.

like

like all very oppressed sects, are timid and ignorant, and were quite unequal to the conception or execution of a plan so daring and complicated. The Catholics accidentally got the start of the Presbyterians, and hence the failure of the rebellion. The moment the Catholics acquired force, the Presbyterians took the alarm; the old jealousy and hatred of the Puritans to the Catholics revived in all its force in the breasts of their descendants; the counties in the North of Ireland, though organized for rebellion, remained quiet on the first notice of the successes of the Catholic rebels; and in consequence, the Government had leisure to direct all its forces against the immediate danger; and all the odium of the rebellion fell upon the Catholics.

Hence, in England, all the disturbances in Ireland are referred to the Catholics only, but with very little truth; for had the Presbyterians been allowed to take the lead, it would not only have been called a Presbyterian instead of a Catholic rebellion, but I am afraid would have proved a Presbyterian revolution.

The six northern counties of Ireland are so very differently circumstanced from the rest, that they very well deserve a separate consideration, if there be really any intentions of restoring the tranquillity of the country.

The situation of the rest of Ireland may very well be understood: the inhabitants, generally speaking are poor, idle, and ignorant; and the only object they want, is to enjoy their prejudices without being made objects of obloquy. But in the North, the spirit of inquiry, as well as wealth and industry, exists in a striking degree of contrast.—Book clubs are common among the labourers and tradesmen, from which gentlemen are excluded; and such is the rage for religious disputation, that

in many villages there are three dissenting chapels of different persuasions; and it is but a few years ago that there was a professed sect of Deists.

The Roman Catholics rebel only from negative reasons—that they may not be insulted and oppressed. It was the Presbyterian sect that was the organ of positive rebellion, and sought to effect a reform in the Government of the country.

There appear to have been two causes of discontent among the Dissenters—the distinction preserved between them and the Protestants, and the wish for a reform in parliament, in order to counteract the pernicious effects of English influence. The only distinction between the Presbyterians and the Protestants is, that the former pay their own clergy while they are forced to contribute to the payment of the clergy of the latter*.

This is certainly a grievance, and an injustice, and ought in policy to be removed; but as the Presbyterians are in general wealthy, it probably was not so much felt, or so much resented, as by the Catholics.

How far the Union has been considered by the Presbyterians as a substitute for a reform in parliament, to which they are so enthusiastically attached, will be examined in another place; it is sufficient at present to point out their great political importance, and earnestly to recommend, that Government should not lightly disclaim all compromise with a sect, which is the most enlightened, proud, and in moral force, the most important body of men in Ireland.

Fifth Cause.

TITHES.

If tithes be found a grievance in England, how much more must their weight be felt in Ireland!

* The Presbyterian clergy receive from the Treasury 7,700l. per annum, and 800l. per annum from the king's privy purse.—Their number is, however, so great, that these sums give but a small pittance to each.

In England, generally speaking, land is in the hands of opulent men, who, if they feel the pressure of tithes, feel it only as a comparative evil; they would be richer if free from them.

But in Ireland, where a very great proportion of the land is let at rack rents to small farmers and day-labourers, the tithe very frequently deprives them of the portion, which is required to complete the sum necessary to their very existence.

Before the rebellion of the year ninety-eight had eclipsed all less important disturbances, there was a continued commotion on account of tithes. The White boys in the South, the Steel boys and Peep o'day boys in the North, existed for a long period, and kept the country in perpetual alarm. The Irish parliament was well aware how sorely the pressure of tithes was felt; but like all men who barter the dignity and sincerity of human nature for a ministerial bribe, they were as callous to other people's sufferings as to their own degradation. They had a conclusive and remarkable instance within their own recollection, that the Irish peasantry were not *inclined* to rebellion, and that their frequent insurrections were to be considered as symptoms of their grievances, not of their rapacity.

Some years ago, the whole of Ireland was distracted by the tumultuous rising of the peasantry under the appellation of Oak boys. The roads in Ireland were formerly made by *corvées*, as in France; and it was against this intolerable exaction of their labour that the peasantry resisted. The country was desolated by the successes of these Oak boys, and the too indiscriminate vengeance of the troops opposed to them. At last, by accident, the Irish parliament thought of removing the grievance: a law was passed to make and mend the roads by a general tax on each county; and from that mo-

3 ment

ment the Oak boys have never been heard of. Surely this instance is sufficient to prove, that in all popular disturbances it is best to remove the ostensible grievance, before recourse is had to more harsh and invidious measures.

But the apologists for tithes generally answer, first, that tithes are not so very oppressive as they are represented; secondly, that there is great difficulty in getting rid of them. It is said, that the tenant does not, in fact, pay the tithes; for in making his bargain, he has his land proportionably cheaper. Nothing can be more false than this reasoning; for, if pushed to it's full extent, it would follow, that the idle only pay taxes. The fact is, that every man, in making bargains, tries to shove off upon his neighbour the weight of the tax; but in this, though partly, he is never entirely successful; the rich will always pay the most, but the poor will still pay something. How can any one suppose, that if the tithes were doubled, the landlord would not attempt, and successfully too, to throw part of the burden on the tenants, by a rise of the rent; the tenant would do the same to the cornfactor, the cornfactor to the consumer; but still each, according to the proportion of his abilities, would pay a share of the tax, and none the whole. In the same manner, if tithes were abolished, the profit would not go entirely to the landlord, tenant, cornfactor, consumer, &c. but each would receive a part of the benefit, some more, some less, according to a nice, but almost imperceptible scale, which regulates the pressure according to the capability the different ranks of life have of supporting it, and *vice versa*.

But no one has any doubt of the great national disadvantage of tithes, as an *ad valorem* tax, falling heaviest on *increasing* industry.

However,

However, it is for the English to examine the policy of tithes; in Ireland they will not even bear the question of their justice. Surely, without calling on our heads the anathemas of the antijacobin sect, who are so unconscious of humanity themselves, that they think it must be affectation in every one else; surely we may lament the fate of the Irish peasantry.

Their religious affections, granting them mistaken, lead them to economise, even under the constant pressure of scarcity, to support the pastor they revere, and give him the means of a certain, though scarcely decent livelihood. They submit to a voluntary tax, that the old and infirm part of their Sunday congregation may have a mass-house to shelter them from the weather; the great crowd, the young, and those that come late, kneel without doors.

Are these men supposed to have no sense of justice, that in addition to the burden of supporting their own establishment exclusively, they should be called on to pay ours; that where they pay sixpence to their own priest, they should pay a pound to our clergyman; that while they can scarcely afford their own a horse, they should place ours in his carriage; that when they cannot build a mass-house to cover their multitudes, they should be forced to contribute to build sumptuous churches for half a dozen Protestants to pray under shelter.

This injustice is so evident, that there are very few Orange men that do not acknowledge it. And however averse many may be to admit the Catholics to their political rights, there is no one in Ireland who does not agree in the wish, that the Roman Catholic priests should be paid by Government, and tithes abolished.

As to any difficulty respecting the abolition of tithes, it is considerably less in Ireland than in England,

land. The laity in Ireland take very little interest in the concerns of the clergy, and would be very well satisfied to have them paid from the public funds. Even the clergy in Ireland would not have the same objection to commute their tithes as in England. In Ireland, pasture ground, when stocked with cattle, pays no tithe. In Ireland, too it is both profitable and easy to convert tillage ground into pasture, so that the rich farmer has the clergyman very much in his power*, and there have been instances of great landed proprietors reducing the value of a living very considerably. A certain stipend from Government would be preferable to the precarious and invidious income arising from tithes. To those who raise still more far-fetched objections to the commutation of tithes, there is a very conclusive answer. The question whether tithes should remain as they are, or be commuted, must be decided by the balance of advantages and disadvantages belonging to each system, not by discovering particular objections to the one or the other; and there can be no doubt, that any system of commutation which Government is likely to adopt, would be exposed to fewer, and less weighty objections, than those which experience shows to be most applicable to tithes.

Sixth Cause.

THE DEGRADED STATE OF THE PEASANTRY.

I consider the degraded and unprotected state of the Irish peasantry as one of the most powerful causes of rebellion in Ireland, and the most difficult to remedy. Their minds are kept in a constant state of anxiety and terroure, and are prevented from

* It is not the same with the peasantry, who, from the smallness of their farms, can have little pasture ground, and generally raise crops of corn and potatoes.

relaxing into that settled calm and security which the regularity and contracted nature of their habits would otherwise insure. If the peasantry were pretty generally well treated, it is incredible that their hatred to their superiors should be so determined; and that, to gratify that hatred, they should always be ready to give up all their former habits, to abandon their homes, and stake their lives on the success of insurrections, the object and practicability of which are entirely beyond their conception. It is not the love of plunder, for their leaders could always restrain them in this instance; it was not the wild desire of gratifying their favourite passions; for the first suspicion of the rebellion arose from the general disuse of spirits, and the rebels never violated the honour of a woman; but it was the desire of vengeance, the love of destruction, from which no authority, no persuasion, could divert them.

The cause of the injurious treatment of the peasantry certainly arises from the long period of protracted conquest, and of lawless violence, which marked the conduct of the early conquerors and tyrants of Ireland, which, however softened by increased civilization, has never been extinguished, and continues to give a tone and manner to their posterity. There were but too many instances in the late rebellion, that we were the descendants of men who held it lawful to shoot a wild Irishman; and notwithstanding the magic of the Union, a stranger can readily distinguish the race of the conquerors from that of the conquered, in the imperious insolence of the former, and the sullen deference of the latter.

It has not been unusual in Ireland for great landed proprietors to have regular prisons in their houses for the summary punishment of the lower orders. Indictments preferred against gentlemen, for similar exercise of power beyond law, are always thrown out by the grand juries. To horse-whip,

whip, or beat a servant, or labourer, is a frequent mode of correction. But the evil is not so great among the gentlemen of large property, whose manners have generally been softened by education, travelling, and the progress of humanity and civilization; a horde of tyrants exists in Ireland in a class of men that are unknown in England; in the multitude of agents to absentees; small proprietors, who are the pure Irish squires; middle men, who take large farms, and squeeze out a forced kind of profit, by reletting them in small parcels; lastly, the little farmers themselves, who exercise the same insolence they receive from their superiors on those unfortunate beings, who are placed at the extremity of the scale of degradation, the Irish peasantry*.

Sufficient proof of this habitual system of ill usage may be collected from the singular fact, that the majority of the peasantry enrolled themselves as united Irishmen, from the apprehension of being massacred by the Orange men, who were composed of the landed proprietors of the different counties. Before the rebellion commenced, emissaries were dispatched by designing men through all parts of the country, mentioning the very week on which the supposed massacres were to take place; and it is a notorious fact, that these reports were univer-

* The poverty and degradation of Ireland has been attributed to the tenure of land by middle men; but this is only a secondary cause, and any attempt to remove it cannot be made without extreme violence, and even then would be ineffectual. The primary cause of a vicious tenure of land, is a vicious system of government. Where government degrades its subjects, they will be poor, and want capital; where capital is wanted, farms must be small; where farms are small, great landed proprietors will never enter into the troublesome and hazardous detail which arises from a multitude of small tenures but will prefer smaller profits for the greater security of letting their lands in the gross, to men who, for the sake of high profits, will undertake the risk of supplying the demand for small farms.

sally

sally believed; that the Roman Catholic peasantry left their houses and fled to the mountains; and that many of the poor wretches died from cold and hunger, sooner than trust to the chance of Protestant clemency.

Now I ask, what sort of conduct from the Protestants to the Papists must the easy belief of such improbable rumours presuppose?

If a stranger on horseback were to ride into Brentford, and say that the neighbouring gentry were to murder the common people at the end of the month; would he not be received as a madman or a liar? Certainly. Because the rank of the common people in England is far from inconsiderable, and insures to them civil and humane treatment from the wealthy. Why, then, should the same man, in similar circumstances, be believed in Ireland? Because the common people in Ireland have no rank in society; they may be treated with contempt, and consequently are treated with inhumanity.

I will add another proof of a more particular nature, to show that this national habit, like other national habits, is so strong, that the expression of it is discernible in men whose personal habits are directly the reverse.

An acquaintance of mine possessed of a very large landed property, who has, in a high degree, that natural affability and politeness which marks the Irish; who gives his tenants plenty of leisure to pay their rents; who is the father of a little army of labourers that he keeps in constant employment; whose house is a kind of hospital, where all the sick in the neighbourhood send for medicines and wine; in his courtyard the poor of the parish, and the wandering beggar, assemble without ceremony, and find in the remnants of his hospitable kitchen more broken victuals than is supplied by any English nobleman's house; this essentially
amiable

amiable and kind hearted man, prefaces a rebuke to a labourer with, "You villain, you! I'll blow your bloody soul in a blaze of gunpowder to Hell!"

Can there be a stronger proof how inveterate this tone of behaviour must be in the country in general, than it's having infected a man whose natural disposition is so averse to it?

To remove this uncivilized deportment of the landed proprietors to the peasantry, is no very plain or easy achievement. It is in vain to look for a more impartial administration of justice, as long as both the grand and petty juries and justices of the peace are composed of the very class of men in whom the evil originates.

The removal of religious distinctions would have no effect here; for the peasantry are not held in contempt as Roman Catholics or Presbyterians, but as peasants; and it is a very remarkable fact, that the Roman Catholic landlords behave in a much more injurious, gross, and tyrannical manner to their labourers, than the Protestant landlords; and, in general, the peasantry prefer to be employed by a Protestant rather than a Roman Catholic. So true it is, that a mind debased by oppression is always the most ready to inflict it.

A disregard to the common rules of civility and respect, which the poorest man has a right to claim from the richest, can only arise from the impunity with which the rich man may express the contempt it is so natural he should be impressed with at the situation of the poor.

• To secure decent behaviour to the peasantry of Ireland, two things are required to make them respectable, and to make them necessary to the landed proprietors. The plan that I should propose is new; but as it is the only one that occurs to me as likely to be effectual in removing the degradation and

and injurious treatment experienced by the Irish peasantry, I shall mention it.

I would make all the municipal officers of the Irish counties, that are within the wishes of the highest or lowest class of landed proprietors, annually elective; particularly grand jurors, justices of the peace, the sheriff, and the treasurer; and to make them of more importance, and more justly responsible, I would attach salaries to these offices. I would do more; I would introduce a regular system of municipal, or rather county administration, all the officers of which should be annually elective. The grand juries have all at present a much greater share of local administration than in England, by being able to levy taxes to any amount, in the county, to make roads. I would increase this, and subject harbours, canals, and public buildings, to the same direction. I would introduce a greater division of labour in the administration of this court; I would confine the grand jurors to their proper province, the care of justice. I would appoint other county officers to superintend the care of the roads, &c. A county surveyor is all that is wanting to make the management of roads in Ireland perfect.

By these means there might be a great number of county offices erected, very useful to the public, and very desirable to individuals; yet, if the salaries were not exorbitant, they would not be so desirable as to introduce bribery at the elections; and it would be sufficient, to prevent rioting, to poll the electors at their different parishes at the same hour. I had an opportunity of observing how grateful to the common people in Ireland the importance is, that they derive from any public function, however inconsiderable. A gentleman bequeathed his property, in trust, to a charity, making the trustees eligible by the parish. On the day of election, though very little pains had been taken to give
notice,

notice, the parishioners, instead of being indifferent about the matter, were eager to come and give their votes ; and I perceive distinctly, that as far as this election has an effect, it will be to make the neighbouring gentlemen more careful to be popular, and will give the parishioners some degree of consequence in their eyes, and in their own.

Seventh Cause.

THE INFLUENCE OF A REPUBLICAN PARTY.

There can be no doubt of the existence of a speculative republican party in Ireland, which in the closet, even more than in the field, has been a considerable cause of the late rebellions in Ireland. The only question with respect to it is the degree of influence and importance we shall attribute to it. Ministers will be very ready to assert, that it is every thing ; that it is the great and sole cause of all the evil that has visited Ireland. But we ought to be particularly cautious how we adopt the mode of accounting for effects, which is usual with ministers ; for as they are the primary causes of most political events, it is always their interest to attribute all evils to secondary causes ; and they are very much assisted in this deception by the natural indolence of mankind, who generally rest satisfied with such explanations as can be derived from secondary causes, and save themselves the labour of attention and investigation, which is always required to develop primary causes.

There is also another description respecting causes, which, since we have got into a strain of metaphysical philosophising, I should wish to state ; it is the distinction between the causes which prepare, and the causes which immediately produce an event. There is an axiom in medicine, which if oftener applied to politics would be found favourable to accurate reasoning, which is, “ that the predispo-
sing

“sing cause is always of more importance than the “exciting cause.” The death of consumptive people is always attributed to a cold that was caught at some particular time or other; when, on the contrary, the cold would have had little or no effect, but for the hereditary taints, or the long course of injudicious habits, which laid the foundation, and were the real cause of the disease.

Are we not authorised by the strictest analogy to assert, that in all rebellions, authors, intriguers, demagogues, are at worst only the spark that kindles the insurrection; the important, the fatal train is laid in the immediate pressure of abuses, injuries, or insults, and the despair of their being voluntarily redressed by gentle, yet certain degrees.

Had a reform in parliament, had a total emancipation of the Roman Catholics been granted to the people by the Irish parliament, all the orators of the human race might have preached revolution to the Irish people, and would have preached in vain.

If a republican party is a great cause of the rebellions in Ireland, yet there is none which can so easily be removed; give them no topic in any really existing abuse, by which they can inflame the minds of the people.

Eighth Cause.

THE UNION.

In introducing this very important subject as a cause of civil disturbance, I do not so much consider it's present effect, as that which is likely to occur in future. Hitherto I have employed my pen with temper, I hope, as well as true patriotism, in endeavouring to remove the causes, which make property and even life insecure in Ireland; but I should not think the duty completed, if I omitted any means which would be likely to prevent them in future. As yet, the fate of the Union, as a measure,

sure, has been very singular; it's partizans in Ireland are extremely few; it's opponents consist of the Protestants*, Catholics, and Presbyterian sects, who felt their degradation, yet submitted to it because all equally suffered; they received that sort of satanic satisfaction from it, which the sailor experienced who blew up the ship and himself in order to destroy the captain.

For once that unworthy maxim of divide and conquer succeeded, and the Union, which five years before could not have been mentioned, was carried with very little trouble.

But as it is now notorious, that the measure was carried through Parliament by a very impudent abuse of influence, and a very *bare* majority, as the sentiments of the people were not consulted by the common decent appeal of a dissolution of Parliament, and as it is well known that a very great majority of the nation were averse to the measure, and the ministry only suffered it as a remedy for temporary evils; is there not a chance, that when these temporary evils subside, and when the good sense of the Irish nation shall weaken the effect of religious distinctions, is there not a certainty, that the honourable sentiment of national independence† will revive?

If there is, then it will be wise, before the British ministry grow old in their affection for the measure, to consider well it's real importance, that they may not risk a useless struggle, if the object is not worth it.

I am still more tempted to this discussion, because I think no public measure was ever treated

* Protestant, here and elsewhere in this work, is used as synonymous with Church of England, the members of this Church employing this term to distinguish themselves as well from Dissenters as from Catholics.

† The reader must be reminded, that by the word independence is only meant an independent Legislature.

with reasoning so little to the purpose, both as to it's good or evil effects, as the Union.

The principal argument by which it was supported, was that drawn from the evident advantage of a free trade between England and Ireland.

In considering the merits of any measure, we ought carefully to distinguish it's annexed and accidental effects from it's necessary effects; for it is by the latter alone that it's utility must be decided.

When ministers sent a very inadequate force to attack Egypt, and yet the expedition succeeded owing to the unforeseen incapacity of the French General Menou; still the want of wisdom in the plan remains as evident as before, since the success of the expedition was by no means the *necessary* effect of the means taken to secure it.

In the same manner the freedom of Irish trade was merely an accidental and annexed, not a necessary effect of a Union; it might have existed without a Union; it might not have existed with a Union. The same national spirit which procured the extension, might have asserted the freedom of Irish trade, though the Union had never existed.

There was a degree of impertinence, as well as duplicity, in those writers who held forth the freedom of trade, as a bribe to the Irish to sacrifice their independence; the freedom of trade was not more desirable to Ireland than to England; it could not be considered as a boon from one party to the other; it was a mutual benefit, a wise compromise of petty interests, which was equally advantageous to both.

The next argument in favour of the Union was the security it would give to the property of the Protestants.

But this security might have been more perfectly produced, by assimilating the Catholics entirely with the Protestants; and to this measure recourse

must be had at last, with or without a Union. The security of property afforded by the Union is at best but imperfect; as Ireland is just as much at the mercy of internal treason, and foreign force, as it was previous to the Union. All the difference that this measure has had upon the security of Ireland is, that we must now wait ten days to suspend the Habeas Corpus act, and place the country under martial law, when formerly it might have been done in two.

At best this is no argument to the Catholics, the majority of the nation.

“ Oh! but, (it was said) the Union gives an opportunity of emancipating the Catholics without risk.”

But the opportunity has never been taken. And after all, the Catholics might have been emancipated, if there never had been a Union, not only without risk, but with a certainty of increased security.

Another argument for the Union was, the supposed danger of differences arising between the two Legislatures, which might either produce a rupture between the two countries, or might weaken them in case of the attack of a foreign power.

In the first place, I reply, that so far from any danger being apprehended from the perversity of the Irish Parliament, it's noted subserviency to the Crown was brought forward as a capital accusation against it when it's overthrow was preferred*.

Secondly, the danger to Ireland which would arise from any difference with England, in case of a foreign war, would be so great, that the conduct of England must be very intolerable, to suppose such an event. A common executive is all that is required to give the federal system as much force

* I do not notice the difference at the time of the regency; differences, which might have been prevented by an act of Parliament, cannot be brought as reasons for a Union.

and security as the system of united empire ; having this, and the power of declaring war, I cannot see what additional advantage arises from the Union. Where an Irish parliament would have been refractory, it is reasonable to suppose the Irish nation will be now ; and which danger is most to be deprecated ?

The last argument of any importance in favour of the Union was, that Ireland would be better governed, and that the predominant influence of the Protestant party would be done away *. Experience proves the contrary. All the local evils which arise from Government have been considerably aggravated ; the countries are so physically as well as morally separated, that a tyrannical or precipitate law passed against Ireland is not felt as any precedent to be applied in England ; and the English parliament have no jealousy or apprehension of it's consequences. Thus martial law has been proclaimed, and the Habeas Corpus act, that is the liberty of the country, has been suspended, without a single regular document having been laid before parliament, without the smallest assurance that the causes of the late insurrection should be inquired into. As to the party influence of the Protestants, it has rather increased, and must necessarily do so.

The English ministry have no sort of knowledge of affairs in Ireland ; to acquire it, they send over a lord lieutenant and secretary as ignorant as themselves. These men naturally, on their arrival, fall into the society of the higher ranks in Dublin, who constitute the heads of the Protestants, of the

* The surrender of political rights to a foreign power for the sake of improving domestic government, calls to mind the Pelew islanders, who jump into the sea to shelter themselves from a shower of rain. When the English ministry proposed the Union to the Irish, they seemed to have been impressed with a very just reliance on the national propensity to make bulls.

Orange men, of that very party whose intolerance and tyranny have ruined the country. Hence, all the information, all the projects of the Lord Lieutenant and his Secretary; hence, all the information and projects of the British minister. When there was an Irish parliament, it had, at least, this advantage, it contained men who knew, and who would speak the truth, but now it is not even known; the Roman Catholics dare not speak; the Presbyterians dare not speak; and the Lord Lieutenant and his Secretary find it an easier task passively to believe the misrepresentations of their boon companions, than to question merchants and shopkeepers. What can an English opposition do for Ireland? The deepest groan which suffering wrings from that unhappy country, scarcely vibrates on the English shore. Middlesex might be alarmed, if such were the fate of Yorkshire; but Ireland forms no precedent for Middlesex, scarcely more than Jamaica*.

In fact, the Union, considered distinctly from the increased freedom of trade, has not been productive of one good effect either to Ireland or England; it has not removed a single previous discontent, while it has added a general and perpetual cause for future discontents among the numerous class of Irish, who were averse to the measure.

The Presbyterians are, morally speaking, the most powerful and respectable body of men in Ireland; they were precipitated into the late rebellion from the despair of obtaining their favourite

* It requires a nicer discernment to distinguish differences in degree, than differences in kind, although they are just as real; the shades between white and black are less distinguishable than the difference between black and yellow. Hence puzzle-headed people saw no difference between St. George's Channel and a canal; and concluded that Ireland might as well be governed by a parliament sitting in Middlesex as Yorkshire.

measure, a reform in parliament. Do ministers really suppose, that the eyes of these men will be so easily blinded by political juggling, as to accept with pleasure an Imperial Parliament, resident in London, composed of four hundred and fifty unreformed English and Scotch representatives, and one hundred reformed Irish representatives, as a substitute for a pure representation, chosen from Irishmen by Irishmen, and resident in Ireland? The English wilfully deceive themselves; their pride will not allow them to perceive the truth—this great truth respecting Ireland, that it is not the influence of religious distinctions alone, it is not the influence of Catholic discontent, or Catholic bigotry alone, that will account for the disposition to rebel, and the formidable appearance of rebellion in Ireland. A large, a very large portion of the effect must be referred to a just and angry detestation of English influence and government, which is spread among all ranks and religions, but particularly among the Presbyterians, and which has arisen from the striking and pernicious effect, which the intrigues of the British cabinet have had upon the liberties of Ireland. The remedy of this estrangement would have consisted in the English Government frankly surrendering their influence, and reforming the Irish parliament; but to remove the jealousy of English influence, by removing the seat of government to England, is like an old method of curing a man of a fever by baking him in an oven.

The reasoning and the practice of the Union was very like a transaction in mon oncle Thomas.

A grenadier sold his son's teeth to a dentist: the only difficulty was to persuade the child to part with them. The contracting parties took the favourable opportunity of a severe fit of the tooth-ach, and reasoned the matter thus: "This tooth-
"you are going to have drawn gives you a great
"deal

“deal of pain; all the rest will decay in their turn,
“and give you as much pain; therefore, while you
“are about it, you had better have them all drawn
“at once.”—“Oh, but,” replied the child, “how
“shall I be able to chew my victuals?”—“That is
“easily settled,” says the father, “I will chew them
“for you.”

The English have the disposition of a nation accustomed to empire; any thing that compromises their own dignity appears quite out of the question. But the dignity of any other nation never makes an obstacle to their measures, either in theory or practice; else I should ask, if the Union were meant as an equal or fair measure, why should not the seat of government have been in Ireland as well as in England: or why not alternately in the one and in the other? If it be an object of little importance, why not concede the possession of our share of it to us? If it be an object of great importance, why should we surrender it to you? Oh, but you reply, if it be necessary that one part of the representation should join the other, it is easier for one hundred Irish members to take the journey, than for five hundred English. Yes, if it is necessary that the junction should be made; but we could have very well spared it; and if it was necessary to you only, surely we ought not to have the worst of the bargain. To me the Government appears so entirely subservient to the nation, that if I thought it would benefit Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, to become alternately the seat of Government, I should think very little of the personal inconvenience of the members of the House of Commons, or House of Lords.

But even allowing the Union to have produced all the advantages that were attached to it; allow that it necessarily gave freedom to commerce, diminished the risk of separation, quieted religious rancour, and civil dissensions, put an end to the danger
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of fatal wars between the two countries, any thing that you please to exaggerate or invent, still there is an evil arising from this Union, which is paramount to any advantages it can possibly afford. Let us drop the particular instance of England and Ireland, consider the subject more generally, and this will immediately appear.

When you wish to prove the absurdity of any theory, you must frequently have recourse to an absurd instance. I shall therefore make no excuse for framing one which is, fortunately, neither very practical nor very probable.

I will suppose, which is perhaps the case, that Bonaparte wishes to realize the project of Anacharsis Cloots, and unite all Europe under his own government. Suppose he began with the union of France and England; he would be able to urge exactly the same arguments, with much greater force, that were made use of for the Irish union. The liberty of trade, which is much more wanting; the extinction of wars which are sufficiently frequent between England and France; the abolition of parties in England, and the tranquillization of Ireland; he would be more bountiful to you, than you have been to Ireland; he would very willingly leave you your parliament, as he has done in Piedmont; he would only ask you to make him King, and give him leave to reside in Paris. Now why should these arguments, which you thought sufficient to justify a union between Ireland and England, why should they not be sufficient to justify a union between France and England? or, what distinction, except the powerful one, of "I won't," which the Irish could not use, will you show, to prove that, in similar instances, similar arguments will not hold good? To say that it is impracticable and improbable, is nothing to the purpose; I never said it

was otherwise : the question is, would it be useful ? You might perhaps say, nature has assigned limits to each country; and of course to their communication; and hence different habits and manners have taken place, different laws, and mutual antipathies; but all this was urged by the Irish, and in their instance, treated as trifles, light as air. Might not Bonaparte say, " Why should there be any more difference between France and England, than between Yorkshire and Middlesex? and the sooner the manners and laws of the two countries are assimilated and their antipathies cease, the better."

Even suppose you can advance more objections, drawn from local differences, still it is not sufficient that they should be objections, (there are objections to the wisest plans); they must counterbalance the advantages on the opposite side; and these advantages are so great, nothing less than the extinction of war, and consequent diminution of great military establishments, and heavy taxes, the freedom of trade, and an incalculable increase of wealth arising from it, that there can be no doubt that objections derived from mere local pride, prejudice, and antipathies, must be considered as nothing, compared with them.

Yet in spite of these plausible reasons, every Englishman would feel indignant at such a proposal; and so did every real Irishman, at the proposal of the Irish Union; and they felt it with justice, and with equal justice. Fortunately, nature does not always trust the guidance of men's conduct to the slow and metaphysical precepts of reason. There are instincts which will be obeyed, even before they can be justified. We resent a blow without any calculation; and every generous man would feel stung with the degradation of his country, though he could not tell you why, or wherefore.

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But there is, in fact, a reason why every Englishman should spurn at being amalgamated with France though France could pour into England's lap the treasure of the world; but it is no paltry, peddling, local reason; it does not allow one limit of aggression in France, and another in England; but in all ages, in all countries, in France as well as in England, in Brabant, Piedmont, and Geneva, as well as Ireland, it proves the surrender of national honour to be as pernicious as it is base.

This reason is grounded principally on two circumstances:

First: The human mind and heart are of very limited capacity, and cannot be extended to objects at a considerable distance; they naturally attach themselves to those which, being more immediately within their reach, excite them to more powerful emotions. Hence the interests of distant countries are regarded with indifference; and hence the force of local interests and attachments. In a large state, the distant parts will feel but a weak interest in, and attachment to the Government, compared with that which takes place in small states; and on the contrary, the Government will attend very little to the local interests of the distant parts. For a stronger reason, a small state, when united to a larger state, will feel little common interest with it; and the larger state will feel still less for the smaller.

In nations, as in individuals, the more extended the sphere of action the less vigorous the effort; and as liberty depends not so much on the good or evil intentions of Governments, as on the resistance of the people to oppression, in small states every rampart against tyranny will be found better guarded than in great states; the distance between the governors and the governed is lessened; public opinion has more force; public enterprise more union; the dependence

dependence of the Government on the people is evident and acknowledged*.

The second circumstance is this: The wealth of countries is always found to vary with the nature of the Government, in this proportion; that according as the people derive importance from their Government, they are wealthy: according as they derive contempt from their Government, they are poor.

The desire of gaining wealth arises intirely from a decent pride, which inspires us with the wish to appear respectable in the eyes of our neighbours.

Now both this decent pride in the individual, and this standard of respect in society, will vary according to the degree of importance which the people receive from their Government.

Most men naturally depend upon the opinion of others for the degree of respectability they attach to themselves; if they live under an oppressive Government, where their political importance is nothing, their personal importance will also be nothing; that standard of respectability which is necessary to secure them from the contempt of their equals will be very low. It will not be held disgraceful to live in a mud cabin, without a chimney, to feed on garbage, to wear rags, and go without shoes and stockings; the shame of poverty being once extinguished, there is no longer an incitement to rouse man from indolence to industry.

* An act for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act would always be passed with more indifference in Scotland than in England, and with still more in Ireland than in Scotland. Indeed, it may be said to have been suspended in Ireland with perfect indifference, as the Imperial Parliament did not think it worth while to enquire into the expediency of it. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and the proclamation of Military law in Ireland, are like Dr. Sangrado's pair of remedies for all kinds of disorders.

On the contrary, under a free Government, where even the peasant is called upon to discharge important functions; where his spirit is elevated by the protection of equal laws, the idea of his personal respectability will be increased; the same effect will take place throughout society, the standard of respectability will be raised high; a bad house, bad fare, will become a reproach; and the want of shoes and stockings will be so shameful, that even beggars will wear them.

Where an oppressed people have broken the chains of a foreign power, and established a free and independent Government, the progress from personal importance, derived from their Government, to great wealth, created in compliance to a high standard of national respectability, is rapid and certain. The prosperity of Holland, the richest country in the world, is a decisive instance.

National dignity, then, derived from pride in a free Government, and importance given by a participation in it's functions, is the great source of national wealth; and, on the contrary, national degradation, arising from a want of sympathy or interest in a Government, is the origin of national poverty.

This is our great conclusion; and we may add, as a corollary, that in proportion as states are small, their Governments will be free, and the sympathy of their subjects in them great.

Accident and local circumstances may assist; security of property, and freedom of trade, may be necessary to the developement of industry and wealth; but national dignity is their great vivifying principle.

Keeping, then, the benefits of a free trade distinct from the question of the Union, Ireland cannot but suffer by the loss of it's political importance. The English Government is too distant, too adverse an idea to give dignity to the Irish nation.

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The Irish already suffer the penalty of their own contempt, and the contempt of all the world, for the surrender of their legislative Government. Under the stigma of so damning a mark, their national dignity can never rise high, and the progress of their wealth must be very slow. National honour is as real a principle as personal honour; and I should as soon expect great virtue from a man who had been pulled by the nose, as great industry in a nation that had surrendered it's political importance.

Even allowing that the prosperity of Ireland will advance with the general progress of Europe, still; I ask, why should she resign the hope of that great prize, of that high state of cultivation and happiness, which her local circumstances seem to promise, but which never can be obtained, except where national importance gives to the national character that dignity and consequence, which will use all efforts rather than stoop to poverty, to shame, and degradation.

And why should England exact this sacrifice? or why wear a jealous or oppressive countenance towards Ireland? The local situation of Ireland and England, opposed to a great continent, must make their political interests always the same. Their mutual trade is a home trade; the wealthier each is, the better customers they will be to one another; their commercial interests must be one and the same too. Why, then, should not the English administration dismiss all idle jealousy, and feeling it their interest, use also their best endeavours to make Ireland not only as prosperous as England, but as prosperous as she can be made? Why exact from her so galling a sacrifice as her independence; a sacrifice which, under similar, or any circumstances, no Englishman would endure to make to France? Are the English to be the exclusive possessors of
national

national honour? Are Englishmen to have the right to desolate the world with war, on the bare suspicion of an insult to their national honour? And yet Irishmen must be supposed blind to their interests, when the very fountain of their national honour is for ever drained, if they are heard to murmur.

You tell us to interest ourselves in the glory of the English Government; we tell you we cannot. Why? Because we cannot love our stepmother as our mother. Could you, under the same circumstances, feel what you require for France? On the contrary, in spite of yourselves, you despise us; we despise one another; as Irishmen we are the contempt of the world. You told us we should be rich, we are far poorer. You said we should be tranquil, our civil commotions are greater than ever. You said our religious distinctions should cease, they have acquired new rancour. You said English capital should go to Ireland; on the contrary, all the capital of Ireland is drawn to England. Give us, then, back our independence; hunt our trade from your ports; that national spirit which lightened it's shackles can assert it's freedom; leave us to our rebellions, the courage that repressed them once can repress them again; take back the lenitives you would apply to our religious distinctions, we shall not always be bigots, but shall one day acknowledge the maxim, that by removing religious distinctions we remove religious animosities. These are evils that time and experience will remedy, and we might yet be a happy and a wealthy people; but if you destroy the principle of national honour, you destroy the very principle of wealth and happiness, and our misery will be such as our baseness deserves, our poverty as complete as your narrow jealousy could desire.

I am aware that this language will be thought
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the exaggerated expression of mistaken patriotism. It is not. The present situation of Ireland amply justifies it. If the gratification of decent pride be the great source of happiness and wealth, then are the Irish, as far as Government operates, deprived of happiness and wealth. A sensible difference has taken place in the national character; from being patriotic, high spirited, and generous, the Irish are become selfish, abject, and mercenary; they have no longer a respect for each other; their homes are no longer homes; that respectability of character, which attaches importance and content to the idea of what is our own, is entirely unknown to them; and they prefer a paltry lodging in London, and a transient glance at the refuse of English society, to the noble mansions where their fathers were the centre of hospitality, and the objects of gratitude and esteem. The finest seats in Ireland are now laid waste, the houses deserted, the trees felled. Why? Because what is thought of these things in Ireland is no longer of any consequence, as long as it is not known at a London route. To be praised by men devoid of importance is of little moment; and hence the great stimulus to national improvement is done away.

When Ireland acquired it's independence under the auspices of Mr. Fox, the Irish learnt to respect each other; public applause became the great spur to patriotic efforts.

It is an unnoticed, but it is a very striking and important effect, which was produced immediately on the declaration of independence; the great capitalists seemed inspired with a new character; every gentleman built a palace, and surrounded it with a Paradise; the before forgotten peasantry became objects of benevolence; their houses were made more convenient, their wages raised; agriculture was created, and new enterprise given to

commerce.

commerce. No expression can convey an idea of the improvement which took place in Ireland immediately on the developement of it's national dignity*. But there remains another very material question. Would this be for the interest of England? I have little doubt but it would.

I shall take for granted, that if the Roman Catholics were placed on an equal footing with the Protestants, there would be an end to all formidable rebellions. We will suppose, under these circumstances, the parliament of Ireland restored, and placed out of the reach of intrigue or corruption. In this case, I know not a single source of jealousy, which could arise between the two countries; and the natural influence of their mutual interests would then have full liberty to operate, and would produce a moral union of much more durability and importance than the present political union. The strength of Ireland, instead of being an aid to France, would then become the strength of England; and this being the case, it must be the interest of England, that the independence of Ireland should be restored, which we have shown would be the means of multiplying her wealth and resources, far, far beyond what she can ever attain in a dependent state. A common executive is all that is necessary, to secure the two countries from mutual war or hostile invasion; and if England would but grant to Ireland a reformed parliament, that should administer with integrity her domestic affairs, Ireland would readily accede to England the right of directing the external relations common to the two countries.

* If these arguments are just, it follows, that it would be for the interest of Ireland to regain her independence; but particularly so, if it was conceded to her with the additional advantages of a reformed parliament, and a better regulated mode of elections.

The last and conclusive reason why it would be for the interest of England to restore Ireland her independence is, that she might get rid of the Irish members, who now sit in the English House of Commons.

This body of men clearly show the inconvenience of a representation very remote from the centre of Government. At a distance from their friends and acquaintance, who are little interested, and know little of what passes, and unacquainted themselves with the world around them, they receive no check upon their conduct from public opinion; without connections, without local consequence, and very hopeless of attracting respect by their personal qualities, they have no way left to attain any respectable settlement in any country foreign to them, but by pinning their consequence to the court. Their estates necessarily suffer by their absence; the journey to London is expensive; the expenses when they arrive there quite disproportioned to those their habits have been formed on; their money (for though the kingdoms are united, the Banks are not) is drawn over at a heavy loss. Can we wonder, that with so many excellent reasons, to indemnify themselves for the original cost of becoming legislators, they should take the means customary on such occasions?

I do not say the Irish members are bought; there is so much voluntary subservience to ministers in the home market, that the foreign article is now a drug; but I say that the Irish members, generally speaking, will always be found ready to sell themselves, whenever they are worth buying. The chance of a successful opposition being ever formed to the incroaching power of ministers had become extremely doubtful, but since the introduction of the Irish members such an event is quite impossible. The liberties of England suffered much
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by Scotch representation; the Irish Union has givenⁿ the coup de grace; and if a majority in parliament always ready to follow any minister, or enact any measures, be an advantage, our prosperity is not insecure. This, probably, will be no reason to any minister that England is likely to have, for restoring the independence of Ireland.

There is a half measure which would have somewhat of the same good effect, that might be more palatable; it is what I have already proposed, the introduction of a degree of municipal government in the different counties of Ireland. The municipal offices would give a degree of political importance to the country at large, and would incline the country gentlemen to stay at home; and by making them elective, the petty tyranny exercised over the lower orders would be entirely removed. The same arguments which prove the utility of small independent states, prove the utility of municipal government, and *vice versa*. Wherever it has been tried, it has had the best effects; something of the kind already has place in Ireland, by the extensive power of grand juries, who can levy taxes for the improvement of roads, &c., and at present there is nothing in Ireland which attaches men of property to the country, but the interest they take in the affairs of these grand juries. There is no country in the world that has good cross roads and private roads, except Ireland; and why? Because they are under the direction of municipal government. Why, then, should we not expect the same good effect by placing all *local* concerns under the same municipal government? Canals, harbours, petty justice, arbitration, the care of minors, property in the county, registry offices, hospitals, charity schools; why should not these, and every interest merely local, be placed under the direction of a well cemented system of municipal

municipal government; which would not only conduct those affairs best which must be best understood by men on the spot, but would give to the people importance, and would win from them an interest in the Government at large?

If any one, hearing the vast variety of political controversy which employs society, imagines that it is conducted upon any rules of just reasoning, he must be very little aware of the imposing parade, which very disjointed corollaries receive from being well disciplined by the incessant exercise of a coterie or a party. The generality of reasoners may be divided into two classes; those who, being convinced of the advantages of a plan, will listen to no objections against it; and those who, being convinced of the objections to a plan, will listen to none of it's advantages. But as the reasonableness of any measure can only be deduced from the *balance* of it's advantages and disadvantages, it is not surprising that the progress of practical political wisdom should be extremely slow.

I have yet another measure to propose for the general tranquillization of Ireland, which I allow is liable to objections; but I contend, that these are infinitely overbalanced by it's advantages. If the Union be persisted in, it would be a fair, politic, and not very inconvenient measure, for the Imperial Parliament to be held in Ireland once every three years. Do not voluntarily deceive yourselves. The discontents of the Roman Catholics are not the *only* cause of rebellion in Ireland. You may conciliate them as a sect, but they will continue to hate you as Irishmen. There is a more formidable party than the Roman Catholics in Ireland, which regards England with a jealous and indignant eye; it is the nation, it is the national feeling which, outraged and wounded, pervades all the Roman Catholics, all the Presbyterians, and all the enlightened and high

high spirited part of Churchmen; among the more enthusiastic, (imprudently I allow) it looks to an increase of liberty and independence, beyond what was known before the Union; among the more moderate, it regrets that portion of liberty and independence, which existed at the time the Union took place. The measure I propose would soothe the first party, and would intirely attach the last, which is the most numerous and most respectable. But till something is done to heal the wounded pride of the country, the removal of religious distinctions will only be a partial measure of conciliation; and I wish repeatedly to impress upon the mind of the public, that religious distinction, though itself a great cause, yet is a very small cause of discontent, when compared with the despair of a reform in parliament, which made half the nation enemies to the English Government; and the Union, which made the other half indifferent to it's support.

It would have been incredible, that a measure, so simple, easy, and effectual, as a participation in the seat of Government, as well as in it's representation, being granted to Ireland, should not have been discussed and adopted, if every event, and every day, did not afford a proof, how easily, in patriots, as well as ministers, in the self-appointed, as well as in the regularly designated guardians of the public good, the slightest private convenience overbalances the greatest public interest. When public duty is the only motive, the great, the disinterested virtues, are found to be the creatures of imagination; and all that is practically useful in the science of politics is, to discover and explain those public interests, that favour the mean passions and narrow interests of gross selfishness. If a nation ever had a heart, then would the English no longer treat the Irish as rebels, no longer consider them as objects of con-

tempt, except when they became objects of terroure; no longer dispose of the subject of their grievances without sympathy or examination; but the whole English people, feeling the deep stain on their name, which the conduct of the English in Ireland had imprinted, the English ministers as principals, the English parliament as accessories to that long, unbroken tissue of outrage, to the monstrous blot in the monstrous history of European cabinets, would, by a sudden visitation of a stricken conscience, by one general impulse, by one general movement, break forth into cries of compunction; and as they have haughtily inflicted and derided, so would they lowly demand a generous pardon from their victims, and by an instant concession of all the rights which Irishmen ought to require, endeavour to win the reconciliation which they do not merit.

CONCLUSION.

ALTHOUGH these plans for the better administration of Ireland have been drawn with a very rapid hand, and from the necessary limits of this kind of pamphlet, are rather hints, somewhat crude and ill connected, than a well digested system; yet any mind, tolerably versed in political speculations, will discover their tendency, and perceive the very great improvement that would proceed from their execution; even if they will not justify the importance attributed to them, still, as far as they operate, something would be gained.

But if we contrast their probable effects with the effects of the present administration of affairs in Ireland, they must be very bad not to appear preferable. If we except the colony of St. Domingo,
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I do not think that any nation possesses a district more miserable in itself, and more likely to exhaust the strength and resources of the Government than Ireland.

Miserable is by no means an exaggerated expression, applied to the general condition of the Irish, even considering them individually. There are two conditions essential to happiness. First, a certain degree of respectability and elevation of mind, which are necessary to produce personal self complacency. Secondly, political security sufficient to remove from the mind all apprehensions respecting life and property. If a man labours under his own contempt, or that of the world at large, or if his property and life are in continual danger, he may be insensible, but he cannot be happy. This, however, is the lamentable state of all the Irish. The peasantry are despised and brutally treated by all parties, and all sects; the Roman Catholics have all the degraded and abject features of a sect disowned and oppressed by the Government, and consequently condemned by society. Add, that now there is not a Roman Catholic in Ireland, who does not feel himself at the mercy of ministers, by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act; and there can be no doubt, that both as a sect, and as individuals, they are sufficiently miserable.

And what is the state of the ruling party, the Churchmen, the Orange men, the great and little landed proprietors? To appearance, they are full of confidence; but it is like the man that talks loud in the dark, in hopes of banishing his fears. Could we read their minds when alone, or on their pillow, we should find them harrassed with dreams of sudden massacre; with anxiety for the fate of their families, with apprehensions for the loss of their property. Is this state happiness?

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As to the Government, Ireland is a most important detriment; and it were better that it were buried in the sea, than retained in it's present state. It is doubly a source of weakness; it requires an immense force for it's defence; and if the present measures be continued, it will soon be an addition to the strength of France.

There can be as little doubt that if the French landed in any considerable force in Ireland they would succeed, as there is, that if they landed in England they would fail. England has the paramount advantage of a popular Government; her whole force is disposable; and that force is the entire nation. There are no parties to be guarded against at home; no insurrections to be apprehended; nothing to divert the smallest part of the military force from opposing the enemy.

But in Ireland the case is exactly the reverse. I grant, (for it is my own opinion) that the people would not join the French on landing; they are become too prudent; but what is the same thing, they would be every where prepared to join them. Ireland would resemble a weak, extensive fortress, where every point is exposed, and every point must be guarded; the garrison must be immense, the disposable force would be nothing. In case of invasion, there would be no appearance of internal insurrection; but there would not be a post or pass, a town or village, that would not require troops to watch the motions of the peasantry. The moment the troops left any part, there would be rumours of a rising; the terrified Protestants would weary the Government for protection; here and there a murder would take place, and give strength to their remonstrances; the troops would return; the main force would be weakened; and the rebels, if there were any, would go to some part of the country not so well guarded. This is
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the best point of view. But, in fact, though no general insurrection would take place, there would be partial disturbances wherever the military were not in force; these would increase by impunity or partial successes; and the main army, instead of acquiring force to march against the enemy, would be constantly frittered away on the duty of posts and garrisons.

We saw a striking instance of this, even where there were no actual disturbances, but only the apprehension of them, when the French landed at Killala; the numbers were very insignificant, and yet they paraded through the country for many weeks, before Lord Cornwallis could even collect an army to march against them.

The present crude and impolitic war was clearly undertaken without the smallest consideration of the state of Ireland; unless ministers seriously wished to try the minimum of wisdom, with which the foreign relations of the British empire might be conducted. On one side of the die, was the gain of Malta; on the other, the loss of Ireland; yet the desperate hazard suggested no precaution, no delay, though ministers had the inestimable advantage of choosing their own time. Weak heads find it an easier task to determine desperately, than to calculate wisely.

A mind of no very great capacity, a heart but moderately endued with the feelings of humanity, must survey with wonder and grief the disregard of public prosperity, the devastation of private happiness in Ireland, which have waited on the measures of the British cabinet. We see the ultimate effects; fanaticism, anarchy, rebellion. We see, too, the secondary causes; religious intolerance, and civil oppression. But where are we to look for the mind possessed of such inflexible stupidity, and the heart so hard, so bigoted, as to support and
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perpetuate this system of fanaticism, which is as odious in it's execution as disastrous in it's effects?

One cannot conceive what personal interest can be so adverse to the interest of the public; and where no personal interest interferes, one would imagine that any man would prefer being the cause of unanimity and happiness, rather than of rancour and misery.

It has been the fashion lately, to ridicule those benevolent feelings, which sympathise in the weal and woe of mankind at large; yet, without any violent sensibility, a man would suppose that scenes of content and happiness would be pleasant to the eye, and grateful to the heart; and we might at least expect, when public measures were productive of disaster, that the men in whom they originated would hesitate and reflect, before they staked their reputation and consistency on the prosecution of a defective system.

But it is a dispiriting task to endeavour to interest English ministers, an English parliament, I had almost added, English patriots, in the welfare of Ireland; the present apprehension of it's loss gives it a momentary importance; but, in general, the affairs of Ireland are considered, not only with indifference, but contempt; and in spite of the fiat of a legislative Union, the nations, in fact, remain as severed and distinct in their local interests and feelings as in their geography.

But I would repeat again to the remnant of that once important class of men, the Irish country gentlemen, that neither their dignity, their interest, nor their happiness, can ever consist in setting themselves up as a party, opposed to the mass of the peasantry, and the majority of the nation. Their true and natural station is, to be the protectors of their tenantry and peasantry; to enlighten their ignorance; to soften their prejudices; to repress, but not to persecute,

persecute, either their civil or political offences. But above all situations, the situation of a country gentleman is most dignified and respectable, when he stands forward incapable of a bribe, and above the influence of any minister or party, a sure and immovable defence of liberty and property, a guarantee of public right, the pride and local protector of his own immediate neighbourhood. But when country gentlemen, by any unnatural bias, are led to quit their true station; when, instead of being the security of the peasantry, they become their terror; when instead of a barrier to the ambitious views of Government, they are reduced to throw themselves upon its discretion, and become its instruments; such a reverse might have been unavoidable, may be necessary; but still it is a reverse; still it is pregnant with insecurity, with incomparable degradation. Oh! do not lightly acquiesce in it, but examine what are the causes, what the circumstances, that led to it; and if more enlightened views, more prudent councils, more temperate measures, can make this unnatural thralldom dispensable; make such views, such councils, such measures, all your own; they must, they will reconcile all interests; religious rancours will cease, political animosities will be composed, the poor man will be contented in his cabin, the rich man will be secure and respected in his palace. I appeal to the goodness of God, that religious bigotry, that stern uncompromising rigour, that insolence, intolerance, and terror, are not the means ordained to stifle the remembrance of injuries, and the regrets of equal rights; to soften the discordance of religious differences, and tranquilize the irritated phrenzy of popular discontents.

NOTES.

No. I.

ON CONFISCATION OF PROPERTY, AND THE CONDUCT OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN.

IT is extremely impolitic in established governments ever to countenance confiscation of property. It is clearly the interest of all men of property, to inculcate a superstitious dread of violating private property, which must always weaken their own security. The general rule, that property should be preserved inviolate, is of so much consequence to them, that no circumstances can afford an exception, which it would be their interest to acknowledge. If the English parliament saw their real interest, they would abolish all confiscation of property, which did not come under the head of restitution; they would particularly avoid attaching this punishment to political offences, as it affords a too convenient precedent to revolutionary governments to adopt the same species of violence, to which they are always sufficiently inclined. The instance of Lord E. FITZGERALD was the most inexcusable error of this kind, that was ever committed by any legislature; independent of its bad policy, it was repugnant to the best and most established rules of justice, as Lord EDWARD died before he could be brought to trial; and the Irish parliament were atrocious enough to establish a species of confiscation, which, under similar circumstances; a Nero, or a Caligula, would have forborn. If England be blessed with a parliament, which does not act from the dictates of a minister, but from those of clear justice and common humanity, it will restore to Lord E. FITZGERALD's children the property most unrighteously withheld from them.

It is not less impolitic in revolutionary governments to adopt measures of confiscation, or to give the slightest shock to the security of property. A great change of government always produces sufficient alarm; to accelerate
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this alarm by violent interruptions to the usual circulation of capital, at once destroys the sources of wealth and public credit.

There are strong arguments which may be urged to revolutionary governments, to induce them to forbear violating the security of property.

The apprehension of confiscations is extremely unfavourable to the cause of liberty. Men of property are naturally friends to liberty; for, in free countries, their property is more secure and more productive. But when they find the partizans of liberty more inimical to the security of property than the most tyrannical governments, they prefer compromising with the certain but slow progress of arbitrary power, rather than trust to the sweeping measures of experimental politics. That party in a country which supports the cause of freedom ought to be careful to soothe the jealous spirit of property. When this feels itself secure, it is the mild source of national prosperity; but when under the influence of alarm, it is blind, intemperate, and ferocious. Add, too, that it has proved its power and influence to be far beyond what political calculators ever suspected. It may be taken by surprise, as was the case in France; but when once on it's guard, it is almost an invincible opponent, and is quite as enterprising, and far better disciplined in it's tactics, than revolutionary enthusiasm. We may almost predict, that no future revolution will take place in Europe in favour of liberty, unless it has the sanction and assistance of the monied and landed interest.

The successful stand which the comparatively insignificant body of Irish yeomen have made against the superior physical force of the Irish revolutionists, is sufficient evidence of the energy of the spirit of property; and, at the same time, the yeomen afford as strong an instance of it's blindness, intemperance, and ferocity, when acting under the influence of alarm.

Revolutionary governments, from considerations of their own interest, ought to forbear the smallest confiscation; but if they had any real zeal for the welfare of mankind, their conduct would be formed on the maxim, that it is the duty of government to give security to private property; that it has no right, under any possible circumstances, to act as the proprietor of it. Even with respect to church lands, which are evidently the property of the state, it would be wise, as well as humane, to make no change during the lives

lives of the incumbents ; the spirit of prophecy is sympathetic throughout, and not very discriminately, the smallest change in the most unconnected parts is felt through the whole mass.

Impressed with such sentiments, it is impossible to view the leaders of the United Irishmen without mingled feelings of detestation and contempt. So far from seeking to soothe the fears of men of property, or secure the prosperity of the country by giving security to property, their regulations on this head were either alarmingly mysterious, or avowedly atrocious ; and the leaders of the last insurrection, in their celebrated proclamation, declared all property in a state of suspension ; no leases, covenants, or agreements, were to be made, till the pleasure of this embryo government was known, which announced it's despotic, puerile, impertinent intentions, with more dogmatism and intolerance than is usual in long established governments.

The projectors of revolutions are seldom men of much property ; they know that the secure and free enjoyment of the substantial comforts of life does not form their happiness, and they conclude, too hastily, that it does not form the happiness of other people ; otherwise it is quite incomprehensible, that while they are so zealous for personal security and freedom, they are at most cold friends to the freedom and security of property which are of equal, if not superior importance. A wise rebel would not threaten the person or property of his greatest enemy ; a wise revolutionist would forbear to injure them.

No. II.

ON THE SUSPENSION OF THE HABEAS CORPUS ACT.

The suspension of the Habeas Corpus act in Ireland is a very unwise measure, as it makes all men afraid to join in a petition. No one will venture to incur the displeasure of a Secretary, where the Secretary has such ample means of vengeance in his power. Thus, at the very time when it would be most important for Government to be made acquainted with the grievances of the people, all communication is cut off between the Government and the people.

The great danger of discontents in Ireland is, that there are no avowed leaders with whom it is possible to treat or compromise ; all is mysterious, deep, and incomprehensible ; and, in a moment, without any previous symptoms, every

every thing is placed at issue between the contending parties.

It would be very much for the advantage of Government, if they could tempt the discontented to adopt open and constitutional measures, instead of plots and insurrection; nothing would so much tend to this, as the right of petitioning being guarantied from all risk. The men of property in such meetings would gradually acquire an ascendancy and command, discontents would become less embittered and insurrections less intemperate and sanguinary.

No. III.

Though it is certainly wiser to pay the clergy of all sects, rather than to pay exclusively the clergy of one; yet it may be still a question, whether it would not be the wisest measure of all to pay none, but let the clergy be paid by the individuals who want their services. In general, all duties are best done where the profits depend upon how they are done; and I see no more reason for paying a body of clergymen by the state, than for paying a body of schoolmasters. Instruction is the profession of both. And can we hesitate for a moment in deciding who fulfil it best; those who are paid according to their deserts, and chosen by their employers, or those who are paid according to their interest, and are chosen by patrons? When the primitive ministers of the Gospel were paid in the first way, Christianity flourished; now they are paid in the latter, it is pretty stationary, if not on the decline.

No. IV.

Colonel Hutchinson, in the House of Commons, attributed the rebellions in Ireland to the poverty of the lower orders. This is the common mistake of accounting for effects by the secondary instead of the primary causes. The Irish are poor because their minds are depressed by tyranny, and their pride is not called forth by any interest or sympathy in the Government of their country. Bad government is the cause of poverty—poverty of rebellions; but to put an end to rebellions, it is in vain to try to enrich the people, unless you mend the Government.

Mr. Malthus, in his ingenious essay on population, appears to commit the same error, and to acquit governments of all effect in impoverishing their subjects; when, in fact,

bad government is the primary cause, increased population only the secondary cause of poverty. The Irish incur themselves with large families, because they have not that decent pride which will make them forego marriage rather than live and bring up their children like pigs; and they want this decent pride, because oppression and contumely have taught them to despise themselves. Education, and the love of refinement, may produce habits of economy among the upper ranks; but among the lower ranks, these never take place, except when the pride of the common people is awakened by the importance they feel in being the members of a well governed society, and that government being their own. They will never feel so much importance when ruled by a foreign government, however good, as in the government they call their own.

No. V.

It is a very singular fact, that the state of the peasantry, in Ireland has improved since the rebellion. Resistance, as it always does, has procured them more respect and better treatment. Those Squires, who were their worst oppressors, now wheedle them the most—from fear; and I know a Justice who was nearly being brought to trial for kicking a woman with child on the belly, who now pays a degree of court to the peasantry that is contemptible. The Irish peasantry have risen from the rank of slaves to that of enemies.

No. VI.

The introduction of the ballot for raising men for the militia and army of reserve shows how incapable an English parliament is of adapting its measures to the temper and habits of the Irish. The ballot is in England a most unjust and oppressive mode of levying the quota which each man ought to raise for the public service; but in Ireland it is doubly oppressive. In England, the farmer has a large share of the produce of his land, and can afford to find a substitute; but in Ireland, the farmer has a trifling share of the profits, and if drawn, must serve himself, while his stock must be sold under every disadvantage. In England a man has at least, the satisfaction of knowing the ballot is conducted fairly; but in Ireland there is no such confidence; every man who is drawn, imagines it to be from the spite of some country gentleman. My own bailiff

liff requested I would allow him to go to England, because he was sure Mr. ——— would have him drawn for the army of reserve. It was with considerable difficulty I convinced him that he would be dealt fairly with. There is no reason why the ballot should be used in Ireland, where men might be raised by county cess. The alarm that was created by the ballot for the army of reserve was very great; indeed so ill used have the peasantry been, that every new circumstance terrifies them. Property has been valued in Ireland, under the late act, with great rigour (in distant countries all harsh laws are executed with double harshness); and it is hard to persuade the poor Catholic tenants that it is not done with a view of seizing upon part.

No. VII.

I cannot omit a very noble instance of the great effect which kind treatment has upon the hearts of the Irish peasantry. In surveying the unvaried scene of unbending oppression and sanguinary resistance, our imagination is terrified, our sympathy exhausted; yet there is one little trait in the history of these times, which like the green Oasis in the mighty desert, affords refreshment to the heart, and proves that in mercy there is wisdom. It is the conduct of the Dean of Kilfenora* to his parishioners.

This gentleman possesses the living of Callan, one of the largest in Ireland. When the rebellion broke out, he had but just come to reside: and he found all the peasantry in his neighbourhood, as well as every other peasant in Ireland, deeply engaged in insurrection. By every kindness in his power, by persuasion, but most powerfully by *civility* to the meanest labourer, he gradually inspired them with confidence and esteem; he convinced them of the small hope and great peril of their enterprize; he assured them not only of just, but of respectful usage; finally, he gained the friendship of their priest. In one day six hundred rebels came to his house and surrendered their arms. Had these deluded people gone in the same manner to any other gentleman, they would have been strictly examined respecting their treasonable practices; would have been loaded with taunts and reproaches for the past, and threats for the future; and would have found so little temptation to return to their old habits of life, that, in a few days, half of them would have again joined the rebels.

* Dr. Stevenson.

Instead of this conduct, Dr. Stevenson assembled the party on his lawn, spread tables for the whole six hundred, entertained them with the true magnificence of Irish hospitality, conversed with them on indifferent subjects, and made the administering the oath of allegiance a kind of fete, rather than an emblem of victorious oppression. What has been the consequence? Ever since that day, (though the rebellion continued long after, and many insurrections have succeeded) not one of these reclaimed rebels has been even suspected of disloyalty; and by the continuance of the same humane and enlightened conduct, there is not a man in Ireland sleeps half so securely in his bed as the Dean of Kilfenora; there is not a parish in Ireland that can be called well affected, when compared with Callan.

Though a clergyman, a Protestant, and an Englishman, the dean has received that tribute of the poor man's gratitude, which is grateful even to the proud and wealthy; but which, as none in Ireland deserve, none receive. On his return from England last year, to Callan, the day was kept as a festival throughout the whole country; crowds thronged the roads, and greeted him with huzzas; while all the mountains around blazed with bonfires. It seems strange, that many Irish gentlemen try with equal earnestness to cultivate the affections of the peasantry, yet meet not with the same success. The Dean of Kilfenora is the only instance of complete success. The reason is this: that he is, in the best sense of the word, a gentleman; that is, he treats his inferiors, whatever their station, with civility and affability. This is the real secret of conciliating the Irish peasantry; it is not your money or your protection that will win their hearts, but the respectful kindness which removes from their minds the painful sense of degradation.

An Irish Squire, let his intentions be ever so good, destroys the effect of obligations by his manner of conferring them. But it is in vain to tell the Irish Squires to reform their manners towards the peasantry; manners are not to be moulded by wishes, they must be formed by circumstances. Make the gentry, in some measure, dependent on the peasantry; give to the peasantry more political importance, and you need not be afraid that they will be treated with insolence.

No.

No. VIII.

Annual, instead of septennial elections, would have a great effect in giving political importance to the peasantry; but elections produce so much tumult and disturbance, that it would be unwise to make them more frequent, unless the mode of election could be better arranged. There are two measures that would answer this purpose: first, to make the qualification necessary for voting at least twenty pounds a year; this is the worst. Or, secondly, to poll the whole population by the means of primary assemblies, making the body of the people choose intermediate electors, who should appoint the members of parliament. This appears much the best, as it gives the meanest person a participation in the government of his country, and yet not more than what he can claim from his station, at the same time that it puts an end to canvassing and bribery.

No. IX.

Lord Hardwicke has been violently blamed, and with great inconsistency, because he did not give credit to the reports of the late insurrection, and was taken by surprise. Not to believe in reports of insurrections, nor to dread rebels, till they actually make their appearance, is the genuine system of a good and lenient government, which is conscious that it has not inflicted wrong, or merited resistance. Such was the personal government of Lord Hardwicke; that it did not succeed, is not his fault, but the fault of the system which the English Government has pursued, and still pursues, towards Ireland. It is the villain that suspects; the upright man that considers; and instead of feeling the necessity of a defence, Lord Hardwicke ought to make it his boast, that he was taken by surprise.

No. X.

It is surprising with what avidity the romantic philippic of Emmet against the French has been received, as declaratory of the sentiments of the discontented party in Ireland; and how securely ministers repose on the belief, that the Irish do not wish for the assistance of the French. This shows how ignorant they are of the real state of
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 opinions

opinions in Ireland. Emmet certainly hated the French government, because it had conducted itself towards him and his friends with worse than coldness (a proof that Bonaparte was not so intent on war as was represented). Emmet spoke his real sentiments; but we have no proof that they extended much farther than himself and his immediate friends. On the contrary, the current mode of reasoning in Ireland on French assistance is this: Ireland is much more powerful in military resources than any country the French have yet invaded; a band of 300,000 peasantry, living sparingly, inured to hardship, fond of war; a country difficult to march through, and full of fastnesses, would certainly be great checks on French ambition. Independent of this, France cannot pour into Ireland, as into other countries, regular supplies of armies; the English fleets would be allies against the French, as much as the French would be against the English; and the French party would soon feel itself entirely dependent on the Irish party. In fact, the discontented in Ireland wear now a much more formidable appearance than ever; there is not a demagogue that is not an adept in revolutionary measures; there is not a peasant that does not know the deficiencies in military tactics that caused the failure of the last rebellion. Ask a Wexford mountaineer, why his party was defeated? He will tell you, because they embarrassed themselves with cannon; because they made stationary encampments; because they marched on the level country, instead of keeping the line of the mountains; and lastly, because they could not be brought to make night attacks on the regular troops. The disaffected in Ireland are doubly dangerous, because they do not appear so; they have learnt caution; they have learnt to wait for, and seize on opportunities. The war was a fair opportunity; and every Irish country gentleman must know, that the moment war was declared, treasonable intrigues resumed all their activity. Emmet, on his return from France, found the country ripe for revolution; he attempted it, and failed. The disaffected will now remain quiet till another opportunity occurs, till the French effect an invasion; then every hand will prepare its weapon; and in proportion to the embarrassment of Government, conspiracies and insurrections will multiply. And yet, will nothing open the eyes of the English Government to their
real

real danger? Will they maintain their wretched system of Irish politics, even at the hazard of national ruin? What, though the French have not sufficient naval force to aid the Irish rebels, this will not always be the case; some time or other, it may be ten years, or it may be twenty, the French will resume their naval equality; and if England does not alter her measures, Ireland will be the same disunited, disaffected country. But have not the English ministers yet dreamt of the effect of Ireland being conquered by the French? Are they not aware that a revolutionary Irish army, so far from being averse to second the designs of France, would receive, with a frenzied delight, the order to embark for the English coast? The memory of long sufferings; the sense of smarting under recent indignities; the hope for honour, for the first time, placed within their reach; the thirst for vengeance; their natural love of action and of peril, present a prospect of that dark and tardy retribution, which sometimes falls sudden and unheeded, on a nation's crimes. Why will the English ministers prefer making an enemy of Ireland (slave she cannot now be called) rather than attach her as a faithful ally? The interests of the countries are the same; the measures must be faulty which separate them. Ireland, that is the mass of its population and force, is hostile to England; the Union is a name, a sound, a fiction; there is no Union; the nominal Union is only an additional source of discord. Make a real Union, by removing all causes of discontent, and leaving the common interests of the two countries to operate.

THE END.

