

THE  
PROSPECT BEFORE US;

OR,  
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND  
ONE AND INDIVISIBLE.

Houses of the Oireachtas

THE  
PROSPECT BEFORE US;  
OR,  
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND  
ONE AND INDIVISIBLE:  
BEING

FREE THOUGHTS  
ON THE  
FIRST OF JANUARY, 1801.

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THO' YOUR PROGNOSTICKS RUN TOO FAST,  
THEY MUST BE VERIFY'D AT LAST.

SWIFT.

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D U B L I N:  
PRINTED FOR J. MILLIKEN, 32, GRAFTON-STREET.

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MDCCCI.

THE PROSPECT BEFORE US;

OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ONE AND INDIVISIBLE;

FREE RIGHTS

FIRST OF JANUARY 1801.

THEY HAVE ASSURED US FOR THE YEAR  
THAT THEY WILL BE MAINTAINED AT LAST.

DUBLIN.

PRINTED FOR J. MEEHAN, IN CROFTS-STREET.

TO  
HIS EXCELLENCY

THE

MARQUIS CORNWALLIS.

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MY LORD,

ACCEPT this small but honest  
Tribute of Respect.—Had *Tippoo-*  
*Sultan* followed your Lordship's  
Advice, and kept by the politi-  
cal Line your Wisdom and Libe-  
rality

rality pointed out, he would not  
 have become the Victim of *French*  
*Intrigue*; and while *we* adhere to  
 the UNION which your Adminis-  
 tration has happily accomplished,  
 we need not fear the Arts and  
 Machinations of that restless and  
 inveterate Foe to the British Em-  
 pire.

THAT your Lordship may live  
 long under the Shade of those  
 Laurels, which it has been your  
 Destiny to cultivate, not more by  
 War, than by *uniting twelve Mil-*  
*lions of your Fellow Creatures* in  
 the

the more glorious Consequences  
of *perpetual Peace*, is the Wish  
of every true Subject and honest  
Man in Ireland.

JANUARY I,  
1801.

THE

Houses of the Oireachtas

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THE  
PROSPECT BEFORE US, &c.

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I CANNOT but regard Ireland as a ship happily escaped from the destroying fury of a political hurricane: She was nearly wrecked upon the quicksands of treason; and, if she had not been towed off by a sounder and more powerful vessel, she must have struck, and gone to pieces.

It is to congratulate the crew on their timely deliverance, that I call their attention to this first day of their emancipation from the thralldom of faction. The shackles of restraint are struck off, and the political jugglers, no longer capable of imposing upon the common sense of the country,

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are

are left to the melancholy task of reflecting upon their virtuous endeavours to hoodwink a whole people, and impose upon their abused vision the daub and frippery of *French fraternity* for the dignity and congregated beauty of the BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

IN the progress of this little tract, I shall not be able to avoid touching upon PARTY; but it shall not be with a rancorous or malevolent spirit; it shall be with a philosophic view to the end that party would establish; and I think I shall prove to the judgment of every deliberate and unprejudiced man, that the GREAT MEASURE which marks its birth from this day was not only become necessary for PROTESTANT security, but for the peace, the property, the improvement, the security, and social happiness of the WHOLE community.

I ENTIRELY embrace the sentiment recently expressed by Mr. Sheridan in the British House of Commons:—"Now," said he,

he, " that UNION has taken place, I am of opinion that habits of *sympathy* and *cordiality* should be encouraged in every possible way between the two countries."—

That the habits of *sympathy* and *cordiality* were much upon the wane, in consequence of the exertions of some of that gentleman's admirers, both in England and Ireland, I believe nobody will deny ; and it augurs well for the UNION, when we see one of its foremost opposers proclaim the benefits which will immediately flow from that GREAT MEASURE.

THIS will be an immortal day, ye men of Ireland, in the history of your political existence. You have sacrificed a name on the altar of Peace, and you have acquired respect among the nations by the philosophy of reason. The measure which has united you for ever to Great Britain, will be a lasting theme for future politicians, as it has been a pregnant one for the politicians of the day. Some four republicans may rail against it ; but the  
calm

calm and the sensible portion of the community will remember it as the anodyne and healing draught that restored ALL the members of our body to the blessings of health and the vigour of action ; they will regard it as the *peace of God* given to men who were disunited from the parent flock, not only by the separating sea, but by the deeper and more dreadful waters of civil discord, fomented into madness by the politician out of power, and the profligate out of place, by short-sighted individuals who saw only as far as themselves, and who, like Catiline, were ready to drown their country in blood, rather than recede from doctrines promulgated without thought, and persevered in from despair.

THE connexion of Ireland with Britain is of about 630 years standing. A handful of English adventurers, unaided by the government of their country, landed on the island, and with very little exertion forced a settlement which was to become  
 immoveable ;

immoveable ; they found the people degenerated from learning and civility to ignorance and ferocity ; subject to no general law ; but subject in parcels to particular masters, who on every slight or fancied offence rushed to the field, and without the least remorse moistened the clay of the soil with the blood of its inhabitants.

THE Earl of Pembroke, commonly called Strongbow, soon following the first adventurers, made his footing firm, and Henry II. his lawful sovereign, beginning to see that Ireland might be made a province, questioned the Earl in angry tone as to his unwarranted proceedings. Strongbow went to England, and made his peace with the King. He then returned, and managed matters so well with the Irish Chiefs, or Princes, that Henry himself came to Ireland in 1172, and obtained from them, in full and publick convention, the sovereignty of the soil.

THIS

THIS is the short but faithful history of the English establishment in Ireland. Time rolled on in variety of political events; the English King was the *Lord of Ireland*, and Englishmen were, from month to month and year to year, forming settlements in the country; and thus, by degrees, not slow but rapid, the English rooted themselves in the land, inclosing their community in what was called *the pale*, and regulating their actions by laws, to which the native Irish *out of the pale* were not subject.

THE times were barbarous, and it is easy to form an idea of the injustice and cruelty which this separation occasioned. As the English became strong they extended their dominion; and the Irish naturally opposed the intrusion, either openly in the field, or secretly in the shade; murder, assassination, insecurity, was the result, and almost every species of barbarism was perpetrated by both parties with impunity. Time, however, that alters all things, re-  
strained

strained the invading spirit of the English, and softened the ferocity of the Irish people; the *reformation* arrived, and unhappily was not received in Ireland, with that unanimity of sentiment which was necessary to secure the religious peace of the country. The Catholic religion was the religion of both English and Irish; but the reformation of the Catholic religion coming from the parent country to the Anglo-Irish, they generally embraced it; while the Irish adhered pertinaciously to the tenets of their forefathers. Here was a new and dreadful source of division! In religion at least they were before united, but now a door was open for all the inveterate prejudices and passions of the human mind; and the consequence of this unfortunate schism forms a black and horrid page in the history of the land! The English became strong; they were nourished and supported by the parent state: The Irish, although numerically increasing, became politically weak; they had neither protection nor support; and their religion, unhappily, shut

them

them out from an equal participation of civil rights. This was unavoidable, it was self-defence in the Anglo-Irish, and the land became *two*; the PROTESTANT, who was the governor, and the CATHOLIC, who was the governed. Where was the interior peace? It was not to be found! Where was the blessed repose of security? It was not in the land! Coercion became the order of the day; the coerced felt, and would now and then struggle to shake off the load that pressed upon them. This situation of things continued, or more or less, till about the year 1764. We then find that the Anglo-Irish began to feel a sentiment of country, and *for themselves* by gradual exertion obtained many political benefits. At length the American war occurred, and the British army was withdrawn from Ireland to protect remoter possessions: The *Anglo-Irish* saw and seized the opportunity; they demanded, with an organized force of 80,000 men at their back, political freedom; and Great Britain made a virtue of necessity and recorded *their*

*their* independence. The Catholic was not included; his incapacities continued. This arrangement, however, went on; and, as time advanced and manufactures improved, the power of Britain protected the trade of Ireland, and sent her productions to the remotest corners of the world.

THE human mind expanded; the Catholic got by little and little, till at length little was left to bestow; and, as in all free governments there will be factions formed for the attainment of political power, there arose in Ireland a faction of a most dangerous tendency; it bottomed itself on *Catholic physical force*; it worked openly and covertly to give the Catholic equality of civil right; it shewed an inclination to withdraw from British connexion, and to become a really independent power; lesser factions sprung from the greater, and, with less art, despising the dilatoriness of delay, they at once formed plans of general revolt and rebellion, and entered into engage-

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ments with the *destructive republic* to assist them in their design. The treason was detected ; the leaders were seized ; their plans exposed ; and by the energy of government the people of Ireland, both Protestant and Catholic, were snatched from the very brink of ruin ; they were snatched from the danger, but the precipice remained ; and it was now necessary to remove them *for ever* from the gaping destruction. How was this great end to be accomplished ? There was only one road left to lead to its certain completion ; the Anglo-Irish faction worked upon the Catholic physical force ; the country was in danger from them ; the Catholic, finding his strength, and feeling his exclusion from the legislature, was disaffected to the government ; the country was in danger from them ; there was but one measure left to secure to Britain the geographical and physical consequence of Ireland ; to secure to the Anglo-Irish their liberty and property ; and to place the Catholic in such a situation as that his  
natural

natural strength would be no perpetual impediment to his absolute political freedom ; and these blessed effects were to be obtained, and obtained alone, by a LEGISLATIVE UNION WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

THIS memorable measure has been accomplished with the temper and solemnity its importance demanded. After the most deliberate investigation of all its parts ; after an opposition of talents, interest, and respectability ; the Irish Legislature, seeing the annihilating ruin which was suspended but by a single thread from falling on their country, nobly sacrificed the name for the substance of independence ; and she this day commences her second birth in UNION WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

LET us for a moment enquire, what would have been the probable, I had almost said the unavoidable, consequence either of her projected alliance with France,  
or

or of her continuance under the vaunted constitution of 1782? a constitution, by the bye, that gave a ruling power to another state, by making the acts of the Irish Legislature null and void, till they were sanctioned by the great seal of Great Britain.

THIS radical defect in the constitution of 1782 was unavoidable with British connexion; but to the historian or philosopher it appeared incompatible with what the settlement would imply; that is, with political independence. It founded as if one man were to say to another, "I have absolute property; but, by this instrument which I now deliver, I positively prohibit myself from using it in any manner whatever without your previous and formal concurrence. It is true I cannot exist without using this property; but my existence is nevertheless independent of you, because I know you will for ever permit me

me to use what is yours and not yours, what is my own and not my own!"

PROPERTY without the right of using it, is no property to the possessor; and independence which depends, is a contradiction both in terms and in reason.

BUT to return. Had General Hoche's expedition in 1796 succeeded, and the plans of O'Connor and his confederates been established, what would have been the state of Ireland at this day? Is it not palpable to the plainest understanding, drawing infallible conclusion from the miserable experience of other countries, that she would at this day have been, not the independent ally, but the wretched vassal of France? that the productions of her soil and the labours of her people would have been devoted to feed, and to clothe, the devouring armies of that destroying republick? that her sons would have been by *requisition*, that modern term  
for

for compulsion, driven in thousands to swell the columns of these armies? that her foil must have supported an immense number of French troops, necessary for a double purpose; first, to keep the loyal portion of the people in awe, but principally to defeat invasion from Britain? that military government must have reigned in all its iron horrors, unsoftened by a single court of civil judicature in the whole compass of the land? that the CATHOLIC, so well taught by the patriots of the day to regard the PROTESTANT as his oppressor, being let loose, his fury would know no bounds, and human carnage would cover the face of the country? that commerce there could be none? that private property, being at the mercy of the mob, would be invaded with impunity? And that worse, infinitely worse, than a state of nature would at this day be the state of Ireland! Such would, according to every rational deduction, have been her situation during the war; and  
on

on the arrangement of a peace, after having been bled at every vein by her unprincipled ally, she would have been restored with perfect *sang-froid* to Great-Britain for a West India island, or a port or territory in the East.

ON the other hand, let us suppose the Constitution of 1782 had been continued *in all its purity*. We then would have had the name of independence, but depending really and constitutionally upon an external power for the possession of every social enjoyment and advantage ; for our safety from foreign foes, from domestick treason, for the protection of our commerce, for the extension of our trade. In short, we would have continued to depend, not only as a manufacturing country, but for our very being as a civil community, on the purse, the army, and the navy of *Great Britain*.

OUR

OUR Parliament would have constitutionally continued under the management of the British interest; and when casual events led to party exertion, the people must have been taxed to buy off the patriots of the day; whichever side prevailed, this would have been the practice. Cabal, intrigue, insecurity would have continued; while the people, the easy tool of the factious, would have been the real sufferers.

OF this state of civil discord every power at war with Britain would take advantage; and the people, distracted between the plausible promises of political empiricks, and the efforts of external foes, would be losers in their peace, losers in their rights, losers in their property, and losers even in the hope of better times; for the same causes would have infallibly produced the same effects, and there could be no internal tranquillity for Ireland.

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THE CATHOLIC would, by necessity, constitutionally continue expelled from the legislature; he would, therefore, continue discontented; the indignant feelings of nature may be softened, but, unless the causes are done away, they can never be wholly subdued; and thus there would be a lasting, a growing, an inflammable, and a destructive principle in the very heart of your body politic, which in the end might be worked upon to overflow the moulds of government; and, like a deluge, tear, destroy, and annihilate every vestige of social compact and security. Then anarchy would rage! and crimson war would bathe his bloody hand in the bowels of humanity! till exhausted by barbarian effort, the victor would pause, and casting a rueful look on the devastation his dreams of reform had occasioned, he would curse the day that party principles impelled him to lay his country in ruins!—But here the triumphant faction cannot stop—order must

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be restored, and Britain is expelled.— They now discover, that in the political system of Europe, Ireland, *if not supported, must fall*; let us suppose they make a last desperate effort, and admit the power of France into the land—affiliate with her—receive the consoling comfort of the fraternal embrace; and, in the frenzy of despair, devote their country to the natural enemies of their forefathers.—What would result? an exterminating war with Britain;—she could never sit in apathy, and see the French plant a military province at her very door!—she could never sit in apathy and see her ancient possession become the naval nursery of her inveterate foe! No; war in all its horrors would rage; the land would become a land of blood; and even allowing she did not immediately succeed in her endeavours at re-establishment, she would too certainly succeed in its total destruction. The new allies—the protectors—the French friends would be the instruments of Irish misery; and

and with French faith, like the Punic of old, they would at any open abandon the political dreams of the faction to secure their own substantial interest.

BUT, God be praised, the desperate die has not been cast! this country did not pass the Rubicon! she was wildly hurrying to the spot, but her progress was retarded by the strong hand of Justice, and her reason was awakened by the voice of Wisdom.

SNATCHED from the gulf that gaped to receive and to destroy us, what now is the prospect of Ireland? She has united her political being with Great Britain,—they are now ONE AND INDIVISIBLE—their interest is the same—they must sail down the stream of Time together, subject to the same gales of prosperity, and equally open to the same storms of adversity—they must adhere together for being; if one sinks, the other must follow.—Union

is

is salvation—separation is ruin. We have, according to the language of the sagacious *Locke*, formed “an agreement  
 “to join and *unite* into *one community* for  
 “our *comfortable, safe, and peaceable liv-*  
 “ing one amongst another, in a *secure*  
 “*enjoyment of our properties*, and a greater  
 “security against any that are *not of it* ;”  
 —and, behold the prospect that opens before us !

THE PROTESTANT is secured in his political ascendancy ; he is secured in the possession and disposition of his property ; he is secured in the production of his talents and his industry—he is secured of *legal freedom*, which is the only *true liberty*, because he will not contribute one shilling to the expence of the State without his own consent ; and he has every mortal security, that, from age to age, those social blessings will be handed down to his latest posterity.

THE

THE CATHOLIC is equally secured in his property; he is secured in the production of his talents and his industry; his children and their children's children, to the remotest time, are secured in his and their possessions; and the necessity which kept them from a full enjoyment of political liberty is essentially removed; the necessity for their exclusion from the *last right* DOES NOT EXIST. Union has destroyed it; and he may now look with confidence for the day that will give him perfect equality with his Protestant neighbour. This is an inevitable and not very distant event, and it is an event which, in uniting the men of Ireland with each other, will cement the general Union. Now this event could never, with safety to the Protestant interest, have taken place, while the *free* constitution of 1782 obtained in Ireland.

THESE blessings to this country the Legislative Union will accomplish; and the

the genius of the people, having its full spring, will branch out into innumerable modes of industry, agriculture and manufactures at home; a real equality of commercial benefits with Britain abroad, in the scale indeed of her means, but those means will increase by the advantages they bestow. Unrestrained by British jealousy, her natural exertions will have their full force; she will have a double impelling power for her industry; she will have the vast ability of Britain for the consumption of her productions; and she will have her own efforts to send those productions from her own ports *in her own ships* to the trading nations of the earth.

I, therefore, congratulate you, ye Western people of the Union! Some men among you, soured by personal disappointments, may murmur their discontent; but the value of internal peace, and the abundance which cannot fail to flow

flow from social security, are too conspicuous for Reason not to approve and Wisdom not to applaud the measure! Connected to Britain by natural ties, you are now drawn closer by political interests; you have all the benefits of her nursing and protecting power, while she has the preserving certainty of your physical importance; without the first, you would perish; without the second, she would totter. You could not long exist in separation. Union is theoretically established. Cemented by equality of interest, it ought to be immortal. The beneficial consequences it can practically produce to Ireland will, in a great degree, depend upon the activity of Irishmen. There is now no impediment. "The world is all before you." Too long has Religion been made a tool of division and warfare among men: The PROTESTANT and the CATHOLIC are brothers: GOD is the father of all, and looks with the eye of mercy and forgiveness upon  
all

all his children. Imitate HIM in this benignity of sentiment; banish from your bosoms the destructive poisons of party; arouse your natural powers; let Industry inspire you with exertion, and be Peace your polar star: The first will crown you with Wealth, and the last lead you to Happiness.

F I N I S.

