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THE

PRESENT POLITICS

OF

I R E L A N D:

CONSISTING OF

I. The Right Honourable Mr. HUTCHINSON's Letter to
HIS CONSTITUENTS at CORK.

II. PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSIONS of the IRISH AR-
RANGEMENTS; by

Messrs. CONNOLLY,

GRATTAN,

and

FLOOD,

Against them.

FITZGIBBON,

MASON,

FORSTER,

HUTCHINSON,

For them.

III. MR. LAFFAN'S OBSERVATIONS on the Relative
Situation of Great Britain and Ireland;

With NOTES thereon by an ENGLISH EDITOR.

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Houses of the Oireachtas

ADVERTISEMENT.

TH E following Letter of the Right Honourable J. H. HUTCHINSON, to his Constituents of Cork, being much asked for, the Publisher presumed to think he could not do a more useful service to the Public than to print it in this form. The subject of this letter is surely of very great importance to the sister kingdoms: and the argument is treated with an ability, which has been acknowledged even by those, who do not admit themselves to be convinced.

Had any formal answer been published to this celebrated performance, the Publisher, from the same desire of conveying candid information, would have equally printed it with the original letter. But he has never heard of such an answer. And, in order to supply this defect, he has now subjoined the
principal

iv A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

principal speeches in the Irish House of Commons on Mr. ORDE's motion for leave to bring in a Bill to carry the Irish arrangements into laws. And these speeches he has now printed page for page against each other, rather than in the order wherein they were spoken, that the reader may more conveniently judge of *the facts* and of *the reasonings*, without much regard to *characters* and *names*.

LONDON,
20th Dec. 1785.

A L E T T E R

A
L E T T E R
F R O M
J. H. HUTCHINSON, Esq.
T O T H E
M A Y O R O F C O R K, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I Mentioned to you, during your magistracy, my intention to address you on the subject of the Commercial Bill. My letter, of the same date and tenor with that which you will now receive, was prepared, but not sent to you. Reflecting that I had declined to debate the commercial part of the Bill, till our merchants and manufacturers should have had an opportunity of laying their evidence and observations before the House of Commons, I doubted whether the same reason did not then conclude against my declaring any opinion or entering into any argument. On a subject of great importance and complication I wish for every possible information. The Address from the late Sheriffs and Grand

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Jury

Jury of Cork, has since determined me to deliver my opinion; and, having been censured for not assigning my reasons, I think I should no longer withhold them from my fellow-citizens, and that my letter, as originally written to you, will fully explain my sentiments. I am an advocate for truth alone; and shall be as readily disposed to acknowledge, on conviction, any error in my sentiments, as I am firmly determined not to surrender up my reason to unmerited reproach.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

JOHN HELY HUTCHINSON.

Knocklofty, Oct. 14, 1785.

To JAMES MORRISON, Esq.

A L E T T E R, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I Have sent you printed copies of the Bill for effectuating the Intercourse and Commerce between Great-Britain and Ireland, for the information of my constituents; and think it my duty to address them, through their Chief Magistrate, on a subject of such general importance, and in which the merchants and traders of the city of Cork are peculiarly interested. My object in this letter is not so much to influence their opinions, as to rouse their attention to the different parts of this Bill; for the purpose of informing their
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judgments and my own. When I see in some of the public prints the grossest misrepresentations of this measure, and statements of several particulars as contained in the Bill, which are not to be found there, but are contrary to the whole tenor of it; I consider those attempts as tending directly to alienate the affections of Ireland from Great-Britain, and to disturb that mutual concord, so essential to the happiness, strength, and security of these two sister kingdoms. If these execrable attempts to promote discord and disunion tended only to misrepresent and calumniate individuals, I should have suffered them to pass with silent contempt; knowing that these shafts have but momentary effects, and that every man's character will finally find its own level, and be appreciated by his fellow-citizens according to the tenor of his conduct.

Though the public has been assured by authority, that the Bill, brought in this session for a commercial arrangement between the two kingdoms, should never be revived if not called for by the public voice, yet attempts are still making to disturb the public mind, as if this measure were to be carried through against the sense of the nation. An arrangement of commercial intercourse between Great-Britain and Ireland is generally desired, or our House of Commons was mistaken in its unanimous Address at the close of the last session. The interval between this session and the next should be employed in the investigation of this subject; the Bill should be dispassionately and carefully read; the objections to it fairly stated, and the advantages likely

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to

to arise from it, candidly considered. I presume it will not be thought inconsistent with the character of an honest man for any of you to do this, though this is the crime objected to such of your representatives, as thought that the House of Commons should have taken the very same course. For the man who asserts, that those, who voted for the introduction of this Bill, had by such conduct declared in favour of any particular clauses in it, is ignorant of the course of Parliamentary proceedings, or wishes to misrepresent.

The objections to this Bill were partly of a constitutional and partly of a commercial nature. On the first the introduction was principally opposed; and the great ground of argument for establishing the objections on constitutional principles was taken from those parts of the Bill, which relate to the trade with the British colonies and settlements; to the four enumerated articles from the United States of America; the grant of the surplus of the hereditary revenue; and the trade to the East-Indies.

By this Bill we should have taken the British colony trade on the same terms with Great-Britain herself; rum excepted, which we had many years since obtained liberty to import from the British colonies, and had imported, on lower duties still to be continued. She gives her colonial produce a preference to similar articles from other countries; for, having the monopoly of that produce, she always thought it just to encourage it by such a preference, and expects that we, as equal partners in that monopoly, should do the same.

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To this principle we have conformed since we obtained the trade. If we should at any time dislike any of the terms, we may by this Bill refuse to abide by them, and determine the agreement. Those colonies are British property; she has a right to grant them on what condition she pleases; she now grants them to us in the same manner she holds them herself, with the exception before mentioned, which is in our favour.

On these terms, but without any exception, our House of Commons, in the year 1779, gratefully accepted the grant of this trade, in the following resolution of the 20th of December in that year:—"Resolved, *nem. con.* That a liberty for this kingdom to trade with the British colonies in America and the West-Indies, and the British settlements on the coast of Africa, *in like manner as trade is carried on between Great-Britain and the said colonies and settlements*, will be productive of very great commercial benefits, will be a most affectionate mark of the regard and attention of Great-Britain to our distresses, and will give new vigour to the zeal of his Majesty's brave and loyal people of Ireland, to stand forward in support of his Majesty's person and government, and the interest, the honour, and the dignity of the British Empire." But the British Act of that session, passed subsequent to the resolution last mentioned, having required equal duties and drawbacks, and the same duties, regulations, and restrictions, only in such part of the trade between Ireland and the British colonies in America,
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the West-Indies, and British settlements on the coast of Africa, as was not enjoyed by us previous to that session, our Acts of Parliament followed this distinction. In the first of these * there is the following clause:—"Whereas such part of the trade between this kingdom and the British colonies in America, the West Indies, and British settlements on the coast of Africa, as was not enjoyed by this kingdom previous to the present session, *can be enjoyed and have continued so long and in such case only*, as the goods to be imported from the said colonies, plantations, or settlements, shall be liable to equal duties and drawbacks, *and be subject to the same securities, regulations, and restrictions*, as the like goods are liable and subject to upon being imported from the said colonies, plantations, or settlements, into Great-Britain, or exported from thence to such colonies, plantations, or settlements respectively."—And this clause, copied from a British Act of that session, is to be found in every Irish Act from the year 1780 to this time, including the present session †.

These terms were enjoined by the legislature of Great-Britain as the condition of the grant, which the legislature of Ireland has uniformly recited and performed in every material article. The enjoining or complying with this condition was never thought a

* 19th & 20th Geo. III. chap. 11.

† See 21st & 22d Geo. III. chap. 5. 23d & 24th Geo. III. chap. 5. and 25th Geo. III. chap. 4.

violation of our constitution; it was a condition annexed to the commencement and continuance of the commercial grant of the colonies; it is a condition, which this Bill still annexes to the same grant, and also to the new grant of the British markets. The nature of the new grant has made it necessary, that the condition should be expressed with more clearness and precision; but its principle is in no respect varied. The same liberty of performing or not performing the condition would still remain; because the national faith is not pledged by the agreement of 1779, or the bill of 1785, to adopt any British law. The condition was not obligatory to Ireland; it is not now proposed to be obligatory: it did not violate the constitution from 1779 to 1785: it does not violate the constitution now.

On one of the laws of this period, introduced by some of the great supporters of our legislative independency, and passed in the year 1782 * after the restitution of our constitutional rights, the present Bill in the parts that relate to legislation is founded, but is not carried so far. A law, formed at such an important æra by men of such high characters, well deserves our most serious attention, when we are considering the propriety of uniformity of laws or concurrence of legislation. It recites as a fact, "that it is the earnest and affectionate desire of his Majesty's subjects of this kingdom," and lays it down as a principle, "that it

* 21st & 22d Geo. III. chap. 48.

is their true interest, that a similitude of laws should at all times subsist between the people of Great Britain and Ireland ;” and with this view it enacts, “ that all such clauses and provisions, contained in any statutes theretofore made in England or Great Britain *concerning commerce*, as import to impose equal restraints on the subjects of England and Ireland, and to entitle them to equal benefits, should be accepted, used, and executed in this kingdom—provided always, that all such statutes, so as aforesaid *concerning commerce*, shall bind the subjects of Ireland, *so long as they continue to bind the subjects of Great Britain.*” By the latter part of this law we give to the British legislature the power of repealing laws of Ireland, the duration of which is referred to that legislature ; and from this clause a probable intention may be inferred of adopting such laws as should be made in Great Britain in the place of the laws so repealed, provided the restraints and benefits were equal in respect to both countries. The opinion of the legislature at that time is express, that uniformity of commercial laws would promote the interests of both kingdoms ; and, if that advantage could not have been obtained without injuring the independency of Ireland, that opinion would not have been advanced at the moment of its establishment.

Compare that act and the present bill. The act establishes the British commercial laws, which contain equal benefits and restraints as laws in Ireland, with a retrospect of 290 years ; and extends the idea of similitude

larity of laws between the two kingdoms not only to seamen, but to commerce generally. This Bill makes it a fundamental condition of the proposed agreement, that the ships and seamen of both countries should, by the laws of both, be secured in the same privileges, advantages, and immunities ; but, as to commerce, restrains the similarity of laws to that commerce only which consists of British property, and arises to Ireland from British concession, or is immediately and necessarily a part of that system ; and even there binds the British legislature to the rule of equal restraints and equal benefits, of which the Irish legislature being also to judge, a concurrence of legislation would have grown out of this system, in the exercise of which the sentiments of both nations must have been consulted, and the consequence would have been an enlargement of the objects and power of Irish legislation, and certainly no diminution of dependency. By the operation of this bill, the subject of every law proposed for our adoption would be distinctly considered either during its progress, or soon after it passed in Great Britain ; but by the act of 1782 the acts of near three centuries were adopted in one heap. If the bill is unconstitutional, the act is infinitely more so. But neither is subject to that imputation, because similarity of laws is a just and constitutional principle, if neither of the countries can be bound without the assent of its legislature.

The justice of the rule, that *Cujus est dare ejus est disponere*, was never questioned ! But Great Britain

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offers

offers to relax this rule in favour of Ireland, and to engage to give herself no benefit in her own colonies that she does not give to her sister kingdom ; to impose on her no restraint in that commerce which she gives, that she does not impose on herself ; and to make Ireland in some measure a joint legislator with herself over a part of her own empire. It is and ever has been a part of the British colony system, to favour the produce and manufactures of her colonies against the interference of similar articles from foreign colonies and states. She expects, that, as long as you choose to enjoy the benefit of this system, you should do the same, and that these similar articles should be made subject to the same duties on importation in this kingdom as in Great Britain. To this we have hitherto conformed without objection or inconvenience. The same principle applies equally to the like articles imported from the United States of America ; and therefore to four of these articles, namely rum, peltry, whale-bone fins, and oil, of which the British colonies can furnish a complete supply, the same condition is annexed. That this was considered as part of the colonial system, and not founded on any intention to regulate the trade of Ireland by British law, is manifest from this—that motions made on this occasion in both Houses of the British Parliament, to regulate our trade with the States of America in some articles unconnected with the colony system, were rejected on this avowed principle, that Great Britain had no power to regulate any part of our foreign commerce. If by this agree-
ment

ment Ireland were to retain the liberty of importing from other countries produce or manufactures similar to those of the British colonies, she would not take the colony trade on the same terms with Great Britain.

It is true, the British act of 1780 allows Ireland a selection ; but we framed our import duties from the year 1779, pursuant to the resolution of our House of Commons in that year, and followed the British laws ; and, as by the proposed agreement we were to have the liberty of importing British colonial produce from this kingdom into Great Britain, she thought it necessary to annex it as a condition to this agreement, that we should subject similar articles from foreign countries to the same duties, regulations, and restrictions, as in Great Britain ! because otherwise we might import those articles, as the produce of the British colonies, into her ports with little probability of detection, and subvert her whole colony system. This argument applies equally to the four enumerated articles from the American states.

But whether we adopted British colony laws in a smaller or greater number of articles, makes no difference in the constitutional principle. If it violated our independency in one case, it would be equally a violation of it in the other. But it is a violation of it in neither. The objection, that if we refuse to adopt the British law we shall lose the benefit of this agreement, applied with more weight to the condition of 1780, because Great Britain gave us then more than she has now to grant.

When I reflect, how long Scotland had endeavoured to obtain from England the protection of her navigation laws and the benefits of her colony trade ; that what is now offered to be permanently granted to Ireland, without any infringement of her rights of legislation, could not be purchased by Scotland without the surrender of her legislative sovereignty ; when I reflect with what effusions of public gratitude we received that very boon, which some of us seem now to disdain and spurn ; and how carefully and affectionately it had been cherished by our legislature in the acts of every succeeding session ; I view with amazement the wonderful revolutions of human sentiments, and consider the constitutional jealousy arising from the proposed system of colonial legislation, as one of those popular delusions, which have too often inflamed the passions and misled the reasons of men.

A further constitutional objection has been made to that part of the Bill, which grants in perpetuity the surplus of our hereditary revenue above 656,000*l.* and to the support of that grant by a supposed perpetual Revenue Bill. As to the grant, it is necessary to observe, that the guarding the seas had been a heavy expence to this kingdom, as early as the reign of King Charles the First *. At the Restoration specific duties were granted, and granted in perpetuity, “ for the better guarding and defending of the seas against all persons intending, or that may intend the

* Stafford's Letters, vol. I. p. 68, 152.

disturbance of the intercourse of the trade of this your Majesty's realm, and for the better defraying the necessary expences thereof, which otherwise cannot be effected without great charge; and for increase and augmentation of your Majesty's revenue†." The probable amount of the proposed grant for many years to come would be far inferior in value to one year's amount of the duties granted by that act, and granted in the first place for this specific purpose. This part of the Bill would provide for the same service with more œconomy, and with much better effect. When I say with much better effect, I speak from experience. In the late war frigates were stationed off the coast of Scotland to protect the trade of that country. I presented a memorial from Cork to the then administration of Ireland, praying, that the same attention should be shewn to the southern and western coasts of this kingdom. I was not able to prevail. But when this navy becomes the navy of the empire, to the support of which Ireland contributes, it would be Irish as well as British; and there could be no longer a foundation for any distinction. Our contribution would center among ourselves, and would encourage our industry, by the investment of our quota in our own manufactures.

As to the second objection to this part of the Bill, the fact has been misapprehended. It is no part of the Bill that this grant should be supported by a perpetual Revenue Bill. It would have been sup-

† 14th and 15th Ch. II. chap. 9.

ported with good faith; but, like the rest of our revenue, by annual bills in aid of the acts of excise and customs, which are now perpetual.

It has been objected in a neighbouring kingdom, that the grant of this surplus is a diminution of the royal power and property. It certainly is so, and has justly and liberally been conceded, to strengthen the whole empire by a great commercial adjustment between these two countries. But to state this part of the Bill as an incroachment on the rights or power of Parliament, or as weakening or limiting the freedom of the constitution, is a strange perversion, of the most obvious tendency and effect, of a regulation calculated to promote the manufactures, protect the commerce, strengthen the constitution, and provide for the defence of the nation.

As to objections made, on constitutional principles, to those parts of the Bill that relate to the British East-India Company, I shall consider them more fully when I come to the commercial parts of the subject, to which they properly belong. I will only say in this place, that I consider those parts of the proposed agreement as an exchange, by mutual consent, of a commerce which exists in theory only, and which may never be productive, for a certain immediate and advantageous commerce to a great empire in that part of the globe, and to Great Britain; neither of which we can acquire without such an exchange; and, this possible commerce being re-assumable at our pleasure by parting with the consideration
given

given for it, and as we barter commerce for commerce, and not commerce for constitution, that no objection of a constitutional nature can justly apply to those paragraphs of the Bill.

I cannot discover in any of those instances the smallest particle of legislative power gained by Great Britain or lost by Ireland. The former has always made laws to regulate the trade with her colonies and settlements in Africa and America; by this agreement she is to continue to do so. The Irish legislature now follows those laws, and has declared by several of her statutes, that it is reasonable to do so. After this agreement, she will continue to follow them as long as she thinks it reasonable. But, when this event shall have taken place, Great Britain in making those laws must consider, what regulations appear equal to the Irish legislature, or she hazards the continuance of this agreement. What legislative power is Ireland to lose? When a Bill shall be brought into either of our Houses of Parliament, relative to the British colonies, or to the four articles from the American states, shall we not have the same power over that as over every other Bill. Can we not amend any part, or reject the whole? Can we not say, the restraints and benefits are not equal, or, though they are equal, they are not wise, and they shall not be the law of Ireland? But then you risk the agreement — so would the British legislature, if she made any law relative to her colonies and settlements, which the Irish legislature should think unjust.

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But the determination of the agreement would not necessarily follow our varying or rejecting their Bill ; for by the proposed agreement the dissatisfaction of the British legislature must be first declared. If our conduct should be founded on just grounds, it is not improbable that no such dissatisfaction would be declared, but that wise and moderate men might suggest some expedient, or advise some middle course that would be agreeable to both countries, and that the British legislature would vary or change its law. But, it is said, you could not originate the Bill. In respect to the British colonies and settlements, no man can be so unreasonable as to desire it ; as to foreign colonies and the four enumerated articles, our right to originate would be unquestionable. I speak of the right, not of the exercise of it, the prudence of which must depend on the occasion.

If Great Britain neither gains nor Ireland loses any power of legislation, where is the injury to our independence ? Where is the bridle that is to be thrown, it seems, over the neck of the high-spirited steed ? It is held out, not by those who offer, but by those who would scare him from his provender.

I therefore thought and still think, that there was no good reason on constitutional grounds against the introduction of the Bill, for which introduction I voted. Considering the subject in its true light, as merely commercial, I thought that there were strong reasons to induce even those, who objected to some of the commercial regulations of the Bill, to vote for liberty to bring it in. A commercial

merical settlement between the two kingdoms is acknowledged by every reasonable man to be much wanted; and how this can be obtained, without temperate discussion, and the communication to each other of the points in which they agree, and of those in which they differ, I cannot comprehend. In the accomplishment of the British union many delays and differences in opinion had arisen. Though the commissioners, appointed for that purpose under the authority of the Parliaments of both kingdoms, had on both sides signed and sealed the articles of union, yet the Scotch Parliament made many important alterations, which were adopted by the English Parliament. In the proceedings to establish a commercial union between Great Britain and Ireland, difficulties and differences in opinion must necessarily have arisen among men of the best intentions. Our Propositions have been altered by the British House of Commons; their Resolutions have been altered by the Lords of Great Britain; and these alterations were adopted by the House of Commons of that kingdom. In the progress on the Irish Bill the fullest discussion was intended: every objection would have been heard, and every well-founded objection doubtless must have been allowed, and every proper alteration made. Nothing final during this session was ever in contemplation. A great length and variety of examination must have preceded the settlement of the schedule of duties and regulations. This schedule must have been laid before our two

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Houses of Parliament in the next session for their approbation; and, after all this had been done, nothing could have been concluded, until the Irish Parliament had declared its satisfaction in the acts of the British legislature.

The Bill offered to Ireland many commercial advantages of the most important nature. It secured for ever the linen trade of this kingdom. The agreement, effectually to favour our manufactures, would have been of great value to us. The encouragement, which it gave to our sailcloth manufacture, would have occasioned an annual profit to a very great amount. The perpetual supply of rock salt would have been useful to our victualling trade and fisheries; of bark to our manufacture of leather; and of coals to all our manufactures. The perpetual exemption of this last article from duty on the export to Ireland, would have been a great and peculiar advantage to our manufacturers. The inhabitants of Great Britain pay for their own coals, from port to port, 5s. the chaldron. An intention has been mentioned not long since to tax this commodity at the pit. If this Bill had passed, the tax would have been drawn back, and this kingdom secured against any imposition, which the necessities of Great Britain may induce her to lay on the export of this necessary article. If Great Britain had not given of late years the strongest proofs, that she is not disposed to look to times of less liberality, for precedents to govern her conduct in respect to her sister kingdom, it

it would not be prudent to mention, that English coals came formerly to Ireland under a duty of 4s. the ton, imposed on the export by an English act*.

I also thought the circuitous colony trade from Ireland to Great Britain would have been highly useful to this kingdom, and particularly to the city of Cork. I thought the opening of the British markets to our manufactures would be, in one respect, of the utmost importance to this kingdom; I mean by the re-exportation of Irish manufactures from Great Britain with a drawback of all duties; and, if this opinion is well founded, we should consider the advantages of having our manufactures exported to all parts of the world, by the capitals and credit of Great Britain. By this assistance our linens to a great amount are re-exported from England; and this assistance has ever been one great source of the prosperity of that manufacture. Under the proposed agreement, all our other manufactures would have been re-exported from thence equally free from duty.

That the British markets would have produced consequences so extensive in favour of Ireland, as her principal manufacturers affirmed, it is not my opinion. That Ireland would have been materially benefitted by it in some of her manufactures, I entertain no doubt. And, whenever Great Britain can lighten the taxes on her manufactures and on the

* Carte's Life of the Duke of Ormond, vol. i. p. 84.

materials of them, which must naturally be one of her first objects when her circumstances permit, this part of the proposed agreement would effectually open the best, the nearest, and the most certain markets in the world to Ireland; and would promote the most beneficial of all trades, because the whole profits would belong to the subjects of the same empire, and because a capital employed in a home trade, which this may be justly considered, may be sent out and brought back many times, before the capital employed in a foreign trade has made one return; which must be peculiarly advantageous to a country deficient in capital, and would at the same time be attended with all the advantages of foreign trade, by increasing the quantity of specie and the number of ships and seamen. The re-export of our manufactures from Great Britain ensures their admission wherever British are received, and baffles the ungenerous policy of Portugal.

In all those particulars the advantages are on our side; and, if we hesitate whether to accept or not the colonial and domestic markets of Britain on terms equally beneficial with herself, I will venture to tell you, that no nation in Europe, which had no colonies of her own, would follow your example. If this part of the subject admitted no doubt, the questions then for the consideration of our Houses of Parliament would have been, whether they thought it reasonable and just to agree to the parts of the Bill, that related to the East-India trade, and to the

the preventing of any prohibition of the export of our yarn to Great Britain. The first of these considerations have depended on the evidence of our merchants, as to the parts of the East which were open to us: for no European settlement there would admit us: whether we had sufficient capitals to carry on that trade: and whether any probable future advantages (for present there are none, as we have never sent a ship there, though at full liberty so to do during the last six years) were of sufficient weight to prevent a commercial settlement between the two kingdoms, in which Great Britain offers you access to all her markets foreign and domestic, on the same terms with herself; with a covenant on her part effectually to favour every article of your growth, produce, or manufacture, materials from foreign countries excepted, which are to be imported in both kingdoms duty-free; and in which she offers an export of your manufactures, with all duties drawn back, through the medium of her Company, to her East-Indian territories, by which channel alone she can convey her own manufactures thither—the benefit of whatever revenue shall arise on India goods sent to Ireland, or a drawback on the exportation from Great Britain, which would give them to us free of all duties—and an equal trade with Great Britain in her possessions in India, in the event of a dissolution of the Company; in which Company, during its continuance, you have an equal right with Britons, of becoming adventurers; and
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from which you can purchase the produce of the East in an open market and at a public auction, on the same terms with your fellow subjects of Great Britain, and on cheaper terms than at any other market.

These several circumstances appeared to me to have been worthy the consideration of the House of Commons; which, after having been fully informed on this subject, would have been more competent to determine, whether we should or should not, in favour of the British East-India Company, and in consideration of the other commercial benefits proposed to us, impose this limitation on our commerce, determinable at the discretion of our two Houses of Parliament; which, while we allowed it to continue, would have placed Ireland in precisely the same circumstances with every part of Great Britain, London excepted.

Had this part of the agreement been found injurious to the probable hopes of our rising commerce, it ought to have been and unquestionably would have been rejected. If it had appeared, that, without prejudice to ourselves, we could have strengthened the staff on which our sister kingdom leans in the day of her adversity, what generous Irishman would have withheld his concurrence? But if this part of the Bill, instead of imaginary prospects, in the place of commercial visions, offered us some immediate, real, and substantial benefits, the choice would not have been difficult to make.

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The agreement not to prohibit the exportation of our yarn would be an engagement not to relinquish a beneficial and profitable part of our commerce; beneficial and profitable to the whole kingdom, but to Munster in particular; it would be an agreement not to do what we shall never do, though no such agreement existed. When it is considered that Ireland gains by this export above 340,000*l.* yearly*, that it is a manufacture, though an imperfect one, which employs great numbers of our people, for whom it would be difficult to find any other employment; it seems to be a proposition almost self-evident, that the exportation should never be prevented by any other means, than by giving every possible encouragement to our own people to manufacture it at home, the only rational and effectual means of preventing the export.

But it is objected, that Great Britain prohibits the exportation of her yarn, and that there is no equality in our agreeing not to prohibit. I answer, that the policy of that nation in this respect has been condemned by persons of great commercial information; that these prohibitions were laid on to gratify the manufacturers of that country, who have been sometimes much mistaken in their opinions on this subject. In 1698, they petitioned, that the importation of all worsted and woollen yarn from Ireland should be prohibited, and represented, that the poor of England were perishing by this importation; and

* At a medium of seven years, ending 25th of March, 1784, it amounted to 348,927*l.* 5*s.* 0*d.*

in 1739*, they petitioned against taking off the duties on those articles from Ireland to England; but now they insist that it should be made a part of this agreement that the exportation from Ireland to Great Britain should never be prohibited—a caution to manufacturers not to be too confident in their present opinions, and to the public, not to give way to such opinions without hearing proofs or reasons. As to equality, it is to be estimated by the sum of advantages on each side, and not by a comparison of each article separately. Thus Britain gives bounties on Irish linen exported from her ports, but we give none on British exports from ours. In yarn the inequality is merely nominal. In coals the equality is but nominal, and the whole advantage is in the Irish scale.

In these and other articles the exercise of the legislative power would be restrained in this kingdom during the continuance of the agreement; and in many articles similar restraints would be imposed on the British legislature; but without such restraints no commercial agreement could ever be framed between two independent legislatures. Restraints of the same nature made a part of our Propositions, which were almost unanimously agreed to, and were never considered as subversive of constitutional rights. Limitations, which arise out of the power of the Legislature, and depend for their duration on the same power, are not arguments against, but the

* English Comm. Journ. p. 115—Commercial Restraints.

clearest proofs in support of legislative independence. Agreements to direct the channels in which trade shall flow, or to commute the barren speculation of a possible distant trade, which is open to us, but which we are not now able to enjoy, and perhaps may never be worth our having, for a beneficial trade which is not open to us, and which we may acquire by the suspension of an useless right re-assumable at our pleasure, would not be a relinquishment, but an enlargement of commercial freedom, and a just and constitutional exertion of legislative power for salutary purposes. Let us apply this reasoning to the East-Indian commerce. You have no liberty of trade with the British empire in India. Great Britain offers you an export of your manufactures to those countries from Great Britain and Ireland, on the same terms with her own, through the medium of her East-India Company, to which she limits herself. She offers you at the same time her own markets in the same manner that she enjoys them herself; but to this she annexes a condition, that while you think proper to enjoy those benefits, you should agree not to trade to the few hospitable shores that will receive you between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straights of Magellan; and that, when you choose to relinquish that profitable liberty of trade which she offers, and which you have not, you may then re-assume that unproductive liberty of trade, which you have now in theory only.

E

Some

Some of the commercial regulations of this Bill have been misunderstood ; I mean those which relate to bounties, and the breweries.

As to the first, the Bill directs, that all bounties, except such as are in the nature of drawbacks or compensations for duties paid, on any articles to Great-Britain, shall cease, with an exception of corn, malt, flour, and biscuit ; that no bounty to or from a British colony or settlement, or to the East-Indies, shall be payable in Ireland, unless in cases where a similar bounty is payable in Great-Britain ; with an exception when such bounty is in the nature of a drawback or compensation for duties paid. The bounties to her own settlements Great Britain has a right to regulate. The ceasing of all bounties on articles from Ireland to Great-Britain is followed by her bill as to bounties from Great-Britain to Ireland, to prevent a war of bounties, which would be hurtful to both countries. The bounties, payable in this kingdom to encourage the sale of our manufactures in our own markets, or on exportation to foreign states, not British colonies or settlements, are in no sort restrained.

The parts of the Bill relative to bounties, which are highly advantageous to Ireland, have been perverted into objections against the Bill. A proof of the great utility of those regulations is to be found in the fate of the sail-cloth manufacture. It flourished before the British bounty. It was ruined by that bounty. It will flourish again by the withdrawing

ing that bounty; and, by the preference given to it by this Bill over foreign in the British navy, by the other encouragements which it is to receive in the out-fit of British and colony ships in being considered as British, and by the export to India, will flourish in a far greater degree than at any other period, and will become one of our most important branches of manufacture.

In respect to the breweries, we should have been gainers by the proposed agreement, as the duty on British beer, now 4s. 1d. would have been then 5s. 4d. the barrel.

I thought those commercial matters were proper subjects for investigation; that the Bill, which related to them, should be brought in and printed, and dispersed through the kingdom; that our merchants and manufacturers should be examined to every part of it; and that not a step should have been taken in it, without seeing our way clearly, and without the concurring sense of the trading part of the nation. I did not think myself at liberty even to debate the commercial parts of the Bill, before the commercial evidence of Ireland was heard; but I am forced by the most unfounded and malicious misrepresentation to mention my present sentiments, with the readiest disposition to change any of them on better information, but with the firmest disdain of groundless clamour.

On those principles I voted for the introduction of the Bill. Had it appeared, on the introductory

statement of it, to have contained any thing derogatory to the independence of our legislature, or that could have justly raised a doubt of that kind, I would have voted either against the introduction, or for the immediate rejection of it.

Many of my fellow-citizens petitioned against the Resolutions of the British Parliament. I stated their petition more fully than petitions are usually stated. I was not called upon to give my opinion on those Resolutions. As to the legislative rights of Ireland, the Address of the British Lords and Commons to the Throne has declared their sense; and the Bill of the British House of Commons has spoken most explicitly and decidedly on that subject. The Irish Bill differs materially from those Resolutions, and contains many new provisions in favour of our constitution and commerce. I speak of that Bill for the introduction of which I voted; and on the ground of that Bill I will maintain this position against any man: That it neither surrenders nor impairs, nor promises or engages, or tends in any respect to impair, the independence of the legislature of Ireland; but that, on the contrary, it expressly reserves to this and all succeeding Parliaments the full exercise of legislative rights, in all acts of legislation whatever; and gives to our Houses of Parliament a greater power than any Houses of Parliament ever had before, by placing in their hands, without the Royal assent, the repeal of a legislative agreement.

Consider

Consider the present state of the British empire. Survey your own country, with an honest pride, as a most important part of that empire; conscious of your own weight in the general scale, be not too prone to suspect, that any English Ministry would be mad enough to invade your liberties, or to impair either your commercial or constitutional rights. What is now the necessary object of British councils? To strengthen and connect the remaining parts of the empire. What are the principal means of effecting this? Multiplying the resources, increasing the wealth, promoting the population and industry, and establishing the tranquillity and contentment of Ireland. No two countries on the globe are more necessary to the happiness of each other than these two islands. The man who considers them as adversaries, and not as partners in commerce, is not a judicious friend to either. The man, who attempts to serve one at the expence of the other, would injure both. What is the obvious wish and interest of the enemies of the British empire? To separate these two kingdoms: first to weaken and disunite the British empire, and then to subvert it. What would become of the liberties of Ireland then? Counteract your enemies, co-operate with your friends, and consolidate the strength of the two kingdoms on such terms, as shall appear to be of equal advantage to each.

Let me ask any of my fellow-citizens some few plain questions. Have we since 1779 to this time followed

followed British laws, by laying the same duties on all colonial produce, foreign as well as British? Have you felt any commercial or constitutional prejudice by this? Do you think it reasonable, that Great-Britain should allow you to bring into her ports the produce of foreign colonies, whilst she prohibits herself from doing so? Have not her colonies been the great source of her superior commerce and maritime strength? Would you promote the trade and navigation of Great-Britain, and in effect of Ireland, or of foreign nations? Would you strengthen the fleet which protects, or that which may be destined to invade you? Is there any country, the trade to which is more valuable to Ireland, than her trade with the rest of the world? Is not Great-Britain that country? Can more effectual means be devised for promoting your trade, than by extending the most valuable part of it? Was not this the object of our Propositions, and is not this the object of our Bill?

What would you have? To remain as we are. How, would you have Britons keep their markets shut against you, whilst you keep your markets open to them? Shall they supply you with colony produce, and refuse to receive it from you? Is this equality of commerce or constitution? Give us similar prohibitions or prohibitory duties. Are you inclined to bring your linens within this rule, and can you justly expect that Great-Britain should encourage your staple manufacture, with prejudice to her

her own in other countries, if you discourage hers? Are you aware, that every protection to a manufacture by a duty, which excludes a better or a cheaper manufacture of the same kind, is, to the amount of the difference in price, a tax on every other manufacture, and every other man in the community who buys the protected manufacture? Do you prefer a system of mutual prohibitions, that tends to protect idleness or ignorance in both kingdoms, to a system that sets up the industry and skill of each nation as an example and rival to the other? You certainly feel no dastardly repugnance to this noble emulation. Do you prefer exclusion to comprehension; reciprocal restraints, prohibitions, perpetual jealousies, and ill-will, to the mutual intercourse of kindness and encouragement, which bids the mixing commerce of the two kingdoms roll in one common flood?

There is no kindness, you say, in the attempt to exclude us from a trade to the East *. Is there none in offering you a trade to her extensive dominions there? Does she give greater liberty to the inhabitants of Great Britain? Which is most valuable, the trade she offers, or that of which she proposes to you still to suspend the exercise? If the exchange is in your favour, is there any thing dis-

* The most valuable part of that trade, which consists in teas, we have already relinquished in favour of the British East-India Company, without murmur, though without any equivalent. We are now offered an equivalent, for what we have, in effect, already conceded without any.

honourable

honourable in accepting of it? or any thing indecorous in proposing it? Would you have her violate her national faith, and dissolve her India Company? No, you say, that expectation would be unreasonable and unjust. Tell me then what can she offer more than she now proposes to you, either whilst that company exists, or in the event of its dissolution? I ask you but one question more. Does Great-Britain possess in any one part of the globe any one article of free commerce whatever, in her power to participate, which she does not open as freely and beneficially to Ireland as to herself? And then consider, my fellow-citizens, what nation upon earth has the widest and best-regulated range of commerce.

In considering the Bill, examine the fundamental principles in the first place. What are they? 1st, To encourage and extend as much as possible the trade between the two kingdoms, on permanent and equitable principles. 2dly, That the inhabitants of each should trade to and from the British colonies, settlements, and dominions, in every part of the globe, now or hereafter to be planted, made, or acquired, on equal terms, both directly and circuitously. If you disapprove of the principles, reject the Bill; if you approve of the principles, go into the detail of the Bill; approve, or amend, or reject, according to your judgment, applied coolly to every distinct and separate part of this comprehensive system. In this you will act with that wisdom and temper which become a great commercial city. Consider whether
any

any clause or expression in it can have the most remote tendency to injure your constitution. If you find any such, reject it, whatever commercial benefits the Bill may offer. But pray, let the clause be first read, and a little considered, and a little understood. Judge of it from the plain words of the text itself, and not from the brilliant paraphrase of eloquent commentators; and let not every man, who thinks proper to beat on the spirit-stirring drum of the constitution, make you start and tremble, and frighten you out of your wits.

I certainly consider myself accountable to my constituents for my parliamentary conduct; but on great national questions it is my duty to think as well as to act for them. I desire only that they will read the Bill, make themselves, as I have endeavoured to do in respect to myself, masters of the many important and complicated subjects which it comprehends; and *then* say, whether a Member for the first trading city of Ireland, who was not unversed in subjects of constitution and commerce, would have acted as became him, if he had voted that a subject of this nature should not have been considered. I have voted only that it should be considered; and was never more thoroughly convinced, that I never gave a vote of more beneficial tendency to the city of Cork; and have no doubt that my constituents will hereafter view my conduct in this light. I affectionately regard my fellow-citizens, and there is nothing I value more than their esteem, except the lasting in-

terests and happiness of them and their posterity. I desire only that they may judge for themselves, and of the Bill itself by its own merits; and not view it through the medium of misrepresentation, which so many men in both kingdoms have, or think they have, an interest in placing between the public and the real subject for their consideration.

The great principle of this Bill, namely equal freedom in each kingdom to the merchants and manufacturers of the other, has been long my decided opinion*. When for your service I endeavoured to give some light to this subject, I pointed out this inequality as one of the just grounds of our commercial complaints. Are my fellow-citizens, after twenty-five years experience of my conduct as one of their representatives, so little acquainted with my character, as to suppose me capable of expressing to the public the warmest feelings on the subject of their former oppressions in trade, and that I should now have any design to renew those grievances, or to impair those constitutional rights, which alone can protect them in the enjoyment of commercial freedom! Apply all the exertions of your knowledge and experience to this subject; its importance deserves them all. Shew your veteran, and, let me add, faithful Representative, that any part of the measure injures your rights as merchants, manufacturers, or freemen, and then see whether any man

* See Commercial Restraints of Ireland, Letter 9.

will use more vigorous exertions for your service. But consider it with that temper and good sense with which the conduct of my fellow-citizens has been usually marked; and do not suffer it, before it has been read or understood, to be encountered by violence and outrage.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful,

And obedient servant,

JOHN HELY HUTCHINSON,

Palmerston,

5th September, 1785.

ON Friday, the 12th of August, 1785, Mr. Orde made his long expected motion, for leave to bring in a Bill—"for effectuating the Intercourse and Commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, on permanent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of both countries." Mr. Orde explained the nature of the Bill in a speech of three hours continuance: and, in considering an important subject, he beseeched every member of the House, "to divest himself of what he had already heard, to throw aside all prejudice, and to discuss a measure, so interesting to all, with tempers free from any bias, and with minds open to conviction."

Mr. CONNOLLY, Against.

Mr. Connolly said, he had before declared the business to be intricate and mysterious; he now found it to be extremely delicate. Instead of conciliating, and as he had said, dovetailing the two countries, it would in his opinion, have a contrary effect; it would take away their constitution, and leave them no commerce at all. He had the day before said, he would move a long adjournment, and propose an address to his Majesty to explain the reason of it, but his idea was now totally changed: Having heard the Bill, he would object to the motion for leave to bring it

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

He began by calling for the Resolution agreed to unanimously on the 20th of December, 1779, which was read, and was in these words:

"Resolved, Nem. Con. that a liberty to trade with the British Colonies in America and the West Indies, and the British Settlements on the Coast of Africa, in like manner as the trade is carried on between Great Britain and the said Colonies and Settlements, will be productive of very great commercial benefits, will be a most affectionate mark of the regard and attention of Great Britain to our distresses, and will give new vigour to the zeal of his Majesty's brave and loyal people of Ireland, to stand forward in support of his Majesty's person and government, and the interest, the honour, and the dignity of the British empire."

I will assure the Right Hon.
Gentle-

Mr. CONNOLLY, Against.

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

it in. The Bill bartered away the constitution of Ireland. It was well known he had been no advocate for the attainment of that constitution; but that House having asserted the constitution, and the constitution having been recognized, he had no right to give his consent to alter or relinquish it, nor had any member of that House any such right, and the kingdom he was persuaded, would never submit to such a sacrifice. The Bill proposed to be brought in by the Right Hon. Gentleman, notwithstanding the mazes and the labyrinth into which he had endeavoured to lead the House with a view to disguise and gloss over its real purport, it was evident, was in substance and effect, the same with the Bill upon the table; the Bill brought into the British Parliament, by the minister. It ought, therefore, to be opposed in the first instance. They had better not suffer the Hydra that threatened ruin to both kingdoms to grow up; let them meet the mischief in its infancy, and strangle it in the cradle. He had voted for the original Propositions, because he thought a permanent system for the benefit of the two countries; but the Bill now opened to the House by the Right Hon. Gentleman, instead of dovetailing and uniting them, could tend only to their mutual discontent and separation.

Gentleman, (Mr. Connolly, that I did not in any sort allude to any thing which has fallen from him; but since he has done me the honour to interrupt me, I shall probably be induced to allude to him before I sit down; and the Right Hon. Gentleman having called my attention to him, has a claim upon me for precedence, I shall therefore in the first instance dismiss him. The Right Hon. Gentleman has stated that this is a subject of so much delicacy and intricacy, so much envelope in difficulty and mystery, that it is nearly incomprehensible. And in the same breath he announces the whole system to be injurious to the trade and commerce of this country, and subversive of its legislative independence. The Right Hon. Gentleman calls out for time to enable the people to understand the subject, and will not consent to the introduction of a Bill which is to point out to them what they are to understand. The Right Hon. Gentleman will not consent to the introduction of a Bill which he has never read, and which he professes his inability to understand, because it is a Bill which he asserts to be ruinous to the trade, and subversive of the constitution of Ireland.

Possibly I may have mistated the argument. I do not think however, that I have mistated it; however, if my
Right

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

Right Hon. friend feels any thing like uneasiness at the repetition of his arguments, or at any observation which I have made upon them, he knows my respect and regard for him to be so great, that I never can proceed in any thing which may give him one moment's pain. I am satisfied he acts upon every occasion, to the best of his judgment for the advantage of this country. I shall therefore proceed as I had intended when I first rose.

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

I can excuse the Right Hon. Member who moves you for leave to bring in the Bill, he is an Englishman, and contends for the power of his own country while I am contending for the liberty of mine; he might have spared himself the trouble of stating his own Bill. I read it before, I read it in the twenty Resolutions, I read it in the English Bill, which is to all intents and purposes the same; and which he might read without the trouble of resorting to his own. His comment is of little moment; a Lord Lieutenant's Secretary is an unsafe commentator on an Irish constitution: the former merit of the Right Hon. Gentleman in pressing for the original Propositions and contending against the present, which he

now

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

As my Rt. Hon. friend (Mr. Grattan) alluded to the memorable æra of 1779, I thought it necessary to remind him of the unanimous sense of the House and the Nation upon the subject at that time, and to remind him, that the grant of the Colony trade was at that time deemed an act of liberality, which ought to attach us warmly to Great Britain. I thought it necessary to remind him of his language and conduct at that time, that the emulation of that day was, who should stand forward to express his gratitude to Great Britain, and his admiration of the unexampled ability and address with which Lord North had conducted the cause of Ireland. How it has happened that the extension and permanent establishment of the principle, which

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

now supports, may have been very great, and I am willing to thank him *for his past services*; they may be a private consolation to himself. No more—I differ from him in his account of this transaction. He *was pledged* to his eleven Propositions; his offer was the Propositions, our's the taxes; he took the latter, but forgets the former. I leave both, and come to his system. Here it becomes necessary to go back a little—I begin with your free trade obtained in 1779; by that you recovered your right to trade with every part of the world, whose ports were open to you, subject to your own unstipulated duties, the British plantations only excepted; by that, you obtained the benefit of your insular situation, the benefit of your western situation, and the benefit of your exemption from intolerable taxes. What these advantages might be, no man could say, but any man who had seen the struggle you had made during a century of depression, could foresee, that a spirit of industry operating upon a state of liberty in a young nation, must in the course of time produce signal advantages—the sea is like the earth, to non-exertion a *waste*, to industry a *mine*; this trade was accompanied with another, a plantation trade; in this, you retained your right to trade directly with the British plantations

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

which at that time was the subject of overstrained applause and gratitude, has now become a topic of popular clamour and discontent. How it has happened that a voluntary and precarious grant of the Colony trade, in 1779, was considered an affectionate mark of British liberality, and that an extended and irrevocable grant of the same trade, in 1785, is considered as an insult and an injury:—How my Right Hon. Friend will reconcile his conduct and his language in 1779, to his conduct and his language on this day, by what *twist* of argument he will be able to reconcile to the nation, opinions so violently contrasted and inconsistent, I am free to acknowledge I want sagacity to discover.

That I may not incur the hazard of contradiction, when I state what was in 1779 considered perfect freedom of trade, I will recur to the words of a Gentleman now in my eye (Mr. Flood), delivered in this assembly on the 20th of December, 1779: “What is a Free Trade? I was one of the first and most decided in using the term. It is a trade to the whole world, subject to the restraints of your own legislature, and that of the country with which you trade; consequently in Britain, and the British Colonies, subject to the restrictions of the British

Mr. GRATTAN, *Against.*

tions in a variety of articles, without a reference to British duties; by this, you obtained a right to trade with the British plantations directly in each and every other article, subject to the rate of British duty; by this, you obtained a right to select the article, so that the general trade should not hang on the special conformity; and by this, you did not covenant to affect, exclude, or postpone the produce of foreign plantations—the reason was obvious, you demanded two things, a free trade and a plantation trade; had the then minister insisted on a covenant to exclude the produce of foreign plantations, he had given you a plantation trade instead of a free trade, (whereas your demand was *both*) and his grant had been *inadequate, unsatisfactory, and inadmissible*—these points of trade being settled, a third in the opinion of some remained; namely, the intercourse with England or the channel trade—A successful political campaign, an unsuccessful harvest, the poverty of not a few, together with the example of England, brought forward in the year 1783, a number of famishing manufacturers with a demand of protecting duties; the extent of their demand was idle, the manner of conveying that demand tumultuary, but not being wholly resisted nor yet adequately assisted, they laid the

Mr. FITZGIBBON, *For.*

tish legislature. This, says he, is a principle as clear as the sun, which shines upon our reviving empire, and wide as the universe, if the universe were wider than it is." This, Sir, is the Honourable Gentleman's definition of a Free Trade; and upon his own principles, clear as the sun, and wide as the universe, I meet him upon the present question. From 1779 to 1784, we rested satisfied upon the subject of trade; but in 1784, it was discovered that the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland was unequal; that she poured her manufactures in upon us, and shut our manufactures out from her markets. But above all, it was complained that by the construction which she put upon her navigation laws, we were prohibited from importing into England the produce of her colonies, whilst she claimed a right, and we acquiesced in the claim, to import into this country, from England, the produce of the whole world. The remedy proposed was, to commence a war of Prohibitory Duties, but the good sense of the House saw how destructive such a measure must be, and rejected it by as respectable a majority as ever appeared within these walls. An Honourable Member then thought it necessary to move an address to the Throne, that the servants

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

the foundation of another plan, which made its appearance in 1785, opposite indeed to their wishes and fatal to their expectation; this was the system of reciprocity, a system fair in its principle and in process of time likely to be beneficial but not likely to be of any great present advantage, other than by stopping the growth of demand, allaying a commercial fever and producing settlement and incorporation with the people of England; this system was founded on the only principle which could obtain between two independent nations, *equality*, and the equality consisted in similarity of duty: now as the total abatement of duties on both sides, had driven the Irishman out of his own market, as the raising our duties to the British standard had driven the Englishman out of the Irish market, a third method was resorted to, the abatement of British duty to the Irish standard: but then this equality of duty was inequality of trade, for as the Englishman with that duty against him, had beaten you in the Irish market, with that duty in his favour he must keep you out of the English: so that under this arrangement the English manufacturer continued protected, and the Irish manufacturer continued exposed, and the abatement of duty was no more than disarming the argument of retaliation. Had the arrange-

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

vants of the crown might be directed to employ the interval between that time and the present session in digesting a plan of commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, upon equitable and liberal principles. I have heard Gentlemen say, they considered that address as alluding to Protecting Duties, but I will not pay their memories a compliment at the expence of their understandings; it is impossible they could have understood that this address alluded to Protecting Duties; the words of the address speak the sense of it very plainly; and Protecting Duties had been just rejected, as a wild and nonsensical project.

A system of commercial intercourse therefore was called for, by the Parliament of Ireland, and I trust I shall not hear it again asserted, that this has been a subject obtruded upon the nation. The unanimous address of the Commons gives the lie direct to that assertion; accordingly the outline of the system which had been called for, was submitted to the House in eleven Propositions, early in this session. The leading features of it were, "That the markets of both countries should be open to the manufactures of each other upon equal terms; that therefore no new prohibition or additional duties should be imposed

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

arrangement stopped here, it had been unjust indeed, but as Ireland was to covenant that she would not raise her duties on British manufactures, England on her part was to covenant, that she would not diminish her preference in favour of Irish linen, and the adjustment amounted to a covenant, that neither country in their respective markets would affect the manufacture of the other by any operative alteration of duty; however, the adjustment did not stop at the home manufacture, it went to plantation produce, and here you stood on two grounds, law and justice; law, because you only desired that the same words of the same act of navigation should have the same construction on one side the Channel as they have on the other; how they had ever borne a different one, I cannot conceive, otherwise than by supposing that in your ancient state of dependency you were not intitled to the common benefit of the mother tongue; the answer to this argument was unsatisfactory, "that England had altered the law," but if England had so altered the law, it ceased to impose the same restrictions and confer the same advantages, and then a doubt might arise whether the act of navigation was the law of Ireland, so that you seemed entitled to the construction or free

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

posed in either country upon the manufactures of the other; that Great Britain should secure and make permanent to us, the grant of the colony trade, which by the settlement of 1779, as my Right Hon. Friend has termed it, was precarious and revocable; and that she should relax her navigation laws in our favour." For the present I shall not go into the detail of this system, but I must remind Gentlemen, that England by this agreement binds herself to secure to this country the monopoly of her market in the article of linens. And I must remind them also, that a Gentleman of the first abilities, a leader of English opposition, did state emphatically in the British Senate, that Britain, by so doing, gave up her best protection against the future caprices of this country.

As to the liberty of sending our manufactures to the British markets, I freely own I have not very sanguine expectations of advantage from it. But, Sir, I prize the advantages of a relaxation in her navigation laws very highly. I think that without such a relaxation we have little prospect indeed of any foreign trade: because, if the Irish merchant has not the certain issue of the English markets for foreign commodities, he has no spur to enterprize and speculation. But

Mr. GRATTAN, *Against*.

free from the act; now it is of more consequence to England that you should be bound by the act of navigation, than to Ireland to have the benefit of the fair construction of it. But you stood on still better ground, *justice*; was it just that you should receive plantation goods from England, and that England should not receive them from you? here if you don't find the law equal, you may make it so: for as yet you are a free Parliament.

I leave this part of the subject; equality of duty but no present equality of trade. I come to that part of the adjustment which is *inequality of both*; — and first, the part which relates to the *primum* of your manufactures. When the original Propositions were argued, Gentlemen exclaimed, “England reserves her Wool, and Ireland does not reserve her Woollen Yarn,” it was answered, “Ireland may if she pleases,” what will those Gentlemen now say, when England reserves both; — the *primum* of her manufactures, and of yours; and not only woollen yarn but linen yarn, hides, &c? To tell me that this exportation is beneficial to Ireland is to tell me nothing; the question is not about stopping the export, but giving up the regulation, in instances where England retains the power of regulation, and the act of prohibition. To tell me,

Mr. FITZGIBBON, *For*.

But if England relaxes her navigation laws in our favour, she has a right to expect that we shall protect and cherish the ships and mariners of the empire, as she has protected them. She has a right to expect that we will follow her in a code of laws, which have been the source of her commercial opulence, the prime origin of her maritime strength, and therefore it is folly to suppose that England will ever conclude any treaty of commerce with any nation on the earth, without ample security for the protection and encouragement of British ships and mariners, and for the protection and encouragement of her own plantations. This security she has a right to expect from us, and without it, it is vain to hope that she will ever conclude any treaty with us, and I must remind Gentlemen, that our trade with England is of greater value than our trade with the rest of the world. If we were to lose it, in six months, you would not have gold in circulation for the common occasions of life.

This is the outline of the system, proposed and approved of almost universally, early in the session, and I call upon any man to shew me where the principle or spirit of this system has been departed from in the English Propositions, or in the Bill introduced by the English Minister.

Mr. GRATTON, *Against.*

me, that this exportation is necessary for England is to tell me nothing, but that you are material to England and therefore should have obtained at least equal terms. I own, to assist the manufactures of Great Britain as far as is not absolutely inconsistent with those of Ireland is to *me an object*; but still the difference recurs, she is not content with voluntary accommodation on your part, but *exact*s perpetual export from you in the very article, in which she retains absolute prohibition—"no new prohibition"---every prohibition beneficial to England was laid before---none in favour of Ireland. Ireland till 1779 *was a province*, and every province is a victim, your provincial state ceased, but before the provincial regulations are done away, this arrangement establishes a principle of *uti possidetis*, that is, Great Britain shall retain all her advantages, and Ireland shall retain all her disadvantages. But I leave this part of the adjustment where reciprocity is disclaimed in the outset of treaty and the rudiment of manufacture; I come to instances of more striking inequality, and first your situation in the East. You are to give a monopoly to the present or any future East-India Company during its existence, and to the British nation for ever after; it has been said that the Irishman

Mr. FITZGIBBON, *For.*

But it was necessary to combat the prejudices of the British manufacturers, and the opposition of a party, many of whom do, I am satisfied, oppose any extension of the trade and commerce of Ireland upon principle, and therefore it is, that the British Minister, and the men who supported him, were forced into the detail of this subject in their Resolutions -- A detail, which must necessarily have followed, even if the British Parliament had kept clear of it in this first stage of the business.

God forbid that I should impute wrong motives to any man; I am satisfied that it is the principle of some of the leading men of the present opposition in England, not to extend the trade and commerce of this country. And if I did not chuse to keep this subject clear of any thing which might look like a question of English party, I would prove to the conviction of every man who hears me, that the weight of Ireland in the scale of the empire must for ever prove an obstacle to the great object of their political career.

With respect to the East India trade, I must inform the Right Hon. Gentleman, that it is a question, in my mind, of no doubt or difficulty, that we have by a law of Ireland confirmed the monopoly of the East India Company; and therefore, so long as their charter

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in this is in the same situation as the Englishman, but there is this difference, the difference between having, and not having the trade; the British Parliament has judged it most expedient for Great Britain to carry on her trade to the East, by an exclusive Company; the Irish Parliament is now to determine it most expedient for Ireland to have no trade at all in these parts. This is not a surrender of the political rights of the constitution, but of the natural rights of *man*; not of the privileges of Parliament, but “of the rights of nations,” — “not to sail beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan,” an awful interdict! Not only European settlements, but neutral countries excluded, and God’s providence shut out in the most opulent boundaries of creation; other interdicts go to particular places for local reasons, because they belong to certain European States, but here are neutral regions forbidden and a path prescribed to the Irishman on open sea. Other interdicts go to a determinate period of time, but here is an eternity of restraint, you are to have no trade at all during the existence of any Company, and no free trade to those countries after its expiration; this resembles rather a judgment of God than an act of the legislature, whether you measure it by immensity of

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charter lasts, we are bound by it. And were this charter expired, I believe our prospect of a trade to India, even if it were the interest of this country to interfere with Great Britain, is very remote indeed.

The Right Hon Gentleman has said, that we gain but a speck of advantage in the permission granted to East India ships to touch at Irish ports in their passage out; and yet this was one very great cause of the clamour raised in England against the system; for Mr. Wedgwood, and two other men, who were examined upon the subject, at the bar of the House of Lords, did not hesitate to declare, that glass, and some other articles, were likely to be exported from Ireland to the East Indies, and in such quantities as would prove extremely injurious to the manufactures of England.

As to the East India trade, the Gentleman is much mistaken. Whenever the charter of the Company shall expire, Ireland will, upon the same terms as the subjects of Great Britain, be enabled to trade with all the British possessions in the East, as to British colonies, and to all the independent states without restriction.

—The Right Hon. Gentleman is totally and radically mistaken, and there cannot be a stronger argument for the introduction of the Bill than he has furnished; for it now appears

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of space or infinity of duration, and has nothing human about it except its presumption.

What you lose by this surrender, what you forfeit by giving up the possibility of intercourse with so great a proportion of the inhabited Globe, *I cannot presume to say*; but this I can say, that Gentlemen have no right to argue from present want of capital against future trade, nor to give up their capacity to trade because they have not yet brought that capacity into action, still less have they a right to do so without the shadow of *compensation*, and least of all on the affected compensation which, trifling with your understanding as well as interest, suffers a vessel to go to the West, in its way to the East. I leave this uncompensated surrender—I leave your situation in the East which is *blank*—I leave your situation in the East which is the surrender of trade itself; and I come to your situation in the West which is a surrender of its freedom. You are to give a monopoly to the British plantations at their own taxes; before, you did so only in certain articles, with a power of selection, and then only as long as you pleased to conform to the condition, and without any stipulation to exclude foreign produce. It may be very proper to exclude foreign produce

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appears that he is altogether mistaken in his idea of the fundamentals of it. He has objected to this system, that we stipulate not to trade with the colonies of foreign states. Now I request of gentlemen to attend to this objection. It is modestly desired on the part of this country, that Great Britain should grant irrevocably to us a right to trade with her colonies and plantations and leave it in our discretion at any time, to trade with foreign colonies and plantations to the prejudice of Britain and British plantations; nay more, it is desired that England should open her ports to receive the product of the West Indies through the medium of Ireland, and trust to the scrupulous honour of Irish merchants not to deceive her, by imposing the produce of foreign colonies upon Great Britain in her own markets, to the utter ruin of the British plantations. But can any thing be more just, if we are to share with England her colony trade, than that we should give to her colonies a monopoly of our market? It has been insinuated, that we could trade to more advantage with the colonies of foreign states; but what foreign states will allow us to trade with their colonies? Who is to protect us if foreign states shall refuse to do us justice? or who is to assert our rights if they shall be violated?

lated?

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by your own temporary laws, and at your own free will and option, but now you are to *covenant* to do so *for ever*, and thereby you put the trade out of your own power *for ever*, and you give to the English, West as well as East, an eternal monopoly for their plantation produce in the taxing and regulating of which you have no sort of deliberation or interference, and over which Great Britain has a complete supremacy. Here you will consider the advantage you receive from that monopoly, and judge, how far it may be expedient to set up against yourselves that monopoly for ever; there is scarcely an article of the British plantations that is not out of all proportion dearer than the same article is in any other part of the Globe, nor any one article that is not produced elsewhere, for some of which articles you might establish a mart for your manufactures. Portugal, for instance, capable of being a better market for our drapery than Great Britain; this enormity of price is aggravated by an enormity of tax, what then is this covenant? to take these articles from the British plantations, and from none other, at the present high rates and taxes, and to take them at all times to come, subject to whatever further rates and taxes the Parliament of Great Britain shall enact.

lated? But admit for a moment, that we could trade with the colonies of foreign states, in exclusion to the colonies of Britain, would not this be an act of open hostility, and call for retaliation?

The Right Honourable Gentleman is mistaken as to the settlement of 1779---it was a voluntary grant, revocable at pleasure; and one great argument in favour of the present settlement is, that by it that grant is rendered irrevocable.

I now come to the great argument of those who oppose this system—the argument, if it deserves the name, which has been trumpeted forth by the enemies of Ireland in both countries, to inflame her pride, and to prejudice her against this settlement. It is asserted again and again, that this treaty is an insult to Ireland—that it strikes directly at the independence of her legislature. This is the first instance in which Ireland has ever treated, and it is a new idea to me, that England, by opening and carrying on a treaty with her as with an independent state, insults her pride, and strikes at her independence. But what is desired of her on the part of England? So long as you continue to trade with us, as you have proposed, we desire of you, by laws of your enacting, to cherish, and protect, and encourage the ships and mariners of

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enact. Let me ask you, why did you refuse Protecting Duties to your own people? because they looked like a monopoly; and will you give to the East India Merchant, and the West India planter something more? a monopoly where the monopolist is in some degree the law-giver. The principle of equal duty or the same restriction is not the shadow of security; to make such a principle applicable, the objects must be equal, but here the objects are not only dissimilar but opposite; the condition of England is great debt and greater capital, great incumbrances, but still greater abilities; the condition of Ireland, little capital but a small debt, poverty but exemption from intolerable taxes. Equal burthens will have opposite effects, they will fund the debt of one country, and destroy the trade of the other; high duties will take away *your* resource, which is exemption from them, but will be a fund for Great Britain: thus the colony principle in its extent is dangerous to a very great degree. Suppose Great Britain should raise her colony duties to a still greater degree, to answer the exigency of some future war, or to fund her present debt, you must follow, for by this bill you would have no option in foreign trade; you must follow, not because you wanted the

tax

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

of the empire, as we have done. We only desire of you, by laws of your own, to adopt a code of laws, the policy of which stands admitted by all the nations of Europe---a code of laws which is the great source of the strength and wealth of the empire. So long as you continue to trade with our colonies, we desire that you will regulate that trade, as we do. But if you do not chuse to adopt our navigation code---if you do not chuse to protect the ships and mariners of the empire by your laws, as we protect them by ours---if you do not chuse to regulate your trade with our plantations, as we regulate ours, why then there is an end of the agreement---you then make your option, not to trade with us, and with our plantations, upon the terms which are necessary for the general security of the empire.

Here give me leave to recur to that principle, clear as the sun and wide as the universe, which I have taken the liberty to borrow from an Honourable Member --- Freedom of trade, is liberty to trade with foreign nations, subject to the restrictions of your own legislature, and the legislature of the country with which you trade. Here I meet that Honourable Member with his own principle, clothed in his own words: and if the principle is questioned, it is impossible

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tax, but lest your exemption from taxes should give your manufactures any comparative advantage, Irish taxes are to be precautions against the prosperity of Irish manufactures! You must follow because your taxes here would be no longer measured by the wants of the country or the interest of her commerce, because we should have instituted a false measure of taxation; the wants and the riches of another country, which exceeds you much in wants, but infinitely more in riches. I fear we should have done more, we should have made English jealousy the barometer of Irish taxes. Suppose this country should in any degree establish a direct trade with the British plantations, suppose the apprehensions of the British manufacturers in any degree realized, *they* may dictate *your* duties, they may petition the British Parliament to raise certain duties, which shall not affect the articles of their intercourse, but may stop yours; or, which shall affect the articles of their intercourse a little and annihilate yours; thus they may by one and the same duty raise a revenue in England, and destroy a rival in Ireland. Camblets are an instance of the former, and every valuable plantation import an instance of the latter; your option in foreign trade had been a restraint on England, or a re-

source

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

possible to form a commercial treaty with any nation on earth. But I will shew you the principle recorded again and again in your own statute book, from 1779 to 1785—session after session you have recorded it. What was the principle admitted in 1779—admitted and proclaimed by the whole nation in peals of applause and gratitude? We will import the produce of the British colonies and plantations upon the terms of enacting from time to time, by our laws, specific taxes imposed by Great Britain upon British subjects; and accordingly, session after session, this agreement has been recited in your money bill. The British tax is recited, and the British tax is enacted. What is your option here? Have you an option as to the quantum of tax? No; you enact the British tax, or you give up the trade. I defy the ingenuity of man to distinguish the two cases in point of constitution. What does England desire now?—You have proposed to trade with me in a more extended way, than you have heretofore done---I agree to it, provided you agree on your part to make the same regulations from time to time, to protect and encourage the mariners and ships of the empire, as I do here. Where is the insult *here*, or where is the attack upon your independence? I say again,

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where

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source to Ireland, but under this adjustment you give up your foreign trade, and confine yourself to that which you must not presume to regulate. The exclusion of foreign plantation produce would seem sufficient, for every purpose of power and domination, but to aggravate, and it would seem, to *insult*, the Independent States of North America are most ungraciously brought into this arrangement, as if Ireland was a British colony, or North America *continued* a part of the British dominion; by the Resolutions almost all the produce of North America was to be imported to Ireland, subject to British duties; the Bill is more moderate, and only enumerates certain articles: But what right has Great Britain to interfere in our foreign trade, what right has she to dictate to us on the subject of *North American trade*? How far this country may be further affected by clogging her plantation trade and surrendering her free trade, I shall not for the present stop more minutely to inquire, but I must stop to protest against one circumstance in this arrangement, which should not accompany any arrangement, which would be fatal to settlement itself, and tear asunder the bands of faith and affection; the circumstance I mean, is the opening of the settlements

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where is the departure from the Honourable Member's principle, clear as the sun, and wide as the universe?—where is the departure from the principle, sanctified and recorded again and again in your own statute book? An Honourable Member has alluded to the Methuen Treaty. What is that treaty? It consists of two articles only—Portugal agrees to receive English woollens, and England agrees, from time to time, to enact specific taxes upon the wines of Portugal. Is not this the same principle again? Why the Honourable Member may as well say, that England is insulted, and that England surrendered her independence, because she agreed not to raise more than a stated revenue upon the importation of Portugal wines; because she binds herself to give a preference to the wines of Portugal in the British market, at all times over the wines of France. In short, if the Irish nation will never condescend to promise a compliance with any condition of a treaty, the Irish nation must determine never to make any commercial treaty, or any treaty whatever.

It has been said, we cannot confide in the present Minister; but if we cannot confide in him, I do not know in what part of the British dominions we can find the man in whom we *can confide*. As to the leading

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ments of the colony trade, and free trade of 1779: this adjustment takes from you the power of chusing the article, so that the whole covenant hangs on the special circumstance, and takes from you your option in the produce of foreign plantations, and even of America. It is a revision in peace of the settlements of war; it is a revocation in peace of the acquisition of war. I here ask by what authority? By what authority is Ireland obliged now to enter into a general account for past acquisitions? Did the petition of the manufacturers desire it? Did the addresses of the last session desire it? Did the Minister in this session suggest it? No; I call for *authority*, whereby we can be justified in waving the benefit of past treaties, and bringing the whole relative situation of this country into question in an arrangement, which only professes to settle her channel trade. I conceive the settlements of the last war are sacred; you may make other settlements with the British nation, but you will never make any so beneficial as these are; they were the result of a conjuncture miraculously formed, and fortunately seized. The American war was the Irish harvest. From that period, as from the lucky moment of your fate, your commerce, constitution, and mind took

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ing men who oppose him, I am satisfied it is a first principle with them not to make any concession to this country which is to add to her weight in the scale of the empire.— In 1779, when Lord North proposed his Resolutions in favour of Ireland, they would not assent, nor would they dissent — they would reserve themselves. In 1785, when Mr. Pitt, with the liberality of a great and firm mind, stood forth to combat the prejudices of the manufacturers of Great Britain, for the general advantage of the empire, they echoed the clamours and the prejudices of these men, and having failed in their prospect of damning the measure in England, they instantly changed their ground, and applied themselves to the pride and the prejudices of this country; and, as I have been informed, they have somewhat prematurely indulged their merriment at our expence—they have somewhat prematurely indulged their merriment at the expence of a few individuals, whom they suppose to have swallowed the bait. And this country will be the laughing-stock of every nation in Europe, if she becomes the dupe of so palpable and shallow an artifice. Here, Sir, I desire to be understood, not to state this as a conduct in any degree reprehensible—I am satisfied these gentlemen act

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Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

took form and vigour ; and to that period, and to a first and salient principle must they recur for life and renovation. 'Tis therefore I consider those settlements as sacred, and from them I am naturally led to that part of the subject which relates to compensation, the payment which we are to make for the losses which we are to sustain. Certainly compensation cannot apply to the free trade supposing it uninvaded, first, because that trade was your right ; to pay for the recovery of what you should never have lost, had been to a great degree unjust and derogatory : secondly, because that free trade was established in 1779, and the settlement then closed, and cannot be opened now ; to do so were to destroy the faith of treaties, to make it idle to enter into the present settlement, and to render it vain to enter into any settlement with a British Minister. The same may be said of the colony trade ; that too was settled in 1779 on terms then specified, not now to be opened, clogged, conditioned, or circumscribed ; still less does compensation apply to the free constitution of 1782. His Majesty then informed you from the throne, “ these things come unaccompanied with any stipulation ” — besides, the free constitution, like the free trade, was your right. Free-men wont pay for the recovery of

upon system, but no man shall persuade me that they are friends of Ireland. Let gentlemen recollect the language held by the leader of English opposition, and by a gentleman foremost in his confidence on the same day ; one gentleman stated, that Captain Brooke was an interested witness, and therefore not to be credited, because this was an agreement wholly and exclusively beneficial to Ireland. And in the next half hour his friend stated, that he had written to all his friends in Ireland to be upon their guard, for that it was an agreement ruinous to the commerce and the constitution of this country—I listen to the one and the other with perfect indifference. I do not pretend to say, that a few individuals in Great Britain may not perhaps feel a temporary inconvenience from this settlement ; but I am perfectly assured, that it will be highly advantageous to the empire. There is no solid advantage which this country can acquire that will not ultimately tend to the strength and wealth of the British empire, and therefore he is a narrow and flimsy politician, who will sacrifice the strength of the empire to the narrow prejudices of interested individuals. A spirit of monopoly is the first principle of a merchant or a manufacturer. Whilst man continues to be a creature of passion and interest, felt.

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of right; payment had derogated from the claim of right; so we then stated to Ministry. It was then thought that to have annexed subsidy to constitution had been a barren experiment on public poverty, and had marred an illustrious experiment on the feelings of the nation, and had been neither satisfaction to Ireland, nor revenue to Great Britain. This bolder policy, this happy art, which saw how much may be got by tax, and how much must be left to honour, which made a bold push for the heart of the nation, and leaving her free to acquire, took a chance for her disposition to give, had its effect; for since that time until the present *most unfortunate attempt*, a great bulk of the community were on the side of Government, and the parliamentary constitution was a guarantee for public peace.

See then what you obtained without compensation—a colony trade, a free trade, the independency of your judges, the government of your army, the extension of the unconstitutional powers of your council, the restoration of the judicature of your lords, and the independency of your legislature!

See now what you obtain by compensation—a covenant not to trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of

self-interest will be his first consideration; and therefore in a great national system of commerce, a merchant or a manufacturer is perhaps the last man from whom you may expect information. The great object of his life is to accumulate wealth for himself; but in what manner national wealth is accumulated, his education or his pursuits do not enable him to see; and therefore, upon a great national system, a merchant or a manufacturer is perhaps the last man to whom I would apply for information. Let me remind gentlemen of the evidence delivered at the bar of this House in the course of the last session. How many of your merchants and manufacturers informed you, that this would never be a nation of trade, foreign or domestick, until you imposed prohibitory duties on the importation of British woollens. In a country whose imports from England do not exceed one million, and whose exports to England exceed two millions and an half, the merchants and manufacturers came forward to press you to commence a war of prohibitory duties. An Hon. Gentleman says, he has no confidence in the Irish Administration, and he assigns one reason for his want of confidence, that my Right Hon. friend when he was at London never appeared in the House of Commons to clear up

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of Magellan; a covenant not to take foreign plantation produce, but as the Parliament of Great Britain shall permit; a covenant not to take certain produce of the United States of North America, but as Great Britain shall permit; a covenant not to take British plantation produce, but as Great Britain shall prescribe; a covenant to make such acts of navigation as Great Britain shall prescribe; a covenant never to protect your own manufactures, never to guard the primum of those manufactures!—These things are accompanied, I do acknowledge, with a covenant on the part of England to disarm your argument for protecting duties, to give the English language in the act of navigation the same construction in Ireland, and to leave our linen markets without molestation or diminution. One should think some god presided over the liberties of this country who made it frugality in the Irish nation to continue free, but has annexed the penalties of fine as well as infamy to the surrender of the constitution! From this consideration of commerce, a question much more high, much more deep, the invaluable question of constitution arises, in which the idea of protecting duties, the idea of reciprocal duties, countervailing duties, and all that detail vanish, and the energies of every

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

up a doubt whether he had used the word *mart*, or the word *emporium* when he first stated his eleven Propositions to this House. There is another reason, and I will say it is the true reason, why that gentleman has no confidence in the Irish Administration—he has no connexion with them;—but being closely connected with them, it shall always be my pride, as a gentleman of this country, to acknowledge my obligations to the Duke of Rutland, and to my Right Hon. Friend. This country owes more to them than to any men who have ever filled their stations. In the course of this very interesting business, they have displayed the most unwearied assiduity, and unshaken firmness and integrity.

Before I sit down I must remind the House, that my Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Connolly) has, by authority from a noble Duke, disavowed the declaration which was imputed to him, because it rescues a nobleman for whom I entertain a very affectionate respect, from some imputations which I have heard thrown upon him, and which from my knowledge of his strict honour and integrity, I have always asserted to be false and groundless. We all recollect when a motion was made in this House, with respect to the East Indies, that my predecessor in office declared,

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every heart, and the prudence of every head, are called upon to shield this nation, that long depressed, and at length by domestic virtue and foreign misfortune emancipated, has now to defend her newly-acquired rights, and her justly-acquired reputation; the question is no less than that, which three years ago agitated, fired and exalted the Irish nation—the independency of the Irish Parliament! By this Bill we are to covenant that the Parliament of Ireland shall subscribe whatever laws the Parliament of England shall prescribe, respecting your trade with the British plantations, your trade in the produce of foreign plantations, and part of your trade from the United States of North America. There is also a sweeping covenant or condition, whereby we are to agree to subscribe whatever laws the Parliament of England shall prescribe respecting navigation; the adjustment subjects also your reversionary trade to the East to the same terms—over all these objects you are to have no propounding, no deliberative, no negative, no legislative power whatsoever. Here then is an end of your Free Trade and your Free Constitution! I acquit the people of England; an ill-grounded jealousy for their trade seems aggravated by a well-founded alarm for your liberty; unwilling to
relinquish,

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clared, that it was improper to fritter away piece-meal a great system of trade, which Administration meant to bring forward. And I know Lord Northington's honour, integrity, and firmness to be such, that he never would have suffered such a declaration of a gentleman in his confidence to have remained uncontradicted, if the British Cabinet had determined not in any sort to concede any extension of commerce to this country; and therefore I am happy, for the sake of a nobleman whose principles I admire, and whose worth and honour will ever remain unfulfilled, that my Right Hon. friend has publicly disavowed the declaration imputed to the noble Duke.

For my part, I never have hid myself from any public question, nor ever will. The man who in or out of office can stoop to hide himself from any public question is, in my opinion, a most despicably corrupt man; the man who, in or out of office, can skulk from his duty in this assembly, I consider to be guilty of the most pitiful and nasty subterfuge that can disgrace a man, and therefore I never will skulk from any measure; if I approve it I will support it like a man, if not, I will oppose it like a man. And I repeat before this House, I repeat it in the face of the nation, that the Bill moved
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relinquish, but when relinquished, too magnanimous and too wise to resume abdicated tyranny; they feel in these Propositions an honourable solicitude for the freedom of Ireland and the good faith of Great Britain, and see the darling principles and passions of both countries wounded in an arrangement which was to compose them for ever: to a proposal therefore so little warranted by the great body of the people of England, so little expected by the people of Ireland, so little suggested by the Minister, and so involving to whatever is dear to your interest, honour, and freedom, I answer, *no*. I plead past settlements, I insist on the faith of nations; the objections should have been made when these settlements were making; but now the logic of empire comes too late; no accommodation, no deprecation on this subject: assertion, national assertion, national *re-assertion*! If three years after the recovery of your freedom you *bend*—your children, corrupted by your example, *will surrender*;—but if you stand firm and inexorable, you make a seasonable impression on the people of England, you give a wholesome example to your children, you afford an awful instruction to his Majesty's Ministers, and make (as the Old English did in the case of their Charter) the attempt
on

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for this night is highly advantageous to its commerce, and in no sort incompatible with its free constitution. Gentlemen may triumph in their opposition to this Bill, but I will defend it line by line, and word by word; I will meet their whole array upon it—I fear them not; I will defend it on the principle of the British Constitution; and as to the clamour which has been raised against this measure, it is as unfounded and as little to be regarded as any that ever disturbed the deliberations of a wise assembly. Your own records declare, that you have not thought the principle of the Bill unconstitutional. In every session since 1779, in which year you obtained the Colony trade, you recite the condition on which you possess it; you recite the British tax, and you enact that tax. What then is the difference here? You are permitted to trade to every possession Great Britain has, provided you adopt the laws by which she regulates her trade; provided you trade as British subjects trade. Every advantage which British subjects enjoy is offered to your acceptance. I call upon any man living to tell me—where is there an iota of difference? Therefore let no man talk to *me* of hiding my head; I support the Bill as highly advantageous to this country; and
Gentlemen,

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on Irish liberty its confirmation and establishment!

However, lest certain glosses should seem to go unanswered, I shall, for the sake of argument, wave past settlements, and combat the reasoning of the English Resolutions, the Address, his Majesty's answer, and the reasoning of this day. It is here said, that the laws respecting commerce and navigation should be similar, and *inferred*, that Ireland should subscribe the laws of England on those subjects: that is the same law, the same legislature; but this argument goes a great deal too far—it goes to the army, for the mutiny bill should be the same; it was endeavoured to be extended to the collection of your revenue, and is in train to be extended to your taxes; it goes to the extinction of the most invaluable part of your parliamentary capacity; it is an union, an incipient and a creeping union; a virtual union, establishing one will in the general concerns of commerce and navigation, and reposing that will in the Parliament of Great Britain; an union where our Parliament preserves its existence after it has lost its authority, and our people are to pay for a parliamentary establishment, without any proportion of parliamentary representation. In opposing the Right Hon. Gentleman's Bill, I consider myself as opposing an

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Gentlemen, who are so extremely anxious to prevent us from going into the merits of it, may perhaps be suspected by illiberal men not to wish that the merits should appear to the public.

But the Honourable Gentleman says, it is necessary to answer the Resolutions of England by the Resolution which he has read. He says, he does not think she has attacked our legislative independence, and yet he says he does think an answer necessary; and what is that answer?—why, that we will preserve our independence.

Let me tell Gentlemen, that it is not very prudent, upon every occasion, to come forward in terms of indignation against the sister kingdom, because we cannot exist one moment without her protection. Let me tell them, that it will not be perfectly prudent to rouse Great Britain. She is not easily roused,—but if roused, she is not very easily appeased; and in this, perhaps, lies the difference between the two nations.—Ireland is easily roused, but then she is easily appeased; England is not easily roused, nor easily appeased.—If you rouse the British Lion, you may not easily lull him to rest.

Gentlemen say you may go on in the way you are; you have already a Free Trade, and that is all you want. You have

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an union *in limine*, and that argument for union which makes similarity of law and community of interest (reason strong for the freedom of Ireland!) a pretence for a condition which would be dissimilarity of law, because extinction of Constitution, and therefore hostility, not community of interest; I ask on what experience is this argument founded? — Have you ever since your redemption refused to preserve a similarity of law in Trade and Navigation? Have you not followed Great Britain in all her changes of the Act of Navigation, during the whole of that unpalatable business, the American War? Have you not excluded the cheap produce of other Plantations, in order that Irish poverty might give a monopoly to the dear produce of British Colonies? Have you not made a better use of your liberty than Great Britain did of her power? But I have an objection to this argument, stronger even than its want of foundation, in reason and experiment; I hold it to be nothing less than an intolerance of the Parliamentary Constitution of Ireland, a declaration that the full and free external legislation of the Irish Parliament is incompatible with the British Empire. I do acknowledge that by your external power, you might discompose the harmony of empire and

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have indeed a right to trade, but without the assistance and protection of Great Britain you have not the means of trading with any nation on earth. There is not a single article in which you can trade without the assistance of England; and I desire by that Bill to ensure her protection and assistance, and when the people of this country are restored to their sober senses, they will see it. The Bill for ever guarantees your Linen Trade, to promote which England taxes her own consumption 450,000*l.* yearly. The consumption of England is stated to be forty-eight million of yards; of this she at present takes twenty millions from Ireland, the remaining twenty million from Russia and Germany; on the Russian and German Linens she lays a heavy duty, and is content to pay an advanced price for the Irish; yet still the Russian and German manufactures can in some degree meet Ireland in the English market; if the duty was taken off, they would beat her out of it altogether, and therefore I say she is a besotted nation if she seeks to quarrel with England.

I am much obliged to the Gentlemen who in pure kindness wish to give me an opportunity for reflection, and I hope Gentlemen who have been so very forward and so very hot upon this occasion, will

Mr. GRATTAN, *Against.*

and I add, that by your power over the Purse, you might dissolve the State, but to the latter you owe your existence in the Constitution, and to the former, your authority and station in the Empire; this argument, therefore, rests the connection upon a *new and a false principle*—goes directly against the root of Parliament—and is not a difficulty to be accommodated, but an error to *be eradicated*; and if any body of men can still think that the Irish Constitution is incompatible with the British Empire, a doctrine which I abjure as sedition against the Constitution—but if any body of men are justified in thinking that the Irish Constitution is incompatible with the British Empire,—perish the Empire! live the Constitution! Reduced by this false dilemma to take a part, my second wish is the British Empire, my first wish and bounden duty is the liberty of Ireland—but we are told this imperial power is not only necessary for England but safe for Ireland. What is the present question? what but the abuse of this very power of regulating the trade of Ireland by the British Parliament excluding you, and including herself by virtue of the same words of the same Act of Navigation? And what was the promotive cause of this arrangement? what but the power you are going to surrender,

Mr. FITZGIBBON, *For.*

will reflect also on the best manner in which I can shew my sense of the obligation conferred upon me will be, to repeat and re-assert the words at which they have taken so much offence. I say if Ireland seeks to quarrel with England she is a besotted nation. I say she has not the means of trading with any nation upon earth, without the assistance and protection of Great Britain, and I wish every man and every child throughout Ireland to hear me when I state it. I say that Ireland cannot exist one hour without the support of Great Britain; and therefore again I say she is a besotted nation if she seeks to quarrel with her; and I say further, when the people recover their senses, and awaken from the delusion and the phrenzy into which they have been misled, if the benefits of that Bill are then within their reach they will grasp at them; but I very much fear they may not always be within their reach; if they are, they will be glad to accept of that very settlement which they are now advised to reject with sullen indignation and with insult.

A Right Hon. Friend of mine (Mr. Connolly), when his first symptoms of opposition to this measure appeared, only desired time to the next session, that the people might understand it. However, when the

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

render, the distinct and independent external authority of the Irish Parliament, competent to question that misconstruction? What is the remedy now proposed? *the evil*,—go back to the Parliament of England—I ask again, what were the difficulties in the way of your Eleven Propositions? what but the jealousy of the British Manufacturers on the subject of trade? And will you make them your Parliament, and that too for ever, and that too on the subject of their jealousy, and in the moment they displayed it—safe! I will suppose that jealousy realized, that you rival them in some market abroad, and that they petition their Parliament to impose a Regulation which shall affect a tonnage which you have and Great Britain has not; how would you then feel your situation, when you should be obliged to register all this? And how would you feel your degradation, when you should see your own Manufacturers pass you by as a cypher in the Constitution, and deprecate their ruin at the bar of a Foreign Parliament—safe! Whence the American war? Whence the Irish restrictions? Whence the misconstruction of the Act of Navigation? Whence but from the evil of suffering one country to regulate the Trade and Navigation of another, and of instituting, under the
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Ma. FITZGIBBON, For.

Bill was offered to the House he would have prevented the introduction of it. How this was to enlighten the people, or to enable them to understand the subject, I do not perfectly comprehend. Again, the Right Hon. Gentleman declared that he did not understand commerce, nor was he ever a stickler for constitution, and then proceeded to pronounce sentence of condemnation wholesale upon the Bill, which he had never read, and which if he had read, he declared he should not understand. Another Hon. Gentleman who opposes this measure with equal violence, has let it out somewhat indiscreetly in my mind, that this is a question in which a certain set of Gentlemen in England are deeply interested; and he has in my mind somewhat indiscreetly reproached an Hon. Member who sits above me (Mr. G. Ponsonby) with having upon this occasion deserted the cause of his English connections*. How this reproach consists with the repeated declarations which have been made from that side of the House, that this was a question perfectly detached from all English party, I leave to the judgment of the nation. But I cannot but say, that in my mind the charge which has been made

* Such an allusion had been made from the opposite side of the House.

upon

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

idea of general protectores, a proud domination, which sacrifices the interest of the whole to the ambition of a part, and arms the little passions of the Monopolist with the sovereign potency of an imperial Parliament; for great nations when cursed with unnatural sway follow but their nature when they invade; and human wisdom has not better provided for human safety than by limiting the principles of human power. The surrender of Legislature has been likened to cases that not infrequently take place between two equal nations covenanting to suspend in particular cases their respective legislative powers for mutual benefit; thus Great Britain and Portugal agree to suspend their legislative power in favour of the Wine of the one and the Woollen of the other, but if Portugal had gone farther, and agreed to subscribe the laws of England, this covenant had not been treaty but conquest; so Great Britain and Ireland may covenant not to raise high duties on each other's manufactures, but if Ireland goes farther, and covenants to subscribe British law, this is not a mutual suspension of the exercise of legislative power, but a transfer of the power itself from one country to another, to be exercised by another hand; such covenant is not reciprocity of trade,

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

upon that Gentleman reflects very high honour upon him; because, in my mind, any man who is actuated upon this occasion by motives of English or of Irish party, is a dangerous and decided enemy to this country.

But it is curious to hear the charges which have been brought against Ministry; they are accused of having originated this measure, and urged it forward with their whole force. But what interest could Administration have had in obtruding it on this country; it was called for by the unanimous address of this House, and when it was introduced, there were but three men found who could oppose it; and now I challenge any man to shew me a single instance in which the Bill now upon your table departs from the principle and spirit of the Eleven Resolutions of this kingdom. It is objected that they have been multiplied into twenty, but let any man look at them, and he will find that many of the additional Resolutions are mere matters of detail, mere matters of commercial regulation, intended chiefly to guard against the frauds of smugglers; he will find that the Resolutions are more condemned for their numbers than their demerit. If, however, Gentlemen are determined to reject this measure without examination or enquiry, in my mind,

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

trade, it is a surrender of the government of your trade, inequality of trade and inequality of constitution. I speak however as if such transfer could take place, but in fact it could not, any arrangement so covenanting is a mere nullity, it could not bind you, still less could it bind your successors, for man is not omnipotent over himself, neither are Parliaments omnipotent over themselves to accomplish their own destruction, and propagate death to their successors; there is in these cases a superior relationship to our respective Creators — God — the Community, which in the instance of the individual, arrests the hand of suicide, and in that of the political body, stops the act of surrender; and makes man the means of propagation, and Parliament the organ to continue liberty, not the engine to destroy it. However, though the surrender is void, there are two ways of attempting it, one by a surrender in form, the other by a surrender in substance; appointing another Parliament your substitute, and consenting to be its register or stamp, by virtue of which to introduce the law and edict of another land; to cloath with the forms of your law, foreign deliberations, and to preside over the disgraceful ceremony of your own abdicated authority; both methods are

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

mind it will not be an act of wisdom to reject it with indignation, and it will be still more unwise to reject it with insult; for if a fair and honourable and advantageous offer of England is treated with indignation, we shall not probably have an opportunity of repeating the insult; we shall not probably have a second offer of the English market, and a partnership in the English capital. We shall not probably be courted to an adjustment of commercial intercourse between the two countries, and he is a bitter enemy to both countries who wishes to throw any impediment in the way of such an adjustment. It is essential to the interests of Great Britain; it is essential to the existence of Ireland.

A Gentleman who declared himself to be in a state of constitutional insanity, whether political or natural I cannot tell, advises us not to be too forward in celebrating the funeral of the present Chief Governor, lest we should not be permitted to walk in the coronation procession of his successor.

Sir, I am not the slave of party, nor the instrument of faction; for much as I despise popular clamour, or popular applause, I despise party still more;—and I will tell that Hon. Gentleman, that I consider myself to be perfectly beyond the reach of Ministerial dis-

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

are equally surrenders and both are wholly void. I speak on principle, the principle on which you stand—*your creation*. We, the limited trustees of delegated power, born for a particular purpose, limited to a particular time, and bearing an inviolable relationship to the people who sent us to Parliament, cannot break that relationship, counteract that purpose, surrender, diminish, or derogate from those privileges we breathe but to preserve. Could the Parliament of England covenant to subscribe your laws? Could she covenant that Young Ireland should command and Old England should obey? If such a proposal to England were mockery; to Ireland it cannot be constitution. I rest on authority as well as principle, the authority on which the revolution rests; Mr. Locke, who in his chapter on the abolition of Government, says that the transfer of legislative power is the abolition of the state, *not a transfer*. Thus I may congratulate this House and myself, that it is one of the blessings of the British Constitution, that it cannot perish of a rapid mortality nor die in a day, like the men who should protect her; any act that would destroy the liberty of the people is dead-born from the womb; men may put down the public cause for a season, but another year would

Mr. FITZGIBBON, For.

displeasure; but if the Gentleman supposes Mr. Pitt's Administration will be shaken by an intemperate rejection on the part of Ireland—if his opposition to it is founded in the hope that he will shortly be called upon to assist at the coronation of the Duke of Rutland's successor, he will find that he is miserably mistaken. In my mind, we have taken a mill-stone from Mr. Pitt's neck, and hung it about our own.

Mr. MASON, For.

He was not surprized that the Right Honourable Gentleman should be exceedingly jealous of any measure that appeared to him to infringe, even in the slightest degree, that constitutional independence which he himself had restored to his Country; but that jealousy was a passion which applies itself more powerfully to the imagination, than it does to the understanding of the persons possessed with it, and is apt, as Shakespeare tells us, to make the food it feeds on. This, said he, was precisely the case of the Right Hon. Gentleman on that occasion, as he would venture to assert, that this attack on the Constitution of Ireland, which the Right Hon. Gentleman had repelled with so much ability and zeal, had no real existence,

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

would see Old Constitution advance the honours of his head, and the good institution of Parliament shaking off the tomb to reascend in all its pomp and pride, and plenitude and privilege!

Sir, I have stated these Propositions and the Bill as a mere transfer of external legislative authority to the Parliament of Great Britain, but I have understated their mischief, they go to taxation, taxes on the trade with the British plantations, taxes on the produce of foreign plantations, taxes on some of the produce of the United States of North America; they go to port duties, such as Great Britain laid on America; the mode is varied, but the principle is the same.—Here Great Britain takes the stamp of the Irish Parliament, Great Britain is to prescribe, and Ireland is to obey! We anticipate the rape by previous surrender, and throw into the scale our honour, as well as our liberty. Do not imagine that all these Resolutions are mere acts of regulation; they are solid substantial revenue, great part of your additional duty. I allow the Bill excepts rum and tobacco: but the principle is retained, and the operation of it only kept back. I have stated that Great Britain may by these Propositions crush your commerce, but shall be told that the commercial jealousy of

Mr. MASON, For.

existence, but was merely the creature of his own imagination.

He said, he should not be surprized, if the commercial regulations of the Bill then moved for should occasion a great diversity of opinion, or that some of them, when considered singly, and not as composing part of a system, should appear exceptionable; for if, in a treaty of that nature, every article was in favour of one of the parties, there would be an end of that equality which must necessarily be the basis of any permanent agreement between the two nations;—but that the objections that had been urged against those regulations on constitutional grounds appeared to him entirely void of foundation; to be fraught with absurdity and mischief, and calculated to answer the worst of purposes; to spread a false alarm through all parts of the kingdom, to irritate the public without just cause against the British Parliament, and to persuade the people, that the constitutional independence of their country was in danger at the very moment that it was most secure;—at the very moment that all the branches of the legislature in both kingdoms were vying with each other, which of them should assert the independence of Ireland in the strongest terms;—at the very time when the Minister of Ireland

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

of Great Britain is at an end. But are her wants at an end? are her wishes for Irish subsidy at an end? No—and may be gratified by laying colony duties on herself, and so raising on Ireland an imperial revenue to be subscribed by our Parliament, without the consent of our Parliament, and in despite of our people. Or if a minister should please to turn himself to a general excise, if wishing to relieve from the weight of further additional duties the hereditary revenue now alienated, if wishing to relieve the alarms of the English manufacturers, who complain of our exemption from excises, particularly on soap, candles, and leather; he should proceed on those already registered articles of taxation, he might tax you by *threats*, suggesting that if you refuse to raise an excise on yourself, England would raise colony duties on both. See what a mighty instrument of coercion this Bill and these Resolutions—*stir* and Great Britain can crush you—*stir* and the Minister can crush you in the name of Great Britain—he can crush your imports—he can crush your exports—he can do this in a manner peculiarly mortifying, by virtue of a clause in a British Act of Parliament that would seem to impose the same restrictions on Great Britain—he can do this in a manner still

Mr. MASON, For.

Ireland had moved for a Bill, intended to contain a clause for that purpose; when the Minister of Great Britain had actually presented a Bill declaring that the Parliament of Ireland alone was competent to make laws to bind that kingdom, in any case whatever; and when both the Houses of Parliament in Great Britain had concurred in presenting an address to the Throne, containing the like explicit declaration; nay, even the stipulation required by Great Britain, that Ireland should adopt her future commercial regulations, was the strongest acknowledgment of their independence; for why had she departed on that occasion from her established practice of regulating the commerce of every part of the empire, by her own Parliament only? Why had she then relinquished that power which she had exercised without controul for 120 years? Because she acknowledged the independence of Ireland; because she well knew that no act of her Parliament would be considered as valid by the people of Ireland, if it were not confirmed by the Irish legislature.

He said, that he had listened with attention to the several clauses of the intended Bill, and should not hesitate to assert, that if there was any one clause more absolutely

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Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

still more offensive by the immediate means of your own Parliament, who would be then an active cypher, and notorious stamp in the hands of Great Britain, to forge and falsify the name and authority of the people of Ireland. I have considered your situation under these Propositions with respect to Great Britain: see what would be your situation with respect to the Crown? You would have granted to the King a perpetual Money Bill, or a Money Bill to continue as long as the Parliament of Great Britain shall please, with a covenant to increase it as often as the British Parliament shall please. By these Resolutions a great part of the additional duty would have been so granted—the trade of the country is made dependant on the Parliament of Great Britain, and the Crown is made less dependant on the Parliament of Ireland, and a code of prerogative added to a code of empire. If the merchant after this should petition you to lower your duties on the articles of trade, your answer is “trade is in covenant.” If your constituents should instruct you to limit the Bill of Supply, or pass a short Money Bill, your answer, “the purse of the nation like her trade is in covenant.” No more of six months Money Bills—no more of instructions from constituents

Mr. MASON, For.

necessary than the rest, any one with which it was impossible to dispense, it was that very clause which the Right Honourable Gentleman had reprobated; for what was the object of the pending negotiation between Great Britain and Ireland? It was to form upon principles of justice and equality a final and permanent adjustment of commercial intercourse between the two countries. Now if they took into consideration only the commercial regulations at present existing, they might form a system that would be just and equal; but in order to render it permanent also, they must go somewhat farther—they must look forward to futurity, and take care not only that the commercial regulations of both kingdoms were the same at that day, but that they should ever be the same at all times hereafter. If they did not that, their system could neither be final nor permanent, and their eternal adjustment would last but for a session. A perpetual conformity of commercial regulations was necessary to render the system permanent, which could never be preserved unless the Parliament of one country should agree to adopt the commercial regulations that should, from time to time, be established in the other; the question therefore was reduced to the single point, in which of the two kingdoms

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

stituents—that connection is broken by this Bill—pass this, you have *no constituent*—you are not the representative of the people of Ireland, but the register of the British Parliament, and the equalizer of British duties !

In order to complete this chain of power, one link (I do acknowledge) was wanting—a perpetual Revenue Bill, or a covenant from time to time to renew the Bill for the collection thereof. The twentieth Resolution and this Bill founded upon it attain that object. Sir, this House rests on three pillars—your power over the annual Mutiny Bill—your power over the annual Additional Duties—your power over the Collection of the Revenue. The latter power is of great consequence, because a great part of our revenues are granted for ever. Your ancestors were slaves; and for their estates, that is, for the act of settlement granted the hereditary revenue, and from that moment ceased to be a Parliament; nor was it till many years after that Parliament revived; but it revived as you under this Bill would continue; without parliamentary power; every evil measure derived argument, energy, and essence from this constitutional fund. If a country gentleman complained of the expences of the Crown, he was

Mr. MASON, For.

kingdoms the future commercial regulations of the empire ought properly to originate? Should they originate in Ireland, a country that as yet had but little experience in matters of commerce, in the infancy of its trade, manufactures and industry? or should they originate in Great Britain, the greatest commercial nation upon earth, the seat of empire, and of course the kingdom on which must depend their treaties of commerce with foreign nations? She was mistress of the colonies to which the principal part of their trade would be directed, and mistress of the navy that must protect that trade. There was surely no man so blindly prejudiced in favour of his country as not to acknowledge that the future commercial regulations of the empire ought rather to originate in Great Britain than in Ireland.

When Mr. Yelverton proposed his bill for adopting in Ireland all such commercial laws of Great Britain as conferred equal benefits, and imposed equal burdens on the subjects of both kingdoms, the motion was received with general applause; now the only purport of the clause in question was, to extend to futurity the provisions of that Bill, which they all approved of, and to recommend it to succeeding Parliaments to a-

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

was told a frugal government could go on without a Parliament, and that we held our existence, by withholding the discharge of our duty. However, though the funds were granted for ever, the provision for the collection was inadequate—the smuggler learned to evade the penalties, and Parliament, though not necessary for granting the Hereditary Revenue, became necessary for its collection.—Here then we rest on three pillars—the annual Mutiny Bill—the annual Additional Supply—and the annual Collection of the Revenue. If you remove all these, this fabric falls; remove any one of them, and it totters; for it is not the mace, nor the chair, nor this dome, but the deliberative voice resident therein that constitutes the essence of Parliament. Clog your deliberations, and you are no longer a Parliament, with a thousand gawdy surviving circumstances of shew and authority.

Contemplate for a moment the powers which this Bill presumes to perpetuate—a perpetual repeal of trial by jury—a perpetual repeal of the great charter—a perpetual writ of assistance—a perpetual felony to strike an exciseman!

The late Chief Baron Burgh speaking on the revenue bill, exclaimed, “You give

Mr. MASON, For.

adopt such future commercial regulations as should be founded on the same principles of justice and equality.

He next begged leave to remind the House of the terms on which they then enjoyed the privilege of trading with the British plantations; the terms, he said, were, that they should conform from time to time to such rules and restrictions as Great Britain should enact for regulating the West India trade, and also that they should adopt such duties on all commodities exported from Ireland to the plantations, and imported from them, as Great Britain imposed upon the same articles—not only the duties existing at that day, but also those that Great Britain should think proper to lay on at any future time; and accordingly, though they passed one equalizing Bill in 1780, they were forced to pass another in the following session, in order that their duties might correspond with those which Great Britain had imposed within that interval. Those, said he, were the terms dictated by Great Britain, and accepted by Ireland on that occasion. Did the Right Honourable Gentleman’s pride revolt against that stipulation? Did he reject with scorn those humiliating conditions, as infringing on the legislative independence of Ireland? No, he received this concession like

Mr. GRATTAN, Against.

give to the dipping rule what you should deny to the sceptre."

All the unconstitutional powers of the excise we are to perpetuate, the constitutional powers of Parliament we are to abdicate. Can we do all this? can we make these bulky surrenders, in diminution of the power, in derogation of the pride of Parliament, and in violation of those eternal relationships, which the body that represents should bear to the community which constitutes?

We can go on, we have a growing prosperity and as yet an exemption from intolerable taxes; we can from time to time regulate our own commerce, cherish our manufactures, keep down our taxes, and bring on our people, and brood over the growing prosperity of Young Ireland. In the mean time we will guard our Free Trade and Free Constitution as our only *real resources*; they were the struggles of great virtue, the result of much perseverance, and our broad base of public action! We should recollect that this House may now with peculiar propriety interpose, because you did with great zeal and success, on this very subject of trade, bring on the people, and you did with great prudence and moderation on another occasion, check a certain description

Mr. MASON, For.

like the rest of his fellow citizens, with satisfaction and gratitude;—yet that stipulation was surely more offensive than that which was the subject of the present debate; for in order to avail themselves of the treaty which they were then about to conclude, nothing was required but that Ireland shall adopt such commercial regulations of the British Parliament as should confer equal benefits, and impose equal burdens on the subjects of both kingdoms, and should tend at the same time to increase the shipping and mariners of the empire. But in order to enjoy the commerce of the plantations, they bound themselves not only to adopt her regulations, but also to impose such duties as Great Britain should prescribe on all commodities, whether native or foreign, exported to the West Indies, and on every article imported from thence, rum only excepted. He therefore contended for it, that that was the more offensive stipulation of the two, as if ever a country was to be jealous of the interference of a foreign legislature, she ought surely to be most so in matters that related to the imposition of taxes.

He supposed it would be said, that by accepting of the trade to the plantations, on the terms he had stated, Ireland bound herself to nothing—that she had it always in her power

Mr. GRATTAN, Against,

scription of the people, and you are now called upon by consistency to defend the people. Thus mediating between extremes, you will preserve this island long, and preserve her with a certain degree of renown. Thus faithful to the constitution of the country, you will command and insure her tranquillity, for our best authority with the people is, protection afforded against the ministers of the crown. It is not public clamour but public injury that should alarm you; your high ground of expostulation with your fellow subjects has been your services; the free trade you have given the merchant, and the free constitution you have given the island! Make your THIRD GREAT effort, preserve them, and with them preserve unaltered, your own calm sense of public right, the dignity of the Parliament, the majesty of the people, and the powers of the island! Keep them unsullied, uncovenanted, uncircumscribed, and unstipendiary! These paths are the paths of glory, and let me add, these ways are the ways of peace; so shall the prosperity of your country, though without a tongue to thank you, yet laden with the blessings of constitution and of commerce, bear attestation to your services, and wait on your progress with involuntary praise!

Mr. MASON, For.

power to refuse to impose the same duties with Great Britain, and that the only consequence of that refusal would be a suspension of their trade to the West Indies, with respect to that article, the duty on which they refused to equalize; but he said, that in the present case they stood precisely on the same ground, for that it would be always in the power of the Parliament of Ireland to reject the commercial regulations of Great Britain, and that the only consequence of that rejection would be, a dissolution of the present treaty.

No man, he said, could be so ignorant as to imagine that Great Britain required by this stipulation that they should pass any law, rendering it compulsory on future Parliaments to register the commercial edicts of Great Britain; every man of common sense must know that this was impossible;—that it was not in the power of a Parliament by any act of theirs to bind succeeding Parliaments, or even to bind themselves in a subsequent session. All we bound ourselves to by accepting of those conditions, was to adopt such laws as had been passed by Great Britain since Mr. Yelverton's Bill, imposing equal burdens, and conferring equal benefits on the subjects of both kingdoms, and then to recommend it to succeeding Parliaments

Mr. MASON, For.

Parliaments to follow their example, and to adopt from time to time such further regulations as should be founded on the same principles of justice and equality. But notwithstanding their recommendation and example, every future Parliament would have its option, either to adopt or reject those regulations. How then, said he, in the name of God, can this stipulation affect the supremacy of the Irish Legislature!

He expressed his hope that the treaty, if concluded, would be final and permanent, but desired the House would recollect that they were not about to form an indissoluble contract, like the treaty of union between England and Scotland; for the moment the act of union passed, the Parliament of Scotland was annihilated, or rather merged in that of Great Britain; and if the articles of union had proved highly oppressive to the people of Scotland, they were left without resource, except what they should find in the moderation of the British Parliament, or the hazards of a civil war; the body of men to whom they would otherwise have applied for redress no longer existed—their Parliament was no more: but the Parliament of Ireland, notwithstanding this treaty, would remain in full vigour, and would always be able to reject, if
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Mr. MASON, For.

they pleased, the regulations of Great Britain.

He said, that he was confident it would ever be their interest to adopt those regulations; for though they could not be too jealous of the monopolizing spirit of that kingdom, whilst she assumed the right of making laws to bind them, and of promoting her own commerce by the destruction of theirs; from the time that, in consequence of the present treaty, the commerce of both countries would become the same, and their interests so united, it would be impossible for Great Britain to make any laws injurious to the trade of Ireland, which would not be equally fatal to her own; they should run no hazard by adopting the policy of the wisest commercial people in Europe. But if, contrary to every reasonable expectation, Great Britain should happen to pass any laws injurious to the commerce of the empire—if Old England should fall into a state of dotage, and grow too foolish to understand or to pursue her real interests, it would then be in the power, and become the duty of the Parliament of Ireland to declare off from any commercial connection with that devoted people; and the worst that could happen to them was, that after having enjoyed, for centuries together, a full participation of the British commerce,

Mr. MASON, For.

merce, and increased both the wealth and consequence of the nation by that participation, they might be forced in the end to break off the connection, and stand precisely in the same situation, with respect to Great Britain, that they did at that day.

Mr. FLOOD, Against.

I do not at all wonder that this system should end in an open attack upon the rights of Ireland in commerce and in constitution, because in its origin it appeared to me to be a covered attack upon both. On this principle, I opposed it in its commencement. I have been reproached with being in a minority of one upon this subject; I shall be no longer reproached on that ground.

The King's speech, under the sanction of which the system was introduced, declared, that it was only to adjust matters which had not been before adjusted. Yet the very second of the original ten Propositions, in contradiction to this, went only to objects that had been before adjusted in 1780 and 1782 — namely, *foreign trade and British colonial trade*.

As to foreign trade, one word dispatches that, viz. the word, Independence. Independent Ireland has every right of foreign trade, which Britain

Mr. FORSTER, For.

He said, he could not sit silent when he heard a measure in which he was proud to have had a considerable part, represented by so many gentlemen as injurious to the independence of the Irish legislature, and a barter of the constitution for commerce. He should think himself, indeed, unworthy of a seat in that House, or of the name of Irishman, if he could consent to barter an atom of the constitution of his country for all the commerce in the world; but he was so fully satisfied the present measure did not violate it, in the smallest degree, that he could not repress his surprise at its being supposed to do so. When gentlemen said, that it violated the constitution, they forgot that they had recorded a similar violation of it in every session, since the freedom of their legislation had been established. His Right Hon. friend (the Attorney General) had quoted the resolution of that House

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Mr. FLOOD, Against.

tain herself possesses. For this, therefore, she had no compact to make with Britain. This had been adjusted in 1782. British colony trade was adjusted in 1780. The British Parliament, in 1780, declared, by resolution, that the unshaken loyalty of Ireland, entitled her, to participate in every advantage of British Colony trade. The British act of Parliament, in pursuance of this resolve, authorized Ireland to trade to the British Colonies with *like* advantages with Britain herself. In equity and good faith, what can we have to ask that this did not give? Or can Britain now say that she withheld any thing without impeaching her own candour? Britain boasted the liberality of that transaction. Ireland illuminated.

Now I ask did not most of you imagine, that in 1780, Ireland was put in a better situation, than ever she had possessed before, as to British Colony trade? And, of this I am sure, that there is not a man among you who will not admit, that it would be absurd to hold, that you were not at least restored, to every advantage of British Colony trade, that Ireland had ever possessed. Now I say, that till the 15th of Charles the 11d, you could export any thing to, and import any thing from, the British colonies, as freely as England herself: and, that,

Mr. FORSTER, For.

in 1779. He would now read a part of the statute of 1781, made in consequence of that resolution :

“ And whereas such part of the trade between this kingdom and the British Colonies in America, the West Indies, and British Settlements on the coast of Africa, as was not enjoyed by this kingdom, previous to the last session of Parliament, can be enjoyed and have continuance so long, and in such case only, as goods to be imported from the said Colonies, Plantations, or Settlements, into this kingdom, or to be exported from this kingdom to the said Colonies, Plantations or Settlements, shall be liable to equal duties and drawbacks, and be subject to the same securities, regulations and restrictions as the like goods are liable and subject to, upon being imported from the said Colonies, Plantations or Settlements into Great Britain, or exported from thence to such Colonies, Plantations or Settlements respectively; be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, for the advancement of the said trade, that duties, drawbacks, prohibitions, &c. be granted, &c.”

This statute was passed at a time when the spirit of the nation was as high as ever it had been, and her jealousy of the constitution as great, and has been repeated every session since. Now, Sir, the condition as to regulating trade is as express in this statute as in the present bill.—[*Mr. Grattan interrupting*, desired to know what trade?]*—Mr. Forster proceeded*, the Plantation trade—the very trade now in agitation; and if accepting trade on conditions would destroy the constitution, our constitution has been long since destroyed, even in the very year of its emancipation. But the Right Hon.

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that, after landing it in Ireland, you could reship it for any other country; and for England, as well, as for any other. In 1780 therefore, you were either restored to that liberty, or it must follow, that, that boasted transaction was a deception; and that instead of giving you immunities you never had before, it did not even restore you, to what you had formerly possessed. This liberty therefore of reshipping British colony produce (the only boon which this system boasts) did in every consideration of reason and good faith accompany the transaction of 1780, and was therefore, not, now to be adjusted. Nay it is absurd to suppose, that, in 1780, that was withheld from Ireland, which Ireland had possessed, till the 15th year of Charles the 1st; which every one of the Thirteen States of America did possess to the hour of their separation? and which New Brunswick possesses now? and would it not be more absurd to suppose so, if in fact it is as much the interest of Britain, as it can be of Ireland, that Ireland should be allowed that liberty? Now it is even more so, and I prove it thus. This liberty can be of no advantage to Ireland except in this contingency: except Ireland has a surplus of colony produce over and above her own consumption—That is one necessary fact—

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Hon. Gentleman acknowledges the condition which he inveighs against as being most dangerous now, to be similar to that one which he then and ever since has deemed so innocent. He only dwells on its extending to foreign trade, that is, to foreign colonies, as if the greater or less extent could change its constitutional or unconstitutional nature; but will Gentlemen consider the matter, stripped of all oratory and declamation? Great Britain has colonies, she offers full communication of her trade to Ireland, on condition of Ireland trading on the same terms as she does herself; one of those terms is equal duties and regulations, which the gentlemen admit to be fair and harmless, for we have complied with it in part these two sessions; another of the terms is the giving a like protection, as Great Britain gives to their produce against the produce of foreign colonies. This too is fair, but it destroys our constitution—what pitiful reasoning! It does not destroy us to receive a monopoly of their consumption; but to give them a monopoly of our consumption, annihilates our independence! No man of common sense can hesitate that it is fair we should receive the trade on the same terms as Britain. The Colonies are hers—she has a right to

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fact—Another is, that, at the same article of time, that should happen, which rarely can happen, namely, that British colony produce should be dearer in Britain than in Ireland, or in any other neighbouring country—For if that were not the case, Ireland would lose by sending it to Britain. Now it is absurd to suppose that Ireland would do that. What follows? That at the moment when the liberty of sending colony produce to England would be useful to Ireland, it would be doubly the interest of Britain, to receive it from Ireland. For 1st, Britain as a consumer would be relieved by it; and 2d, the British merchant, in his commission, would be a gainer. In another capacity Britain would be a gainer also—that is to say, as head of the empire, she would profit by the encrease of trade, consequent on this intercourse, between her colonies and Ireland, a member of the empire. Who after this will say, that this liberty was not included in the transaction of 1780; or, if it was not, that Ireland ought to purchase it now, with the surplus of her hereditary revenue, with the degradation of her condition, and with the sacrifice of her commercial legislation?

As to Ireland's not having paid for the transaction of 1780, I say the argument would

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to annex those terms. The trade with them is a gift from her, and the gift is conditional; she offers to take us into partnership in their trade; she, an old established country, raised by commerce alone to an height above any other European power, invites us to partake of the means that raised her to wealth and greatness, to a full and equal share in that trade which cost her millions to obtain and will cost her millions to preserve; and this she does without desiring any thing towards that cost, or for their maintenance, or any return, save a small share of what may arise from our profits in that new partnership. But when gentlemen argue on bad ground, even their own arguments often make against them, and an Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Flood) at the same time that he exerts all his eloquence to persuade us that the confining ourselves to the British Colonies, or accepting the trade on such conditions, is injurious to the constitution, not only admits but contends, that we have done it already, and that we have done it on the solemn faith of compact. Hear his reasoning; he says, that the transaction of 1780 was a compact, and not a gift, and he says it was a compact, because we gave a consideration; three considerations, each of more value than the gift; we gave

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would be a fordid one, if it were founded in fact, which it is not. The sentiment of the British Parliament in 1780 was a wiser and more statesman-like conception. It was that the unshaken loyalty of Ireland entitled her, to those advantages; and, surely, that is a price above all prices. But Ireland paid for it in two ways besides, and in each of them more than the value of the object. 1st, Ireland gave to the British Colonies (that is to Britain) a monopoly of her consumption in *those articles*, in which she then obtained that free trade. Now I say, universally, that any nation pays too dear for any one market, when she gives up all other markets for one. And particularly that the nation pays too dearly for the sugar market of the British Colonies, who gives up all other sugar markets for the British; which is neither the best nor the cheapest. 2dly, I add, that Ireland paid in taxes for the direct trade more than it was worth, and I prove it thus: 10l. per cent. is a good profit in general on trade, and no trade can afford to pay the whole nor the greater part of its clear profit in tax. To apply this. We paid for that direct trade an estimated sum of tax to the amount of above 100,000l. a year. Now this would be the whole clear profit, at 10l. per cent. of 2,000,000l.

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gave monopoly for monopoly, that is, in other words, we agreed to prohibit the goods of other colonies, the very thing that is now held up as a surrender of legislature, and the fact is, we did, and still do prohibit, by heavy duties, the same as Britain pays, all foreign colony produce. In theory, therefore, we have agreed to what he now says cannot be agreed to without ruin, and in practice we have actually done the very thing without injury, if not with benefit to our trade. His other considerations are curious; we gave revenue, that is, we received liberty to import an article, sugars, that would bear a considerable revenue, which we must have otherwise imposed, elsewhere, and thus he strangely construes the accepting the means of a revenue into giving one. His third consideration is still more wonderful; we gave loyalty. Good Heavens! in an Irish House of Commons does he say that we gave our duty to our Prince as a partner for a grant of trade?

[*Mr. Flood interrupted to say, that he had quoted the Resolution of the British Parliament, when he stated that the loyalty of Ireland was deemed a consideration.*]

Mr. Forster resumed. To such wretched shifts are gentlemen driven, who attempt to support what is not supportable,

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2,000,000*l.* worth of trade. Could the whole clear profit be afforded in tax—or can the whole encrease of traffic, by the direct trade, amount, in any series of years, to any thing like the enormous sum of two millions? Most certainly not.

Thus the first of the original ten Propositions was a mere preamble; and the second, which began the business, began it in a direction, unfair to Ireland, and inconsistent with the King's speech. Ireland was drawn, unaware, to treat for the things already settled; and thereby impliedly to relinquish the two settlements of 1780 and of 1782—

This was not enough. Ireland had used non-importation and non-consumption agreements, towards the attainment of those settlements; and when her Parliament was acknowledged to be independent, she applied to her Parliament, for duties of protection or preference, similar to those which Britain had long enjoyed, in favour of her home manufacture, in her home market. To cut all this up, by the root, was the object of the third and fourth of the original ten Propositions. The third therefore makes Ireland propose not only that there should be no prohibitory statutes, but that there should never be any popular or private associations, against importation,

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portable, and would vainly endeavour to persuade you that this measure trenches on the independence of our legislature: you need not adopt any laws that Great Britain may pass for the regulation of commerce; if you do not approve them, you may reject them whenever you think proper; you do but reject the benefit of the condition, and return to the situation in which you now are: but the same Member has proved most strongly the necessity of introducing the Bill, for when such abilities as his can totally misconceive its tendency, it ought to be introduced, in order to be fully understood. He has observed largely on each Proposition, and nothing was ever so misstated, misrepresented and misunderstood, as every part of them has been by him. It would be absurd to follow him through all his errors, many of them the most ignorant child would be ashamed to advance; but I will point out a few, not perhaps so obvious without examination.

Let me first take notice of his having alluded to me, and said, that I voted against a declaration of Rights. I deny it; I declared my opinion of the independence of our legislature from this very seat, early in the debate on that day; but did *he* vote for it? *He did not*, and I repeat the Hon. Gentleman did not vote for it,

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portation, use or sale. Such associations had been made, and had been found beneficial by Ireland; they had not been made, and they had been complained of as injurious, by Britain. Yet Ireland is drawn in these Propositions, to make it one of her preliminaries, that there never should be such associations again. But, at the same time, Ireland is made to forget, that she had never prohibited the export of raw materials to Britain, whereas Britain had prohibited the export to Ireland of the raw materials she most valued. And, therefore, though Ireland, in her *supposed* third Proposition is industrious, to preclude all prohibitions against import (by which kind of prohibitions Ireland had profited), she forgets to preclude, prohibitions against export, of which Ireland complained. Can any thing be more clear than that these Propositions never originated in Ireland? But the boldest stroke of all was, in the very moment that Ireland was soliciting higher duties on import, in order to give protection and preference to her manufactures; to make this kingdom propose, in the 4th of the original ten Resolves, that, she not only should not now, but that she never should hereafter have such duties of protection. Yet the 4th Proposition does this—for it requires that the lowest existing duties,

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it, but lamented that the subject had been brought in that day.

[*Mr. Flood appealed to the House*, whether he did not enter into a long declaration on the subject.—*Here the Speaker interfered to order.*]

Mr. Forster proceeded—I shall leave this subject as a lesson to the Hon. Gentleman, never for the future to charge facts that are unfounded. I shall now proceed to the Hon. Gentleman's observations. He says "Mark the cunning with which the resolutions are drawn, to the injury of Ireland; there is no new prohibition to be allowed on the import from one country to another." This is certainly a great evil, especially if we consider that the Exportation of Irish products to England amounts to TWO MILLIONS and an HALF annually—and the Exportation of British products to Ireland amounts but to ONE MILLION; so it is injurious to a country which may by prohibitions lose two millions and an half, to stipulate against prohibitions, and the country that sends more than she takes, is not wise in guarding against mutual prohibition!

Another discovery the Hon. Gentleman has made is that countervailing duties are unfair—why? Because the brewery of Ireland will thereby be effectually protected. The Hon.

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duties, viz. the Irish, should hereafter be the port duties for both kingdoms. Now experience had proved that they were too low to protect Ireland, and therefore Ireland had prayed, that they might be raised. This 4th Proposition therefore, makes Ireland propose a perpetual negative on her own application. So far was well—but a fear began to be entertained that as these low duties would certainly leave the Irish market open to British imports (perhaps to the ruin of Irish manufacture, and therefore finally to the damage of Britain), so, by possibility, these low duties might now and then suffer some Irish manufacture to escape into the British market. Before the 4th Proposition should be established therefore, it was thought adviseable, in the latter end of the third Proposition, to find an expedient, by which Britain should have higher Protecting Duties than Ireland, without appearing to mean it. Now what was that expedient? The principle of countervailing duties—That is to say, that the port duties, though too low for the protection of Ireland, should be equal; but that the country, that had the highest internal duties on consumption, might add to the port duty, a countervailing duty in proportion to its internal imposts; whereby the before equal duties would

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Hon. Gentleman complains of the report of the English Privy Council, who say, that to put Ireland and England on a footing of exact reciprocity as to Linen, Ireland ought to give a bounty on the exportation of English Linens, because England gives a bounty on the exportation of Irish Linens. Can any thing be more just? Yet England makes no such demand, but is ready by this adjustment to give additional security to our Linen trade for ever. If, indeed, the adjustment were to take away the benefit from Ireland, it would be a good cause for rejecting it; but as it for ever confirms all the advantages we derive from our Linen trade, and binds England from making any law that can be injurious to it; surely Gentlemen who regard that trade, and whose fortunes and rent depend on its prosperity, will not entertain a moment's doubt about embracing the offer.

Another of his curious objections is, that as we have not a navy of our own, and if we assist the navy of the empire, England will turn that navy to her own ambitious purposes. To what ambitious purposes? To the protection of that commerce and of those colonies which are now to become ours.—In the moment that she gives up her monopoly of colonies, she is accused of ambitious purposes, for

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would become unequal. Now to solve this problem, we have only to ask, which of these kingdoms, now has, and which of them, as richer, must always be able to have, the highest internal duties on consumption? Undoubtedly Britain. What follows? That Ireland was made, on the countervailing principle, to propose, that Britain should have higher duties against Irish imports, than Ireland should have against British imports; which was, first, contrary to what Ireland had desired; and, secondly, was in itself unreasonable; because certainly the weaker manufacturing country required more protection than the stronger; though she was content with a protection equal to what Britain had long enjoyed, and by the long enjoyment of which, she had gained such advantage ground, as Ireland could never recover, nor Britain ever lose..

Thus Ireland was made to propose in the 2d, 3d and 4th of the original ten Propositions, either implicitly or expressly, a total renunciation of every principle she had held, and of every settlement and advantage she had obtained in that æra of about five years, in which Ireland gloried more, than in any other period perhaps of her existence. Yet a bolder stroke remained behind—and that was, by the tenth of the original Resolves, to
make

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for her separate aggrandizement.

The Hon. Gentleman complains, that the Bill now before the English Parliament makes it necessary that every proper and authentic document to prevent smuggling should be sent by the revenue officers of this country with any foreign or plantation goods sent from hence to England, but that the same precaution is not taken with regard to the same kind of goods sent from England to Ireland. This is the strongest argument for waiting the introduction of the Irish Bill; it speaks the consciousness of the English Parliament, that they could not prescribe to our revenue officers what documents should be satisfactory to them on receiving goods from England, but that the Irish Parliament alone in their own Bill could determine that matter. It shews the Hon. Gentleman to be totally ignorant of what either is or ought to be the substance of the Bill.

The Hon. Gentleman talks of bounties, and says, by abolishing bounties we shall no longer be able to bring corn to this city; our inland corn bounties, he says, are to be turned into Protecting Duties for England. A strange conception! But why has he fixed on corn and flour? If he had read the Resolution on which he is arguing, he would
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make Ireland propose, to pay tribute, for this negative on all her desires, and for this renunciation of all her principles and attainments—and to pay tribute in a manner peculiarly revolting, and repugnant, to those principles and attainments. In the first place, she was made to propose, that Ireland should make a perpetual grant to the British navy, which Britain had never made to her own navy; and, which, no free country, ought to make to armaments, that must be under the command of the crown. Ireland too, had, in this case peculiar reason to decline any such idea. Above an hundred years ago, in the fever of the restoration, and in the infatuation of this kingdom, Ireland had made a perpetual grant, for the support of an Irish marine. This England never permitted to be applied. Why? Because she wished that Ireland should have no marine—because she wished to have a monopoly of Navy to herself—for what purpose, let her subsequent conduct to Ireland explain. What followed? English Ministers, in spite of law, disappropriated this fund, and applied it to an overgrown land army, rather than to a marine. The defence of this land army Britain had, and Ireland had the burden. With what grace could Britain, after this, come to Ireland, and say, you do not

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have seen that corn and flour are every where exempted.

Another argument of the Hon. Gentleman is, that the declaring that neither country hereafter can lay any new prohibition on native productions, implies cunningly that it may on foreign. What an argument! when the very first principle of the system is, that a mutual interchange of foreign commodities is for ever to take place between the two kingdoms, and one even of the Twenty Propositions declares it in precise terms—But, the Hon. Gentleman talks of prohibitions on exports, &c.; Would the Hon. Gentlemen wish to leave it in the power of either nation to prohibit their native commodities from being exported to the other? would he wish to leave it in the power of England to prohibit the exportation of coals, salt, iron, bark, hops, and many other articles, or to raise a revenue on these articles when exported hither.

The Hon. Gentleman talks particularly of wool. I admit if you balance wool against wool, that his argument is right; but the just way is to balance the whole of the exports;—England engages never to prohibit the export of articles which are necessary almost to our existence, and we engage not to prohibit the export of articles which bring us in 500,000*l.* a year. We are to

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not support a marine; when Britain herself prevented Ireland from doing so? When a monopoly of navy was the choice of Britain, what right had she to say, that Ireland ought to pay Britain, for her having her own choice? When British Ministers, contrary to legal appropriation, had applied the marine fund of Ireland to a land army for the convenience of Britain, what right had they to come to Ireland to demand a new marine fund; and that, not for an Irish marine, but for the British Navy? which was in effect to demand, that Ireland should for ever abdicate any marine, and make a formal recognition, that she never ought to have a sea-guard of her own? As to the fact of protection, does Britain keep a frigate for the protection of Ireland? Or when the Stag frigate was in our bay, was it for the protection of our trade? But admitting that Britain ever so much, and at ever so great charge, did protect Ireland by her Navy, I ask, has she not reason, and is it not well worth her while, to do so without any such tribute and humiliation as this? Ireland is willing to oblige Britain in every way she can; but yet with conscious dignity. What nation would not protect Ireland without tribute, to whom Ireland were to give what she does give to Britain? She gives

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to engage not to prohibit the export of Woollen and Linen Yarn, which we have exported for a whole century, and without keeping a market for the redundancy of which by export, we could *not* ensure plenty for our own manufacturers.

The Gentleman too totally mistakes the case of patents and copy-rights. British patents and copy-rights are protected in Britain by prohibition against import. The Resolutions say to us, "Protect your's in like manner;" a measure never yet adopted here, which must promote genius, printing, and invention in Ireland.

I am ashamed, Sir, of taking up so much of your time on a subject which might be so easily understood by the lowest capacity; I shall therefore quit the Hon. Gentleman and come to the question of constitution, which I do not at all think involved in this subject. If Great Britain grants us a full partnership in all her trade in all her colonies, if she admits us to a full participation in the benefits of her Navigation laws, by which she has raised herself to be the greatest commercial power in the world; if she does not call upon us to contribute to the expence of the partnership, but merely to receive our share of the profits, and says, we may continue in that partnership

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gives her the nomination of her monarch, and therein of her whole administration, throughout every department; a third estate in her legislature; the creation of her peerage; the influence over placemen and pensioners in the House of Commons; she gives her a mighty army; the use of near a million and an half of yearly revenue; five million a year in imports and in exports; above a million a year in absentee expenditure, which at the grievous issue of one million a year from Ireland, carries above 200,000*l.* a year in taxes into the British exchequer; she gives her the use of three millions of people in peace and war, and of seventeen millions of English acres in an happy climate and of an happy soil, and so situated as to be the best friend or the worst enemy in the world to Britain. In giving her the nomination of her monarch, Ireland gives to Britain, in effect, the power of treating for her, with all the world; and of declaring peace and war for her with all mankind. What follows? That Ireland can have no enemies but those who are made so by Britain. And what follows from that? That Britain is bound by every principle of honour, as well as of interest, to protect Ireland, against those enemies, which Britain creates to her. What astonishment then

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ship only so long as we chuse, can any man say, the conditions of it amount to a surrender of our legislature? surely not, it is idle speculation. Let us then look at the subject, free from all imaginary dread for the constitution.

Britain imports annually from us 2,500,000*l.* of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about 1,000,000*l.* of hers, and raise a revenue on almost every article of it, and reserve the power of continuing that revenue. She exports to us salt for our fisheries and provisions; hops which we cannot grow; coals which we cannot raise; tin which we have not, and bark which we cannot get elsewhere; and all these without reserving any duty, or a power to impose any on them; tho' her own subjects pay 2, 3, or 4*s.* a chaldron for her own coals, sent coastways, and in London 7*s.* We on the contrary charge a duty for our own use here on almost every article we send to her. So much for exports: now as to bounties, she almost ruined our manufacture of sail-cloth, by bounties on export of her own to Ireland. In 1750, or thereabouts, when her bounty commenced, we exported more than we imported, and in 1784 we exported none, and imported 180,000 yards; she now withdraws that bounty.

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then must thinking men have felt, at Ireland's being brought for a moment to entertain such an idea? and this too, at what time? In three years after the assertion of her national independence. For I ask, what country has ever been free, that could not protect itself? What country can be independent, that relies for ever, on the protection of another nation? Is not a confession that you cannot protect yourself a virtual cancelment of all pretensions to independence? That such a tribute therefore should have been the virgin fancy of Independent Ireland, must have been astonishing. And that it should have originated within three years of the last war, must encrease one's astonishment: for in last war you had the strongest experience that the fact was false, on which the principle was grounded. Did the British navy protect Ireland last war? No—it did but protect Great Britain. Did the British army protect Ireland? No—it was gone to America. Did the Irish army protect Ireland? No—it was gone to protect Great Britain. What then did protect Ireland? Ireland herself—in other words, her Volunteers. They defended Ireland—and by defending Ireland they enabled Ireland to send her army to defend Great Britain—that is, they in effect protected both kingdoms—yet the

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bounty. And let me digress here a little on fail-cloth, which although gentlemen affect to despise when mentioned, will I trust be an immediate source of wealth by this adjustment. For 1. This bounty is to be removed. 2. The export of fail-cloth to the Indies is to be allowed, and Great Britain exported there, in 1782, about 200,000 ells. 3. There is a British law, obliging every British and colony ship to have its first suits of British fail-cloth. Irish now is to be deemed British. 4. There is a preference of 2d. an ell given by British law to British fail-cloth, over foreign, for the British navy. Irish is now to have the same preference. 5. The surplus of the hereditary revenue is to be applied in the first place to the purchase of Irish fail-cloth. All these give a glorious prospect for that valuable manufacture—But to return, were a man to look for the country most advantageous to settle manufacture in, what would be his choice? One where labour and provisions are cheap; that is Ireland; and what would he next look for? why to have a rich, extended and steady market near him, which England stretched along-side affords, and to establish that market for this country, is one great object of this system. Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of British duties on our manufactures;

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the fashion has of late been with some men in both kingdoms to revile that illustrious body. The curse of ingratitude has fallen on the nation, and the Independence of Ireland having thrown away its staff has begun to totter.

I have spoken of the 10th Resolve, as it stood numbered, in the original Propositions. It became the 11th, as the Propositions went from the Irish Parliament to Britain. This change, in the number and arrangement, arose, from the addition of one Proposition, and one only in Ireland; which was but prefatory to the tenth, and therefore was inserted before it. As it has been asserted, I cannot doubt, the intention of it to have been oeconomy and limitation. Yet it was so expressed, that I thought it, as likely, to lead to further new taxes at least, as to prevent the further accumulation of debt. At all events, the fact is, that the Right Hon. the Secretary, just took advantage of that added Resolve, so far, as to make it a ground on which to ask 140,000l. a year of new taxes, and to get them—Why? That our income might be equal to our expence. And to what end? That we might, in consequence, give away the specified surplus of hereditary revenue. That is, he said thus in effect, “Your establishments which are formed by British Ministers, are

too

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tures; I agree with them it may not operate soon, but we are to look forward in a final settlement, and it is impossible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to rivalship, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by duties, bounties, jealousies or legislative interference, from its natural and beneficial course; this system will attain its real object, consolidating the strength of the remaining parts of the empire, by encouraging the communications of their market among themselves, with preference to every part against all strangers.

I need not mention the Navigation Act, the proper benefits of which we have so long looked for; I will only observe, that Great Britain could never agree to receive the British Colonies' goods from us, unless we prohibited the goods of foreign Colonies as she does, which is a powerful argument for that part of the system against the constitutional phrenzy that threatens it. Let us

also

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too great for your revenue ; we have refused to retrench ; and yet we expect a part of your inadequate revenue to be sent to Britain.—Neither will we quarrel with you, for saying, that the income ought to be equal to the expence of Government, provided the equality is not to arise from retrenchment but from new taxes. On the contrary, we will join you heartily in raising 140,000*l.* a year of new taxes, to enable you to part with the specified surplus of your old duties." But no sooner had the Right Hon. Secretary got the new taxes, under the cover of this Resolution, than the Resolution as to all other Purposes was laid aside ; nor did he condescend to have a question put upon that added Resolve in the British Parliament. Thus sunk into contemptuous annihilation, the only Resolve that originated in Ireland. It was conceived in fraud, and it was dropped in insult.

Such, and so inadmissible were these Propositions, before they entered the British Parliament. Hence it was, that they were hurried through the Irish Parliament, that no man might have time to see to the bottom of them, or to explain them to the public. Short as the moment was, I saw a glimpse of their tendency, and endeavoured to obtain time, that a preoccupied public, might have leisure

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also observe, that now, for the first time, Great Britain offers us a right for ever in all present and future Colonies, without any reservation of power, to call on us either to procure, support, or preserve them ; *she* maintains them, *we* share all the profits ; and, not only their goods, but all goods of Irish produce, are to pass through Britain duty free. Can foreign nations, after this is settled, make distinction between British and Irish goods ? Our manufactures will be united as our interests, and we shall laugh at Portugal folly.

I could run out for hours into the many benefits of this system, but I have tired the House too long ; let me only implore you not to reject this measure for ill-founded, visionary objections, or to sacrifice realities to shadows. If this infatuated country gives up the present offer, *she* may look for it again in vain ; things cannot remain as they are ; commercial jealousy is roused, it will increase with two independent legislatures, if they don't mutually declare the principles whereby their powers shall be separately employed in directing the common concerns of trade ; and without an united interest of commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many shocks, and separation of interests must threaten separation of connexion, which every

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leisure to understand them; all was fever for a short time—but they had scarce got to Britain, before the public began to recover from its error. The contrary was reported to Ministers, and believed in Britain. What was the consequence? Ireland was thought to have fallen into such a state of infatuation and dejection, that any thing might be attempted with success. Hence, in the 20 Propositions, a bolder hand appears every where. The Right Hon. Secretary, when he first mentioned the idea of tribute, did it with a trembling diffidence; and mentioned it, not as a condition on the part of Britain; but as his pre-sentiment, of spontaneous generosity on the part of Ireland. Then delicately and timorously was it ushered in, at the end of the Propositions in the first stage—but in the last exhibition, it stands immediately after the preamble, and in the van of that host of Propositions to which the original ten have encreased. Here too it stands in a different form; as a peremptory demand and absolute condition, to be fulfilled in all its parts (implying distrust) before a step is to be taken by Britain. In the consideration of this tribute, the 20th Proposition must be combined with this second Resolve, in order to see the whole alteration. Now what are the alterations that have been made in the

Mr. FORSTER, For.

every honest Irishman must shudder ever to look at as a possible event.

I will only add, that if this measure be refused, Ireland will receive more solid injury than from any other evil that ever befel her; it is in vain for Gentlemen to think we can go on as we have done for some years—or to expect to cope with England in a destructive war of bounties—our situation must every day become more difficult, and it is impossible to foresee all the ruinous consequences that may ensue.

J. H. HUTCHINSON, Esq. For.

He presented a petition from Cork, praying that the Resolutions, if not rejected, should be postponed till the next session of Parliament. The adjournment was proposed for the purpose of giving the fullest time to the public to consider the Bill, which had been that day moved for, with a declaration of not taking up the measure till the next session of Parliament, and an assurance that it would never be taken up, if not called for by the public voice. That the Minister who held such language was intitled to the public esteem, and to share in the triumph which a learned Gentleman had so eloquently expressed. He was also for the adjournment, because he was

against

Mr. FLOOD, Against.

the Irish grant by the 20th Proposition? 1st. The grant was conditional, and the 20th makes it absolute. In war, at all events, the specified surplus was to be given to the British Navy as the Resolves left Ireland; but in peace, nothing might be given. Thus Ireland seemed to be at a certainty not to give more, with a possibility of not giving so much.—But by the 20th Proposition, this certainty is taken away, and the reverse is established. That is to say, it is made certain that Ireland shall never give less, but that in war, she should lie open to an unlimited demand. In other words, it is made certain that on the first war there should be a rupture between the nations, which, considering the distrust that this system would inspire, might probably be fatal. Thus the nature and quantum of the Irish grant was altered. The application, too, by the Irish Parliament, was conceived to be reserved as a right to be exercised from time to time, and to be adapted to circumstances that no man can foresee. The 20th Proposition cuts off this free exercise of Parliamentary authority in the application of its grant, and requires the application to be made, now and for ever, by one act. Lastly, a perpetual revenue bill in effect is demanded — perpetual duties are unconstitutional enough

Mr. HUTCHINSON, For.

against the Resolution intended to be proposed. That the Resolution implied a contradiction of the declarations made by the two Houses of Parliament in Great Britain, in their address to the Throne, and to the Bill of the British House of Commons, both of which declared, in the most explicit terms, that the Irish Parliament was alone competent to make laws for Ireland; and to the objection, that the House should make such a declaration as well as the British Houses of Parliament, he answered, that it was done by the Bill now moved for, which would be printed and dispersed through the kingdom. It was said that the Bill introduced a new commercial system in respect to the British colonies, different in principle from that of 1779; he denied it, and insisted that by the unanimous resolution of the House of Commons in that year, the liberty so gratefully accepted by Ireland was a liberty of trading with those colonies “in like manner as “trade was carried on between “Great Britain and them.” That on that principle their several laws were passed from that year to the present time, and in those laws the same duties, regulations, prohibitions and restrictions were introduced as in the British laws, except in the instance of rum, which was excepted in the

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Bill,

Mr. FLOOD, Against.

nough in themselves, and derogatory enough from Parliament.—A perpetual bill for collecting perpetual duties would make the matter much worse. Were the whole hereditary revenue to go as usual to Irish services, what man would suffer a perpetual revenue bill for its collection? Any question approaching to such an idea, has been always received with peculiar alarm. How monstrous then was the idea contained in this proposition? And what does it demand? No less, than that Ireland should make a perpetual revenue bill for the whole hereditary revenue, because she was about to give away a part of that revenue to Britain. It is difficult to state any thing more extravagant than this.

The 2d of the 20 Propositions, declared, that, on the full performance of the condition of tribute, a full participation of commerce should be given to Ireland. This is doubly falsified by what follows: this makes the tribute the *sole* condition, and yet, afterwards, condition is added to condition, insomuch, that in the British Bill, founded on the Propositions, there are twenty-three indispensable and fundamental conditions. It is falsified again by the very next, as well as by subsequent clauses of restriction, that prove that the participation is not to be full.

Mr. HUTCHINSON, For.

Bill, and one or two articles of little importance. It was objected, that by the Bill they were to have no selection; he thought it unjust they should have any, because Great Britain herself had none; that they had accepted the trade on the same terms Great Britain enjoyed it, and that it was absurd to expect it on any other. That whatever Great Britain and Ireland could supply, the colonies could take from no other country, and whatever the colonies could supply, the two kingdoms ought only to take from them, for that was the true principle of colonial connection. He insisted that no change whatever was made by the Bill in the independence of the Irish legislature; that the English colonies and settlements were the property of Great Britain, and every country had as good a right to grant its property on condition, as an individual. The nature of a condition was, that the person who had accepted the grant was at liberty not to perform the condition, and to relinquish the grant on one side, the grantor is sure that his property was not to be enjoyed longer than the condition was performed; and on the other side, the grantee was at liberty not to perform the condition, and to determine the grant.

He observed, that the condition expected from Ireland was

Mr. FLOOD, Against.

full. To speak at present of the third, what does that except? Not less than all the countries between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan, containing in the least exaggerated estimate a fourth part of the terraqueous globe, over and above what Britain has any title of property to in that region. We read with surprise of a Roman Pontiff granting one hemisphere to one prince, and another hemisphere to another prince, and here we see half an hemisphere cut off from Ireland in a parenthesis; and that, in a resolution purporting to extend the commerce of Ireland. This parenthesis in the 3d, is detailed in the 9th Proposition. As to both, I shall only say this, that if Ireland is now under no restriction as to her East Indian commerce, such a restraint is not fit to be a part of a system of commercial extension, for which Ireland should be expected to pay; and if Ireland be under any restriction as to her East Indian commerce, it is only by a law of her own, and by a voluntary and unstipulated act of her Parliament in favour of the British East India company, merely because it is British. Such a conduct on the part of Ireland, shews how little such hard conditions are either necessary or deserved. It is foolish in any nation to bind itself, for ever, to the existing monopoly of any other

Mr. HUTCHINSON, For.

was of the most honourable nature; it was no more than this—that she should enjoy the property of Great Britain on the very same terms on which it was enjoyed by Great Britain herself, and whenever Ireland did not choose to enjoy it on those terms, that then each nation was to return precisely to the commercial situation in which she was now placed. He said Great Britain had granted her colony trade on no other terms, and that, in justice to the whole Empire, she could have granted it on no other; for that otherwise the whole maritime and commercial system of Great Britain would be at the feet of Ireland. He adverted to the articles of union between England and Scotland, and said, that event, so long desired by England, had been obstructed for many ages by Scotland's insisting upon having the benefits of trading with the English Colonies, and of the English navigation laws. What Scotland had been long refused, and had at last obtained by parting with the sovereignty of her legislature, was granted to Ireland as a free gift on the condition of similar laws, and while that should be performed, was then offered to be perpetuated to her, without infringing, in the smallest degree, on the unquestioned independence of her legislature; and that when

Mr. FLOOD, *Against*.

other nation; but to bind itself to the future and possible, but unexisting monopolies of any other nation, would be a folly much more than common. Many people think, that it would not be right for Britain to perpetuate this monopoly, as to herself.—Now such a contract, on the part of Ireland, would have a tendency to perpetuate that monopoly, whilst the freedom of Ireland from such a compact, might, according to some able opinions, be a means of dissolving that monopoly by degrees, if such a measure were deemed to be beneficial. At all events, it cannot be the interest of Ireland to be forever bound during the existence of such monopolies—nor after they shall cease, to give up her legislation as to so large a portion of *foreign* trade, by subjecting herself to the duties, regulations and prohibitions that may from time to time, be laid by the British Parliament on the produce of that immense region which lies between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan.

If the trade of Ireland could be extended by exclusion, the 3d and 9th Propositions would deserve our thanks, as far as the Asiatic world and its circumjacentcies are concerned. But this third Proposition takes in another object. It strikes at our trade in all foreign spirits,

Mr. HUTCHINSON, *For*.

Scotland had consented to an incorporating union, she was so anxious for the security of those favourite objects, that she insisted on an express provision for that purpose. Would any man then have foreseen that those advantages could ever have been granted to another kingdom, with a view to no other union but that of interest and affection? The principle of a similarity of laws between the two kingdoms as far as related to colonies, ships and seamen, had been established by several Irish statutes, from the year 1780 to the present session. To support this, he repeated the preamble of one of those acts, the 19th and 20th Geo. III. the spirit of which had been since uniformly agreed to.

“Whereas such part of the trade between this kingdom and the British colonies in America and the West Indies, and the British settlements on the coast of Africa, as was not enjoyed by this kingdom previous to this present session, *can be enjoyed and have continuance so long*, and in such cases only as the goods to be imported from the said colonies, plantations, or settlements, into this kingdom, or to be exported from this kingdom to the said colonies, plantations or settlements, shall be liable to equal duties and drawbacks, and be subject to the same securities, regulations and restrictions as the like goods are liable and subject to upon being imported from the said colonies, plantations and settlements into Great Britain, or exported thence to such colonies, plantations or settlements respectively.”

That one of those statutes, passed in the year 1782, enacted that principle with much greater

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spirits, and consequently must injure our whole trade and intercourse with France, Spain, Portugal and America. Add to this, as to America, the 16th Proposition, which has for its object *foreign* trade only; and, as a branch of that, subjects our imports from the independent States of America to such duties, regulations and prohibitions as the British Parliament shall from time to time think fit to impose on Britain; as to all articles similar to those that are produced in the British Colonies or Settlements. Now, what articles can America send to us, to which, similar articles are not, or may not be produced in some of the Colonies or Settlements of Britain? A great revolution took place, as to the relative situation of America and Ireland, about the year 1782. In a commercial consideration in 1785, the chief object that Ireland could possibly have was America. The rest of the world, comparatively speaking, was mortgaged and pre-occupied. The new states were unengaged. Much Irish blood circulates in America, and there is no small partiality towards Ireland in those states. Was this a thing for Ireland to throw away? Or was it the sound and permanent interest of Britain, that Ireland should so throw it away? If there be a string, by which Britain can recover the affections

Mr. HUTCHINSON, For.

greater extent than the Bill then moved for; for that confined it to the colony system, and to the shipping and seamen, but the act of 1782 not only adopted the principle in those articles, but extends it generally to a similarity in the laws of commerce, provided those laws imposed equal restraints, and conferred equal benefits on the subjects of both kingdoms; and enacted all such clauses and provisions made in England or Great Britain, in any statute made in England or Great Britain, save so far as they have been altered or repealed, to bind the subjects of Ireland only so long as they bind the subjects of Great Britain. The whole of the present act shewed, that a similarity of trade laws was the object; and the duration, while they were laws in Great Britain, shewed a view to the future as well as the past. The present Bill annexed the same condition of equal restraints and benefits to the laws relative to the colonies, to shipping and seamen; and of that equality the Irish legislature was to judge as well as the British; and if, at any time, the adherence to that restrained similarity should be found prejudicial to Ireland, her two Houses of Parliament might determine the settlement, and bring them back to their present condition. He then affirmed as a law-

Mr. FLOOD Against.

affections of America, it is a string which Ireland holds out to her. The 5th Proposition; of the 20, extends to all our imports from Colonies *foreign* as well as British, and subjects them to the same duties, regulations and prohibitions which the British Parliament shall think proper to adopt in Britain. This neither consists with Free Trade, nor with independent legislation. The 8th extends to all those exports of Ireland that in 1780 were exempted, and subjects them, in going to the British Colonies or Settlements, to such duties, drawbacks and regulations, as that they may not be exported with less incumbrance of duty or imposition than the like goods going from Great Britain. This subjects our export trade to the Colonies to disadvantages from which it is at present free.—Is this extension and grace? Is this a thing to be paid for? We have just attained the trade of candles to the West Indies—This would destroy it. Capital is a greater advantage than poverty—The only advantage of the latter, is freedom from incumbrance—And this Proposition deprives Ireland of that. Is this for the interest of the empire? Certainly not; unless the interest of the empire be the ruin of Ireland; and if so, the prosperity of the empire would not be the interest of Ireland.

Now

Mr. HUTCHINSON, For.

a lawyer, that the act of 1782, did affirm the principle that he had stated; he called upon the gentlemen of the long robe to say, whether he was mistaken, and if he was not contradicted, it must be taken as granted, that the principle then objected to was at that time advanced with greater latitude; and when was it acknowledged? At a time when the independence of their legislature had been recently established, and when the spirit of liberty was as high as it ever had appeared in any country. With whom did that principle originate? With some of the foremost assertors of the liberties of Ireland, the late and present chief Baron, the present Attorney General, and Mr. Grattan; for those respectable men were the persons appointed to prepare the act. The generality of the expressions in that law might possibly have occasioned expressions of a similar import in some of the British proceedings, but those expressions had been sufficiently restrained, and the object had been placed beyond the possibility of doubt, by the address of the two Houses of Parliament in Great Britain, and by the English Bill.

He said, they were now alarmed at a principle repeatedly recognized by their own acts, and at a condition which they at first received with gratitude,

Mr. FLOOD, Against.

Now these, in my mind, are noxious doctrines, and a system that suggests them cannot meet with my support.

In a word; what follows? That we ought to put an end to the business, and the sooner that we do it the better. The public has been too long agitated already—The only good that has resulted, is, that both nations, may see, that there is nothing in commerce about which they ought to quarrel. Temper has been shewn on both sides, and I hope it will remain. The importance of the subject demanded free discussion, and that neither kingdom should feel resentment, or chagrin, at the deliberation of the other. In private and in public, I have always said so, from the commencement of this question; and, the event, has confirmed me in that sentiment †.

† [Mr. Flood, in the course of his speech, took notice of a declaration made on a former occasion by Mr. Fitzgibbon, who had said he never would support any measure detrimental to the interests of Ireland. Which declaration Mr. Fitzgibbon rose and repeated. Mr. Flood also said, a Right Honourable Gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Forster) had voted against a declaration of Rights; and before he sat down, he took notice of what Mr. Orde had said relative to Patents, Copy-rights, and other minute particulars.]

Mr. HUTCHINSON, For.

itude, and had since uniformly performed without murmur; nor could it ever have been thought fair or equal between the two countries, that Ireland should have the benefit of the British Navigation system, and not submit to it herself.

He said, the Resolution proposed would be a censure on the British Minister, who deserved very different treatment from them, for having encountered the mistaken prejudices of many of his own countrymen to promote the interests of that kingdom, and the strength and prosperity of the whole British empire. He said, it would be unjust to condemn the Bill before the majority of the House was apprised of its contents, and before the kingdom had considered it. To their dispassionate and unprejudiced opinion it was referred; with that view, and because he could safely affirm that the Bill contained not a syllable injurious to their constitutional rights, he had voted for the introduction of it.

[*Mr.**Mr.*

Mr. HUTCHINSON, For.

[*Mr. Connolly said*, that the Right Hon. young Man, at present the British Minister, had made no struggles for Ireland at all, nor did he deserve to be panegyricized. Had he thought fit to have interfered with his weight in favour of Ireland, it was impossible but that his power and influence must have prevailed.]

Mr. Hutchinson, in reply, said, that he considered the British Minister entitled to the acknowledgments of that country; that he had resisted the petitions of between fifty and sixty of the principal trading cities and towns of Great Britain, and the opposition of many of the principal manufacturers of England, who declared their intentions of removing with their capitals to that kingdom, and had repeated their evidence before the House of Lords of Great Britain, under the sanction of an oath. That a conduct directed to the good of the whole empire, in opposition to the clamours of such a multitude of manufacturers, deserved praise; but he flattered no man: he had not the honour of being known to the British Minister; his Majesty's favour and his own situation rendered him independent of all Ministers.

The House divided,

For leave to bring in the bill	127
Against	108
