

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

PRESENT MATTERS IN DISPUTE

BETWEEN

Great Britain and Ireland;

AND ON THE

Means of converting these Articles into
mutual Benefits to both Kingdoms.

By JOSIAH TUCKER, D.D.
DEAN OF GLOUCESTER.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

MDCCLXXXV.

[Price One Shilling.]

THE REPORTS

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PRESIDENTIAL MATTERS IN DISPUTE

AND

Great Britain and Ireland;

AND ON THE

Means of converting their Wines into
mutual Benefits to both Kingdoms.

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Houses of the Oireachtas

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESSE papers were originally drawn up for the use of a few friends, who wished to know the Author's sentiments on a subject which is now so much debated in both kingdoms, and perhaps so little understood by the great majority in either. The request of my friends was, to have some easy clue in their enquiries, which might direct them to right conclusions, amidst the contradictory assertions, and the clashing evidences of contending partizans. Whether the Author has been able, in the following sheets, to answer the expectation of his friends, is not for him to judge; but as it was their earnest request, that he should lose no time at this critical juncture, in laying his thoughts

before the Public, he now submits them to general examination, with that deference which is due from a man, who writes for no party, is truly and literally independent of all, and wishes no ill to any.

One thing he begs leave to add, that had he originally intended to have given these papers to the press, he would have enlarged on some heads, which are at present only touched upon. He would have shewn, in particular, from the evidence of FACTS, that a poor country, where wages are low, provisions cheap, and raw materials in the greatest plenty, has nevertheless a manifest disadvantage in contending with a rich one, in working up *complete* manufactures, in the price of those manufactures at market, the extension of commerce, and in shipping and navigation. He would have

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produced examples of attempts having been *unsuccessfully* made, some of them recently, to transplant the woollen, the worsted, the iron and metal, the cotton, the pottery, and several other branches of manufacture, from richer into poorer countries; all of them having failed in a course of years, notwithstanding the great natural advantages belonging to the one, the poorer country, and the seeming disadvantages attending the richer. But at present he can only refer his readers to a tract written expressly on this subject, which has stood the test of the most rigorous examination as to the theoretic part, and (what is much better) which has been proved to be founded on fact and experience. The tract referred to is the first of his Four on Political and Commercial Subjects, printed for Cadell, entituled, The Great Question resolved, Whether a
rich

rich country can stand a competition with a poor country (of equal natural advantages), in raising of provisions, and cheapness of manufactures?—With suitable inferences and deductions.

N. B. The reader, by the perusal of this tract, will immediately observe, that every part of the reasoning, and of the facts there mentioned respecting Scotland, conclude in a much stronger degree in regard to Ireland.

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IRELAND being now an independent kingdom, is as much intitled to trade to any foreign country, as England herself:

Consequently she hath a right (or soon will have, when her own ill-judged act of subjecting herself to the restrictions of the East India Company shall expire) to trade to all the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and particularly to Indostan, and to China.

She has also a full right to trade to Egypt, and to all parts of the Mediterranean, the Archipelago, and the Levant; not to mention the Russian dominions bordering on the Black Sea.

Being now no longer bound to submit to the English monopolies of sugar, rum, &c. &c. she is free to resort to any market whatever for the purchase of these commodities, instead of being confined to the English plantations, the dearest in the known world.

She is totally at liberty to employ whatever shipping, English or foreign, she may find the most conducive to her *mercantile* interest, for exportation, or importation of any goods or manufactures, being happily released from those burdens and impositions on a free trade, which are contained in that famous Monopoly, called The Act of Navigation.

She is not now hampered by any English laws (and it is her own fault, if she will hamper herself) relative to the exportation or importation of grain, but is at full liberty to consult the general interest of the whole kingdom, and not the partial interest either of the corn-grower, or of the corn-dealer.

Lastly, Ireland is not as yet infected with that strange phrenzy which has infected the whole English nation for so many ages, viz.

That

That all people, nations, and languages, ought to acknowledge England to be the sole mistress and sovereign of the seas, and to pay homage and submission to her pavilion. Ireland is hitherto untainted with that species of madness, and consequently has provoked no other maritime power to retaliate the affront upon her.

Now all these fortunate circumstances, freedoms, and exemptions, might soon be made to operate to the general advantage of both kingdoms, were a judicious application to be made of self-interest, the strongest principle in human nature. But the benefits from hence arising, and every other benefit, must have been surrendered up on the part of Ireland, without obtaining any other compensation, than what was supposed to be contained in those imaginary favours, specified in the bill which lately passed the Irish House of Commons; but which the English merchants and manufacturers, most happily for Ireland, have opposed with much violence and indignation. These favours may be truly styled *imaginary*, because they are chiefly of such a nature, as make it impossible

(in a commercial sense) for the Irish nation to avail itself of them. In short, they are no equivalent for what was to be surrendered up; and they grant nothing which can be reduced to practice for at least a century to come. On the contrary,

The FIRST MONOPOLY to be opened for the Benefit of both Kingdoms, will soon be a free Trade to all the Countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

THE most fortunate circumstance which could have happened for Ireland is, that she is hitherto unincumbered with restrictions on her foreign trade, unfettered by joint-stock companies, or exclusive privileges: consequently, as Ireland either has, or soon will have, a free navigation from the Cape of Good Hope to the extremities of China, there is not a doubt to be made, but that many, perhaps most of those English merchants and manufacturers, who are the most zealous against the Irish bill, will be among the foremost to fit out English ships and cargoes, and to clear and victual from some of the ports

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of Ireland, in order to trade under the sanction of the Irish flag. In such a situation, the face of things will be changed; no evils will be foreboded to fall on poor Old England, even though the merchants of London, Bristol, Liverpool, and Glasgow, and the manufacturers of Birmingham, Manchester, Etruria, and Paisley, should send their goods to Arabia and Persia, to the East India and China markets, through this *new* channel: nor will there be any great lamentation, should the returns be made in tea and china-ware, in raw silk, cotton wool, camels hair, ivory, drugs, indico, salt-petre, and various other articles necessary for the manufactures of this kingdom. In fact, when these goods and raw materials shall be once landed in Ireland, the necessary consequences will soon be felt in England: for our monopolizing East India Company will be compelled either to lower their prices on the like articles to an equal standard, or to become bankrupts. And no honest man, no lover of his country, or of mankind, can truly say, that either of these alternatives would be the worst thing that could have happened either to Asia, or to Europe.

*A SECOND MONOPOLY to be opened for
the Benefit of both Kingdoms is—A Free
Trade to Egypt, the Levant, &c.*

THE same observations which were made relative to the restrictions of the East India Company, may be made respecting our English Turkey Company, with this only difference, that, whereas the East India Company do not so much as pretend to grant a permission to any ships to trade from any port but from the port of London, the Turkey Company, when the last struggle was made for opening that trade, were obliged to grant a permission of a free trade in *words*, but took care to clog it with such difficulties as rendered it impracticable in *fact*. The Irish nation is not bound by any of these restrictive clauses; and though not capable of profiting greatly herself on her own stock, yet she can transfer an entire freedom to any English adventurer (and thereby obtain an intermediate profit to herself), who shall, with a proper assortment of English manufactures, clear out from some Irish port, and hoist the Irish flag. Here, therefore, let it be asked,
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Were this to prove a lucrative branch of commerce, *who* or which among our most violent *Anti-Irish Patriots* would refuse to submit to the indignity of trading under borrowed colours?—Nay, *who*, or which of our English merchants, or manufacturers, made any scruple of doing the like, when the prospect of gain was before their eyes? The writer of this paper long ago foretold, that the English and American traders would soon be reconciled to each other, notwithstanding their violent and hostile declarations, when self-interest became the load-stone of attraction. His opinion was then treated as a foolish paradox: The mercantile people, almost to a man, were pleased to scout at it; but the event has shewn, that he was not such a dreamer, or so wild in his conjectures, as they imagined him to be.

A THIRD MONOPOLY to be opened for the Benefit of both Kingdoms, will be— A Free Importation of Sugars, and of other Products of the warmer Climates, from the cheapest Market, wherever it can be found: and by that means a Foundation be laid for the gradual Abolition of the present inhuman Slave Trade.

IT was observed, in the foregoing article, that self-interest easily reconciles all differences, and quickly extinguishes national antipathies. If it went no farther, it would do no harm; nay, it would be an excellent succedaneum to true and genuine benevolence. But, alas! it often goes much too far; it often steels the heart against the clearest convictions of honour and conscience. In fact, the plainest dictate of morality, viz. DO AS YOU WOULD BE DONE BY, loses its influence in many cases, when opposed by self-interest. There is not a man that breathes, who would approve of his being made a slave, in the manner that the English carry on the slave-trade on the coast of Africa, and then transport these poor wretches, to sell them to the
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West India planters. The murders committed in the course of this practice, reckoning from the beginning of it to the present hour, almost exceed the power of numbers to ascertain. Yet reason and humanity recoil in vain. For the same trade in human blood is still carried on, not only with impunity, but also with the consent, approbation, and even assistance of the British legislature. Nay, I will venture to foretel, that the same will be for ever carried on, till some other method can be devised for supplying Europe with sugars, and with other produce of the southern climates, at a *cheaper rate* than what we receive through the medium of slavery. *Cheapness* alone would work a surprising alteration in the thoughts and dispositions of mankind on such subjects. For self-interest (which in the present case is only another name for *buying cheap*) would do more towards exciting a strong aversion to the present monopoly of labour in our plantations, and to an abhorrence of the various cruelties attendant on slavery, than all the reasonings, moral arguments, or eloquence in the world. Therefore, as lowering the price of sugars, rum, cotton, &c. &c. is the grand object to be attended

tended to, let us see whether the present state of Ireland can afford us any prospect towards attaining this important end. That is, whether the independence of that kingdom can, or cannot be made subservient to the cause of humanity, by being used as a means for procuring sugars, &c. cheaper at an European market, than otherwise they would have been.

One thing is so notorious, that it cannot be denied, viz. That the English planters in general (doubtless there are exceptions) treat their slaves, or suffer them to be treated, with a greater degree of inhumanity than the planters of any other European nation. The reason of which excess of barbarity is too easily accounted for. As, 1st, The English planters in general have greater numbers of slaves on their plantations than others have; and the greater the number, the more severity must be used to keep them in awe, and to prevent them from combining together in favour of that passion for liberty, which nature has implanted in every breast. 2dly, The English planters are more their own masters, their own law-givers in their assemblies; also

the interpreters, the judges (as jurymen), and the executioners of their laws, than those of any other nation. The very form of the English constitution, originally calculated for the preservation of liberty, tends, in this instance, to destroy it. Consequently the English planters can indulge themselves in a greater degree of passion and revenge, than would be permitted under the absolute governments of France, Spain, Portugal, or Denmark. [See particularly the Code Noir of France. Moreover the regulations of the Spanish government respecting negroe slaves, are still more humane, laying a foundation for the sober and industrious among them, by allowing them the profits of two days labour in each week, to purchase their own liberty in the course of a few years. And it may be observed in general, that though absolute governments are tyrannical themselves, yet they are a great check on the tyranny of their intermediate subjects; being ready to protect the helpless from being oppressed by any but themselves. This is remarkably verified in the case of those slaves who live under the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian governments, compared with the

hard fate of others, who still groan under the bondage of the nobles of Poland.] 3dly, Many of the English planters constantly reside in England, and therefore consign the care of their estates to those tyrants at second hand, called bailiffs or overseers. Now this race of mortals hath a stronger interest than any others, to stifle all complaints against themselves, and to keep their principals as much in the dark as possible, respecting the management and profits of their own estates. Add to this, 4thly, That the planters themselves, knowing that they have a monopoly against the mother country, because we are not permitted to resort to any other market, will keep up the price of sugars, and of the other produce of their own lands, as high as possible: at the same time, that they do not think themselves bound to purchase corn, provision, or any other merchandize at an English market, if they can buy the like articles cheaper in America, or any where else.

From all these circumstances, no man can be at a loss to know the true reason, how it comes to pass, that the sugars, and other produce of the British planters, are much dearer than those

those of any other nation; notwithstanding that our planters have many advantages in the purchase of their negroes, of their boilers, their mills, and of various utensils, which others have not.

But the matter of *fact* puts this affair beyond the possibility of a doubt. For while the common price of sugars in the British islands, in times of peace, is generally found to be about 25 shillings sterling the Cwt.—that of the French is about 16 shillings—that of the Portuguese about 12 shillings—and that of the East Indies, as I have been credibly informed, no more than two shillings and sixpence;—being, N. B. raised or manufactured by *freemen only*.

Now, though the inhabitants of Great Britain are tied down at present to such exorbitant prices, as the monopolising planter or his agent shall be pleased to extort from them; the inhabitants of Ireland are totally free, and may at any time resort to the cheapest market: consequently, by a judicious use and application of this freedom, they may become the means, not only of emancipating the unhappy

happy natives of Guinea from their present galling yoke (though I own, by slow and almost imperceptible degrees), but may also convince mankind in general of the momentous truth, not yet thoroughly understood, That of all monopolies, slavery is the most prejudicial to the true interests of a trading nation.

Suppose, therefore, that ships were fitted out from Cork, or Waterford, or from any other Irish port, with cargoes of English manufactures (because the English are by far the best and cheapest that can be got, and may be procured on the *longest* credit), and properly sorted for the French, Spanish, Portuguese, Danish, or Dutch Plantations; or indeed for any of the newly erected *free ports* in those seas; in that case, is there a doubt to be made, but that the English merchants and manufacturers, with their large capitals, would be the principal adventurers? and can you imagine that the difference in the respective prices between 25*s.* 16*s.* and 12*s.* per Cwt. would not be a strong temptation to them to make the trial? not to mention the additional circumstance arising from the
greater

greater profits to be made on the sale of the manufactures or outlets, when sent to these *new* markets.

But this is not all : for if the sugars raised by slaves in the French, and other islands, where slavery is of the milder kind, are much cheaper than those which are raised in our English plantations, the sugars which *free-men* cultivate in the East Indies (working on their own account), are by far the cheapest of all. An evident proof this, that the cheapness of manufactures is to be obtained by freedom only, and not by the chains and fetters, stripes and lashes, of the labourers employed therein!

Now, laying all these circumstances together, no man can be so blind, but he must see, that the principles of morality, and of national commerce, agree in this respect in perfect harmony; and therefore, that in proportion as such systems of freedom, and of humanity, shall gain ground, in the same proportion will every planter, or sugargrower, be compelled, by the necessity of the case, to lighten the yoke from off the necks of his slaves, and to emancipate them by
 little

little and little, till at last a general revolution will ensue (as was, N. B. formerly the case here in England), and slavery be no more.

Moreover, to facilitate this good work, let it be further observed, that the sugar-cane grows spontaneously, and that rice, cotton, indico, and other articles of great value, may be raised with very little trouble in those parts of Africa, from whence the slaves are usually imported. What, therefore, remains to be done for the completion of this good work, but to point out to the inhabitants of these regions such circumstances, wherein their own advantage and commercial interests do properly consist? and to prove to them, by obvious facts, that they will get more by manufacturing the sugar-cane at home, and by raising rice, indico, cotton, cochineal, &c. &c. on their own lands, than they can receive by trucking for their own flesh and blood, their sons and their daughters, or by making wars on their innocent neighbours, in order to sell their prisoners for slaves, some thousands of miles from their native homes? If any thing more could be added,

added, to cause them to feel the horror and iniquity of such proceedings, it should be this, to inform them, that one-third at least of these unhappy victims die in their passages, and of the diseases contracted on board the ships, by being stowed so close together: that one-third more are generally lost by the seasoning of the climate; and that the remainder linger out a wretched life, till *that* death, which has been so often wished for, shall release them from their misery.

Be it therefore remembered, and be it duly attended to, that these, and many other evils, may be totally prevented by the methods here proposed. Be it, I say, never to be forgotten (at least for the sake of self-interest, if not for better motives), that in a course of years, perhaps in little more than half a century, not only Great Britain and Ireland, but also all Europe, may be supplied (if they please) with sugars, and all the products of the warmer climates, without slavery, without colonies, without governments and placemen, without fees and perquisites, without forts and guarda-costas, without contracts, and without jobs.

A FOURTH MONOPOLY to be opened for the Benefit of both Kingdoms, will be a free Navigation, exempted from those Clogs and Restrictions which are required by the famous Act of Navigation.

THE precise idea of a Monopoly is this, that it is a privilege, or exclusive charter granted to serve a *few*, at the expence, and to the detriment of the *many*. According to this definition, it is impossible that *that* famous Monopoly, called The Act of Navigation, can be vindicated on the footing of *commercial* utility. National prejudices, indeed, are strongly in its favour; but prejudice and reason are not always the same thing; and it doth not follow that nations, any more than individuals, have ever been infallible in their judgments, or have consulted their own interests in the course of their proceedings: England alone can furnish examples without number of this melancholy truth. This being premised, we have two points now to consider, viz. 1st, Whether it can be for the *benefit* of the public in general (abstracted from any *particular* consideration),
that

that the landed and trading interests should be circumscribed, or limited by a monopoly in the freight, carriage, or transport of their own goods and merchandize? and then, 2dly, Whether the excuses usually brought for making this sacrifice, namely, *that it increases the breed of seamen*, hath a just foundation in fact, or can be warranted by experience? The discussion of which two questions will, it is apprehended, contain the whole substance of what can be said on this subject; I mean, as far as reason and argument are to have any share therein. Now, respecting the first inquiry, if any doubt can be started on this head, it must be this, that mankind in general have not the same sense to judge of what is, or is not for their own *immediate* advantage in this case, as they have in all others; and therefore ought to be subject to the restraints of tutors and guardians, to prescribe terms for the regulation of their conduct. But as this is a proposition too glaringly false, and too absurd to be seriously maintained, recourse must therefore be had to the second point, namely, That the great body of the people must be abridged of their natural rights and liberties of employing whomsoever they

please, *for the sake of keeping up, and encreasing the number of sailors to man our navy.* Now, this is the first instance which occurs in history, of monopolies and restraints being judged to be a proper mode of multiplying the numbers of persons employed in the conduct and execution of them. The usual train of reasoning hath been quite the reverse: however, to give the matter a fair hearing, let us try the effects of the present Monopoly, in a case of which every man is a competent judge, and which is exactly parallel to this before us.

A merchant-ship is nothing more than a sea-waggon for the exportation and importation of its lading; the use of which is correspondent to the carriage or re-carriage of goods by land-waggon. Or, to come still closer to the point, it answers the idea of the freight, both forwards and backwards, of wares and merchandize sent along our navigable rivers, and inland canals. Now, can any man be so lost to common sense, as to maintain, that were exclusive patents to be granted either to our waggon by land, or to our barges and trows by water, this would be

be a means of multiplying the number of those who should be employed on either element? And yet this he must maintain, and *prove* likewise, before he can justify the act of navigation, as a proper measure for encreasing the breed of failors. The only rational and effectual method of encreasing the numbers to be employed either by land or water, is to encrease the quantity of produce, of raw materials, and of all kinds of bulky manufactures, which require to be conveyed from place to place. For these will of course create a demand for more waggons, more trows, barges, and vessels for the carriage or transportation of them, than otherwise would have been necessary. Whereas, to begin with schemes to increase the number of waggons, or quantity of shipping, without having a prior regard, or without giving due encouragement to encrease the quantity of goods to be carried, is surely to begin at the wrong end; and, as the old proverb expresses it, to put the cart before the horse. In fact, every thing in trade ought to be left to find its own level; and no monopoly, or exclusive privilege, ought to be granted to one set of traders in preference to another. When the
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sea-carrier finds that he is encouraged, and, as it were, exhorted by means of an exclusive privilege, to raise his price of freight, as having no rivals to contend with, can it be supposed that he will not avail himself of this circumstance? Or, is there an instance to be produced of any number of men, when knit together, and united by a legal monopoly, who sacrificed their own interest to that of the Public? Whereas emulation between rival carriers, rival merchants, and rival manufacturers of every sort and kind, operates by a ratio just the reverse. The price of freight, of goods, merchandize, labour, wages, and provisions, is then reduced to its just standard. And every individual, by striving to outdo his neighbour, and to get the most custom, serves the Public by his endeavours to serve himself. This has ever been the fact, and ever will be, according to the reason and nature of things. Now, as far as the encrease of shipping, and consequently of sailors, is concerned, one example, and a *striking* one it is, may serve instead of a thousand. Since the peace has been concluded with America, our trade between Great Britain and the American continent hath greatly encreased. And what

what hath been the consequence? More English shipping, and *larger* ships (I say *English*, not American), have been employed in that service, than ever were employed during the same space of time before. Now, this I aver has been the fact, notwithstanding the act of navigation itself has been superseded in favour of these revolted colonies; and every indulgence hath been shewn to them, which hath been hitherto denied to other nations, though they most certainly have a better claim.

However, an opening is now made: and in the present enlightened state of things, such an affair as this cannot recede, but must go forward. Other nations will think themselves extremely ill-used (and with great justice) unless they, our friends and best customers, shall be put on an equal footing with the Americans, so lately our bitterest enemies, and at present far, very far from being our most punctual paymasters, or best customers.

But above all, the independence of Ireland will necessarily give a *coup de grace* to this injurious monopoly, as well as to several others. The Irish are not bound by our act

of navigation, or by any other of our restraining laws. They are therefore at full liberty to employ what shipping they may find the most conducive to their own interest; and the English adventurers, who will have the chief share in the fitting out of such ships and cargoes, will rejoice to find, that they enjoy that liberty in the ports of Ireland, which is denied to them in their own. At last, indeed, the English legislature itself will grow wiser by experience, and learn, from the example before their eyes, that trade ought not to be circumscribed, and that the best and surest means of encouraging the breed of sailors, is to encourage the cheapness of freight, and to promote rivalry and emulation among all ranks and classes in society, more especially among the commercial.

A FIFTH MONOPOLY to be opened for the Benefit of both Kingdoms, will consist in the free Exportation and Importation of Grain.

WHEN men set out wrong in any scheme, the farther they proceed, the more distant they are from the right course. This hath been remarkably verified in the regulations, which have obtained the consent of the legislature respecting the exportation and importation of corn.

Corn is a *raw material*, in the most extensive sense of the word. Consequently every encouragement which ought to be given for encreasing the quantity of any material, the most necessary and useful, and for which there is a never-ceasing demand, ought to be given to the growth of corn at home, and for the importation of it from abroad.

The most proper method for encouraging the growth of corn at home, is to multiply the number of inhabitants and eaters of bread. The most effectual way of doing this,

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is, to render the means of subsistence so easy and comfortable, that the common people may not find the weight of an encreasing family a burden too heavy for them to bear. Population will then be the necessary consequence. This is the order of Providence. The proper method for encouraging the importation of corn from abroad, is to admit the unconditional importation of it at all times and seasons, without any restraint or limitation whatsoever.

But corn is not only a raw material, the increase whereof is in that sense, and on that account to be encouraged, but it is also a material of a perishable nature, which daily grows worse by keeping. Therefore it ought to be exported, whilst it remains good and wholesome; otherwise the vender will be a great loser, and the eater of such bread, if he can eat it, will be materially injured.

For these reasons, were there no others, it is very evident that the exportation of corn ought never to be restrained, unless under such an unhappy and uncommon circumstance, where crops have failed in every other
country,

country, and a general famine is likely to ensue. As to the importation of it, it is absurd to suppose, that any raw material, and more especially the most momentous of all others, should be prohibited from being brought in, and the uses of it restrained, for the sake of enriching a few monopolizers.

These points being admitted, it becomes a matter of astonishment to the unbiaſſed enquirer after truth, how it comes to paſs, that, in ſo plain a caſe, men of judgment and reflection could miſs the right path, and be continually deviating in error. But, alas! thoſe of the greateſt ſagacity and diſcernment are as eaſily ſwayed by the conſideration of *profit* and *loſs*, as any others; and are, therefore, too generally blind to any thing reſpecting the public good, if in oppoſition to their own immediate intereſt. This is a melancholy truth, which needs no illuſtration. All the corn laws now in being, were formed on one and the ſame general principle, viz. That the good of the whole was to be ſacrificed to the intereſts of particular monopolizers: and the ſeveral alterations, explanations, or ſuppoſed amendments which have been made

from time to time, were evidently not intended to go to the root of the evil, but to temporise; so that the opportunities of committing frauds by one set of men, should, for the future, be transferred to that of another.

The bill now depending (April 1785), proposes to restrain the abuses, or supposed abuses, said to be practised by the exporters or importers of corn, belonging to those parts of the kingdom which are far distant from the metropolis. A good hearing this! But what is the cure of the evil, and the remedy proposed? Why truly, that the exporters and importers belonging to the port of London, shall have an exclusive right of committing the like frauds for the future; and that the price of corn in all other parts of the kingdom, as to exports and imports, shall be regulated by the price, or supposed price of the London market. A most patriotic method! and likely to do much good! Yet when the matter is traced to its consequences, this proposed amendment of the present evil will turn out to be nothing better than as here represented, viz. an artful scheme for engrossing the whole trade of the kingdom, relative to
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the export or import of corn, into the hands of a dozen, or a score of over-grown corn-factors, belonging to the capital. Indeed the very idea of opening or of shutting the port of London, or of any other port, according as the private interest of those individuals, who are engaged in the corn-trade, shall suggest, is sufficient to explain the whole mystery, and to account for that uncommon zeal, which is displayed on either side in this controversy. As to the solemnity of an oath (which is always required), we know but too well, from fatal experience, that this is not to be relied upon, because it is but a feeble barrier against the temptation of self-interest, and the prospect of greater gain; and where a prosecution for perjury is in a manner impossible.

Put the case, that the corn-factor, whether in London, or any other sea-port town, it matters not, has either a great stock in his own warehouses, or has engaged the corn-growers in the adjacent counties under contract, to supply him with large quantities at a *certain price*. In either case it is manifestly his interest to shut up the ports against imports, in order that he may sell at an higher price,

price, and prevent any foreign corn from rivaling him at market. Therefore he contrives ways and means, at the cheap expence of a few oaths, to get the ports closed up by law, till his stock can be sold off: and if you can believe him, he has no other view in so doing, than to promote the *landed interest*, and to alleviate the burdens under which they now groan. But when the quantity of his stores are considerably lessened, then he changes his note, and having received intelligence from his agents abroad, that loadings are secured, and his ships ready to sail, then he feels (though not before) for the distresses of the manufacturing poor (the landed interest being at that juncture to be forgot); and he applies for opening the ports, by the very same methods which had been used for shutting them before. But when his cargoes are safely landed, and his storehouses are filled, the ports are to be shut again, and the landed interest is to be again promoted,—till the present stock shall be sold off,—and thus the farce goes round; in which, while public good is the cry, private interest is the real mover behind the scenes. Indeed, I do not say but that both may sometimes coincide.

But

But it is evident from the tenor of the present bill, and from the frauds which are said to have been detected in the whole business both of exports and imports, that the system itself, which administers such continual temptations to fraud and chicanery, and even bare-faced perjury, must be totally wrong, and that no cure can be administered, but that which is radical, viz. A general permission both for the exportation and importation of grain at all times and seasons, and to and from all places. And till this is done, much may be pretended, while little is effected. London may accuse the out-ports, and the out-ports may retort the accusation. But every disinterested, impartial man must be obliged to confess, that there is too much truth in the criminations and recriminations on both sides, and that to each of them it may be truly said, *Thou art the man.*

The writer of this paper will not pay so bad a compliment to the intellects of any of his readers, as to suppose them not convinced, that the present corn-laws ought to be in a manner totally changed; and that, if the general good was to be the point to be consulted, both the exportation and importation

tion of corn ought to be left to take their own free course, without any interference of the legislature. But, alas! when self-interest holds the balance, reason, and conviction, and the public good, are too often found to be *trifles light as air*. He doth not therefore depend on the strength of his argument for the success of this cause.

The independence of Ireland is his sheet-anchor in this respect, as well as in the former: for when the corn-trade between North America and Ireland (together with some other articles connected with and dependent on it) shall be left to settle itself into a system; then the British corn-factors, when prohibited from importing into Great Britain, will certainly import into some of the western or northern ports of Ireland, if they shall find it their interest so to do; provided the Irish will have the good sense to give them leave. Ireland will thereby become a kind of magazine or granary for the middle and southern parts of Europe; so that the scarcity of one country will be supplied by the superabundance of another. This will awaken the attention, and excite the jealousy and emulation of Great Britain; and then the English

traders themselves will be among the foremost to apply for a repeal of all these monopolizing laws, when they shall find that they can no longer make any use of them to their own private advantage, but, on the contrary, that this monopolizing system will necessarily operate to the benefit of their rivals.

Upon the whole; it is evidently for the interest of both kingdoms, that the present bill should be deferred. Matters are not yet ripe enough for either country to avail itself of those advantages, which may be enjoyed on both sides in the course of ten or fifteen years hence, were every thing till then to remain *in statu quo*; and were the consideration of the whole affair to be postponed to that distant period. New lights would then arise; new interests and connections would be formed; and it is not improbable, but that the most violent opposers of a *real union*, would be then the most zealous to promote it. At present, an alliance, such as is proposed by the bill now depending, may be truly said to hang out false colours to both nations: for it buoys the Irish up with delusive hopes, which cannot be realized according to the system now proposed; and it fills the English with terrors and

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panics, which have no foundation but in the artifice of the *few*, and the credulity of the *many*. Happily for the world, it is the prerogative of Providence to bring good out of evil. This may be clearly seen in a thousand instances; and it will be our faults (I include the Irish, as well as English), if we do not turn to our own profit and advantage the evil which is now before us.

A real union and incorporation with Ireland is certainly a most desirable thing; but, according to the present situation of affairs, and men's tempers and dispositions, this is an event more to be wished for, than to be expected. Nevertheless, when many of those obstacles, which now appear so formidable, shall be smoothed by the lenient hand of time, and when a mutual intercourse between England and Ireland (according as above described) shall confer mutual benefits on each other; it will then be found, that the only thing remaining towards completing the commercial and political system, and towards giving strength and security, consistence and stability to the whole, will be to unite under one legislature, to form one parliament, and to become ONE PEOPLE.

APPENDIX.

Subjects for Dissertations and Per-
miums, to be offered to the GRA-
DUATE STUDENTS of the UNIVER-
SITIES of ENGLAND and SCOTLAND.

Written December 1784.

IT is a just complaint, and hath been of long standing, that the general tenor of academical studies hath very little tendency towards instructing the rising generation in the civil, political, and commercial interests of their own country, when they come abroad into the world, and are to take some active part on the stage of life. On the contrary it is observable, that a young gentleman may even excel in almost every one of those exercises, which are either required of him for his public

lic degrees, or prescribed by his tutor for private instruction; and yet be very deficient in that kind of knowledge, which is necessary to form the public-spirited citizen, the enlightened senator, and the real patriot; and, what is still worse, the greater his zeal, without such knowledge, the more liable he will be to pursue wrong measures, injurious to his country and to mankind, though with the best intentions of doing what is right.

To remedy these inconveniences, at least in part, the following proposals are humbly submitted to the judgment of the Public—The Author himself hath been long of the opinion, that the subjects here proposed, or some others of the same tendency, are proper for instructing young men of letters of every denomination, in the real interests and true policy, not only of Great-Britain, but of all the nations upon earth. But as he makes no pretensions to infallibility, he shall await the public decision, with that deference and respect which duty enjoins, and decency requires; happy in the consciousness of his own mind, of having meant the *best*.

FIRST SUBJECT.

Whether a strict attention to agriculture and manufactures, and to their inseparable concomitant, a free, extended, and national commerce, can be made compatible with a spirit of heroism, and great military glory? and in case there should be found an incongruity between them, which ought to have the preference?—conquests, colonies, and a widely extended empire? or, domestic industry and frugality, a free trade, and great internal population?

SECOND SUBJECT

What *kind*, and *quantity* of military force seem to be sufficient for guarding^e from foreign invasion, or domestic robbery, the agriculture and manufactures, the shipping and commerce of *that particular country*, whose sole aim is to excel in the arts of peace, without attempting to give laws to other nations, or to exult over them either by land or sea, and not pretending to regulate the balance of power between the contending nations of the world?

THIRD

THIRD SUBJECT.

Whether an examination into the nature of the above subjects doth or doth not lead to conclusions favourable to the interests of this country in particular, and to the good of mankind in general? And if it should be found to be favourable to the good of *all*, whether a system of politics and commerce, built on such a plan, would promote or discourage the employing of *slaves* instead of hiring *free men*, for the purposes of agriculture, manufacture, and national commerce?

FOURTH SUBJECT.

In case it should be found, on due examination, that slavery is repugnant not only to humanity, but also to the general interests of agriculture, manufactures, and national commerce.—Quere, What methods ought to be devised for supplying Great Britain with sugars, and other productions of the West Indies, which are now raised by slaves only? and how might such a benevolent scheme be carried into execution by gentle means, sure
and

and progressive in their operation, but free from violence?

FIFTH SUBJECT

Supposing such alterations in the commercial system as above suggested, and accompanied by the *revocation of all monopolies whatever*—would such a scheme, if put in practice, be attended with any additional expence to government? would it obstruct the collection of the several duties and taxes at home? or would it be any impediment to the protection of our trade abroad? and, above all, would it tend to the accumulation, or diminution of the burden of the present enormous national debt?

R O P O S E D,

That 200l. be raised by subscription for giving premiums to the *graduate* students of the universities of England and Scotland, for the best English dissertations (if deserving to appear in print) on *one*, or *more* of the above mentioned subjects, namely,

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and will engage for twenty more from his
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