

A. D. Monstone

THE

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ARRANGEMENTS

WITH

I R E L A N D

CONSIDERED.

L O N D O N :

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T H E
A R R A N G E M E N T S, &c.

TH E spirit of commerce, by making the many less dependent on the few, gradually overturned the massy fabrick of the feudal constitutions. The progress of this spirit has, even in the short period of the present century, softened the temper of every European government. And it was the silent prevalence of this spirit, more perhaps than the avowed operations of design, which, during late times, prompted so many requests on the part of Ireland and dictated so many grants by Great Britain.

That much has been asked at different times and much has been given will not be

regretted by those, who wish to see fellow subjects enjoy equal privileges; or by those, who value above all things the blessings of domestic quiet within a convulsed Empire. It is only to be lamented, that what was at last done, was not decisively done, on the fair principles of mutual advantage and lasting contentment.

If we briefly review the restraints, which had been imposed formerly by our mercantile avarice more than by our political jealousy; if we shortly consider the relief which has been given, during the last seven years, by our apprehensions, more than by our policy; if we compare the extent of what Ireland actually enjoys with the little that is now withheld; we shall see the truth of that regret in the best light, and probably determine, that there is now nothing in contest between the sister kingdoms, which can possibly counter-balance the disagreeableness of future altercation, the pleasures of promised concord, and the profit of equal industry, directed to one common end.

In

In 1778, which may be regarded as the period of rigour and the beginning of concession, the produce of Ireland, except woollens, cottons, and hats, glass, hops, gunpowder, and coals, were allowed to be exported * to the British Colonies in America, and to the British settlements in Africa. Iron too was permitted, on paying specified duties. And foreign manufactures, which had been imported through England into Ireland for her own consumption, were equally allowed to be transported to the same distant markets.

To enable us to judge of the value of what was then given, or withheld, we ought to recollect, that this act only restored ancient rights, without conferring new ones. All this and more might have been lawfully done from the commencement of colonization to the epoch of the restoration: All this was permitted to be done,

* By 18 Geo. III. ch. 25. But the articles, which were then excepted were allowed by the 20 Geo. III. ch. 10, for opening the Colony Trade.

by

by the act of navigation itself *. Even the law, which in the first instance, excluded Ireland from the unrestrained trade of our distant dominions, allowed servants, horses and victuals to be sent from Ireland to our colonies †; and to these articles linens were added by the 3 and 4 of An. ch. 8.—If we reflect, that the Irish exports of provisions and linen alone amounted yearly to 3,250,000*l* while the annual value of the whole exported products of Ireland was only 3,500,000*l* ‡, we shall not probably think, that many of the restraints on that essential right of every community, to make the most of its own advantages, were even then withdrawn.

When the embargoes and embarrassments of the war filled up at length the measure of Ireland's distresses; when the Irish asked plainly for a free trade as an adequate relief

* See 12 ch. 2. ch. 18.

† By 15 ch. 2. ch. 7.

‡ See Mr. Young's tour in Ireland, Apen. p. 144.

from

from commercial burdens, we relinquished much, but did not grant a free trade.

In 1779 indeed we had allowed the importation of tobacco, being the growth of Ireland, under the like duties and regulations as American tobacco, when imported into Britain. A regard to our own manufactures more than to theirs had induced us at the same time to grant a bounty on the import of Irish hemp into this kingdom *.

But it was not till 1780, that after much delay, without much consideration, we restored to Ireland an equal trade to the British colonies in Africa and America †; including the export of her woollens, which it had been the object of so many laws to prevent. We allowed too a direct commerce between Ireland and the Levant, by persons free of the Levant Company. And the gold and silver coins, which the Irish absentees were supposed to have brought into England were now permitted to be sent back to Ireland ‡.

* By 19 Geo. III. ch. 37.

† By 20 Geo. III, ch. 10.

‡ For all which see 20 Geo. III, ch. 18.

This

This then is the amount of what may be called Lord North's concessions to Ireland. Whatever disadvantage may have resulted from them to Britain he merits the blame :— Whatever good flowed from them to Ireland he equally deserves her praise. Certain however it is, that after all Ireland did not enjoy completely the plantation trade : For a people, who cannot dispose of the commodities, which remain after domestic consumption is satisfied, cannot consume at the cheapest rate ; since every ultimate disadvantage must be considered by the supplier both in buying and selling : Now, Ireland was still restrained, by an act * passed only eight years before, from sending out of her own ports the colony produce to Britain. The domestic manufactures of Ireland continued still to be loaded with many burdens, and her traffick with foreign countries to be prevented by a thousand obstructions. To take away with one hand what is given by the

* 12 Geo. III. ch. 55.

other,

other, can never merit the praise of liberality, however it may be contemned as equally inconsistent with plain dealing as it is with sound policy.

Amidst her subsequent embarrassments Ireland thought, what no one who loves freedom will blame her for thinking, that she could manage best her own affairs her own way. With this view, she asked for a free legislature; for a parliament over which no other parliament should be paramount. And Mr. Fox proposed in 1782, and caused to be enacted a law * for repealing the statute of the 6th of Geo. I. which secured the dependency of Ireland. But, with all his renown for promptitude and decisiveness he did not grant all that was asked, or at least what was regarded in Ireland as effectual to the end. And he once more essayed his legislative talents, by carrying through in the subsequent year, an act † for declaring, *that the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound by laws made in*

* 22 Geo. III. ch. 53.

† 23 Geo. III. ch. 28.

their own Parliment, and to have all lawfuits decided finally in their own courts, fhall be eftablifhed for ever. The declaration made thus to Ireland, *that your legiflature fhall in future be free,* though a fimple propofition, contained many confequences, that were by no means apparent to every one, and that were perhaps not all forefeen, by the author of the Irish revolution. For, the energy of the British legiflature being thus withdrawn, all British acts of legiflation ceafed to operate in Ireland: Neither reftriCTIONS nor facilities, which had flowed from a fountain, that no longer flowed, could any more adminifter either good or evil to Ireland. If any mifchief has refulted to Britain from thefe measures, Mr. Fox merits the blame: whatever benefits have refulted to Ireland he equally merits her commendations. We fhall probably find by no long inquiry, that fome advantages and many inconveniencies did refult from the before mentioned measures; owing to a real want of forefight in the authors of them, and to the confequent want of fyftem, both in the object and the means.

The

The change itself may have indeed produced some inconvenience to Ireland first, and to Britain afterwards. But, it was the inadequateness of the inconsiderate modes to the beforementioned ends, which gave rise to the recent disputes and dangers, both commercial and political. Lord North (as we have seen) avowedly opened to Ireland the trade to our Colonies: Mr. Fox virtually extended the Irish commerce with foreign nations: yet, both these ministers left the trade and navigation between the Sister Kingdoms, which, considering their relationship and proximity, ought to be the most free, obnoxious to many disputes and liable to some obstructions. The Irish naturally inferred, that when a thing is given, all must necessarily be given, without which the same thing cannot be enjoyed. When they found moreover their Portugal trade embarrassed, their jealousy traced up the cause to the same temper, which, after pretending to give the whole had only given a part. They feared, that the admitting freely into Britain without a duty the provisions of Ire-

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land would operate as a tax upon their own consumption. They complained, that the prohibiting by high duties the importation of their woollens and other stuffs into Britain, while they excluded from their markets foreign goods of the same kind, shewed a disposition to oppress, without benefitting the oppressors themselves: and that the allowing of drawbacks on the export of British refined sugars, sailcloth and cottons, amounted to a tax on their inconsiderable manufactures of the same kind. To quiet these complaints, by removing or obviating the chief cause of them, no provision seems to have been made either by Lord North, or Mr. Fox; since no inquiries were certainly made by either of them into the real state of the manufactures of both countries, in order to remove the jealousies of tradesmen, by putting the manufactures and business of all upon an equitable footing; and by getting in return some security for future satisfaction.

To the beforementioned causes may be truly referred the desire of protecting duties
and

and equalizing drawbacks, which have been insisted on, together with associations of non-importation of British manufactures, which were actually executed with no small effect, when legal modes of redress had been denied. And while Britain began to enjoy all the blessings of returning peace, Ireland fell back into an abyss of deeper distractions, and seemed ready to seek relief even from the miseries of civil war.

The disturbances of Ireland, which thus plainly arose from large concessions without previous concert, and from a positive admission of independence without any agreement of future aid, were bequeathed with other similar legacies by the late ministers to the present. Of this state the whole nation felt the unhappiness, and every one wished for an investigation of the true causes of those disorders, that effectual remedies might be sought. The wishes of the public were doubtless complied with, by much inquiry first, and by much consideration afterwards. Were we to judge from actual effects more than from public report, we may infer, that
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those persons who knew best the affairs of Ireland and were intrusted with her interests, have been consulted with regard to the origin of the disease as well as to the efficacy of the cure.

Of the Irish Paliament it cannot be asserted, as of the American Congress, that when oppressed by their grievances they declined to trace up their sufferings to the true source, to avow their real object, and to point out plainly such means as would be fully adequate to the end of removing real distress and preventing after jealousy. To justify this remark it is unnecessary to recapitulate the addresses of the Irish Parliament, during the last seven years. It is sufficient to mention the Resolves, which were entered into, on the 7th of February, 1785, by the Irish Commons, with such apparent sincerity and zeal, *for encouraging and extending the trade between Great Britain and Ireland, and for settling the intercourse and commerce between them on permanent and equitable principles, in order to promote the mutual benefit of both countries.*

Whether

Whether these are objects of the highest importance to the general interest of the British Empire, what unprejudiced person can doubt? As the Parliamentary Resolutions of a sister kingdom, they merit the highest attention; as proposals directed to the most useful end, they deserve the most candid discussion; and as measures which lead directly to the peaceful settlement of a distracted Empire upon a digested plan of systematic government, these proposals ought to be supported by every wise and good man, were they less just in their principle and less salutary in their means.

Though the specifick proposals of the Irish Parliament have been detailed, for the sake of perspicuity, into ten resolutions, they may be considered under three distinct heads: 1st, As they tend to affect our domestic manufactures; 2dly, As they will probably enlarge or diminish the foreign trade of both; and 3dly, as the public burthen may be lightened at present, or lessened in future, were these resolves substantially adopted. It is proposed to speak briefly of each

each of these points, according to the foregoing arrangement.

1. Whether admitting the products and manufactures of the sister kingdoms mutually in to each other, without paying any other duty than the lowest duty, which maybe payable on importation in either country, except where an internal duty may have already been imposed on the same article of the importing country, is doubtless a question of great importance, which merits serious discussion. The general proposal plainly is, that the products and manufactures of both kingdoms shall be mutually imported and consumed, with as little burthen, and as equally as possible. And to this it is objected: *That the advantage of cheap provisions, low wages, and no taxes, must enable the Irish manufacturer to undersel the English at every market, not excepting our own, particularly in woollens.* The objector evidently borrowed his documents from Lord Sheffield's *Observations on the Irish Trade*, without advert- ing, how clearly the noble author hath proved, *that at the time Ireland, on the opening*
of

of her ports for exportation of woollens, made an effort to send the greatest quantity to foreign markets, she increased her imports of woollens from England : That Ireland is hardly in a situation to agree to that proposal ; as Great Britain could undersell her in most manufactures ; such is the predominancy of supreme skill, industry and capitals, over low priced labour, and comparatively very few taxes.* The question then is answered, as far as Lord Sheffield may be allowed to answer it.

But let us attend to the reason of the thing. It is unnecessary on this occasion, to revive the famous controversy ; *Whether a poor country, where raw materials and provisions are cheap, and wages low, can supplant the trade of a rich manufacturing country, where raw materials and provisions are dear, and the price of labour high :* This point has been so decidedly settled in favour of the rich manufacturing country by Dean Tucker, that it can be now only brought forward by ignorance, or interest, or faction. Let

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* See observations on the Irish Trade, p. 13, 19.

us only consider the case of two individual manufacturers settled in the same neighbourhood, a rich one and a poor one: The rich one, being already possessed of capital, credit, and customers, can plainly buy his materials at the cheapest rate, work them up in the best manner, because he can give the best wages to the best workmen, and dispose of his finished goods more readily and lower than the poor one: If the rich manufacturer employs a capital of £. 2000, and the poor one only £. 200, the rich manufacturer, by gaining ten per Cent. or £. 200 a year, can live comfortably; but the poor tradesman must gain 20 per Cent. or £. 40 a year, before he can live at all: Consequently the rich manufacturer must be always able to undersel the poor one 10 per Cent. on every article. Every manufacturer, however opulent and established he may now be, must remember the many difficulties he had to encounter in his youth, when he met his richer neighbour in every market, whether in buying his materials, in employing the most expert workmen,

workmen, or in selling his goods: And he may recollect perhaps with pleasure, that it required a life of patience, attention, and industry, to surmount every difficulty, attending a too powerful competition, and to become himself rich.

A manufacturing town is composed of such individuals, whose active competitions promote the prosperity and riches of their neighbourhood. A similar competition may prevail between a rich manufacturing town and a poor one: But, has Bolton yet overcome Manchester? Has Roachdale overpowered Leeds? Or, has Walsal eclipsed the skill, and industry, and opulence of Birmingham? It is on the other hand known and understood, that all the little towns, which stand within a ten miles circle of Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham, are the mere instruments belonging to these capitals of their respective manufactures.

Of such towns and villages is a manufacturing province or kingdom composed; who may in the same manner, as a province or kingdom, enter into competition with each

other. But, has Wales or Scotland, notwithstanding their supposed advantages of cheap materials and low-priced labour, yet carried away the Woollen Manufacture from England? The truth is, England was and is in possession (a point of great consequence in every thing) of superior wealth, which she had gained, not by war, or by mines of gold and silver, but by ages of attention and industry; of established credit and extensive correspondences; of the skill and experience, that resulted from all these; and of the division of labour, which naturally takes place in the progress of manufacture; and which enables the workmen not only to labour skillfully but to sell cheaply.

Of all these advantages Ireland is doubtless in some degree possessed. But, the nature of the question supposes a great inferiority, otherwise there would be no reason for apprehension. Of the state of Ireland, in respect of lowness of labour, habits of industry, cheapness of living, and extent of capital, it may be proper however to inquire a little more minutely.

If

If it is allowed, that there are two millions and a half of people in Ireland; it will be equally admitted that the two millions are Roman Catholics, and that the half million are Protestants. The Protestants reside chiefly in the North and are principally employed in carrying on the Linen Manufactures. It is a remarkable fact in the œconomy of these tradesmen, that each occupies a little farm, which he cultivates in due season, though he may be obliged to stop the loom, in order to follow the plough. And his capital and his time are consequently directed to a different employment from his real business. He is therefore neither so good a farmer, nor manufacturer, as if he employed his undivided attention and money to one object. This fact alone evinces, that industry has not arisen to that state of improvement, even among the most industrious of the Irish manufacturers, which results from the division of labour; consisting as this happy circumstance does, in the workmen applying attentively to one business only and even solely to one branch of this business. But, no
cheapness

cheapness of labour can compensate for the before-mentioned distraction of employment: And no attention and skill can enter into contest for cheapness with the machines which have been introduced into England; as we may learn from the decisive success of the great works for the spinning of cotton. The price of wages have risen about one fourth *, during the last twenty years, in both kingdoms; which remarkable fact sufficiently evinces, that both hold an equal pace in improvements and in wealth. Common labour is little more than one third of what it is in England; yet it is very extraordinary, that Masons, Carpenters, Thatchers, and such artizans should be paid nearly as much in Ireland as in England; though it must be acknowledged, that the wages of manufacture is a good deal lower in Ireland than in England; while the rates of living are in the first country to the last as eleven to fourteen. But, in forming such estimates we ought always to consider

* Mr. Young's tour, Apen.

whether

whether superior skill and industry are not an ample compensation for higher wages. The common ditcher of Norfolk would be a cheaper labourer at eighteen-pence a day, than the stoutest Patagonian at two-pence. If Ireland, from whatever cause, should in future advance in her trade and manufactures with quicker steps than Britain, the price of wages will rise in the same proportion; because it is not the actual wealth in any country which raises the value of labour; but the greater demand for labour from more frequent employments. The competition, which will soon arise between the linen and woollen manufacturers, between the workers in silk and workers in cotton, must necessarily raise the price of every kind of labour: For, workmen never fail to pursue that business, which brings them the greatest wages. Two very important truths ought however never to be forgotten, in forming such comparisons: the general industry of no people can ever exceed what their capital can employ: no regulation of commerce can any where increase the quantity

tity of industry, beyond what the capital of the country can maintain; though such a regulation may divert the employment of it to a business less advantageous than that to which it would have naturally gone; several examples of which may be found in Ireland.

The foregoing reasonings and facts apply chiefly to the manufacturing protestants of Ireland. With regard to the great body of the Irish people, the Roman Catholics, it has been justly remarked, that the whole tenor of the Irish law necessarily tended not so much to convert them from their errors, as to beggar their fortunes; to depress them by a sense of hopeless penury; and to render them indolent and inattentive by putting them in constant remembrance, that they could not better their condition by any efforts. But, the prevalence of liberality hath induced the legislatures of both kingdoms to relax a little in their favour. And the Roman Catholics of Ireland may now take leases, or buy lands, though not even now with the freedom of protestants. The
 desire

desire of every man to become an owner of a portion of his country is the great realizer of mercantile capital. Whether the late freedom, which has been justly given to the Roman catholicks, will therefore promote the advantage of agriculture, or the interests of manufacture, in Ireland, may admit of some doubt. A very competent judge has certainly determined* after great inquiry, that money laid out upon the improvement of the unimproved lands of Ireland would yield from fifteen to twenty per cent profit, besides other advantages. But, amidst the present competitions of the mercantile world, what merchant or manufacturer, can expect to make more then ten per cent. by his business? It would however require (according to the same judge) five pounds sterling to be expended on every acre English, amounting to 88,341,136l. to build fence, drain, plant and improve Ireland, in the same manner as the face of England is improved. It would require twenty shillings an acre more, amounting to above twenty millions, to stock the farms of Ireland, like those of

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* Mr. A. Young's Tour in Ireland, Apend, p. 20.

England. Here then is a permanent drain, which may carry off the whole accumulations of the mercantile capital of Ireland and probably will draw off many of them. Happy for Ireland will it be, if she shall thus lay out the surplusses of her stock, in improving her own fields, in preference to the more splendid and precarious expenditure on West India estates. Nor, is this evil much to be dreaded by the Irish patriot, or feared by the English partyman. The Irish Parliament, by giving bounties on the land-carriage of corn to Dublin, have incited a vigorous spirit of tillage, though to the diminution indeed of pasturage and the loss of manufacture. It is not likely then that the mercantile surplusses of Irish stock will soon accumulate faster than those of British stock. Were we to suppose, what might easily be proved, that the mercantile capital of Britain is to the mercantile capital of Ireland as a hundred is to one: Were we to suppose, that the mercantile capitals of both increase with the vigour of compound interest: It would surely require no deep calculation to prove, how

how much faster the capital of Britain must necessarily augment than the capital of Ireland.

It is nevertheless said by some, and feared by others, that were we to ratify the mutual freedom of manufacture, which the Irish have proposed, the labour, the skill, and capital of Britain would emigrate to Ireland. If it be thereby meant, that the mere artificers would retire to Ireland to get less wages than they now receive at home, this is surely no probable supposition. If it be imagined, that the most skilful artisans would be tempted by high rewards to manage the manufactures of Ireland and instruct the ignorant, this is only saying, that the Irish will do that hereafter, which they have always done, without perceiveably injuring British fabricks; because in proportion to the charges of the master, must the goods be enhanced to the consumer; and it has been seldom found from experience, that the tradesman, who has been tempted from his native country by high wages, has long preserved his morals. He who asserts, that mercantile

capital may easily be transferred from one country to another, has perhaps no clear conception what mercantile capital is. Credit, and correspondences, are as much capital as cash. Every manufacturer may certainly carry off his cash: But, he cannot transport with him to a strange land the good opinion of his neighbours, from which he derived so many benefits in the purchase of his raw materials; or the favours of his customers, which formed the chief vent for his finished goods. The Protestant weavers of Ireland, who used to emigrate to America (the Roman Catholics never emigrated) are said to have carried away large sums of money; but, they transported nothing else: They found themselves among strangers, without credit or friends. And they retired into the wilderness, where they followed the plough, but forgot the loom. He who has made a capital, by pursuing a particular object will not quit that object to look for another: He who has inherited a capital from the industry of his father will not send his property

property to a place where he does not chuse to reside. And were we to appeal to experience we should probably be convinced, that no capital having been sent to cut the canals or work the coleries of Ireland, which have so long languished, notwithstanding public support, none will be transmitted in future for similar purposes.

But with regard to the general subject, a few authentic facts will be more satisfactory than a thousand speculations. The linen trade between the sister kingdoms, has, for almost a century, existed in that free and equal state, which is now proposed for every other product, and manufacture of both. Yet, British linens have flourished notwithstanding the unlimited competition of the Irish; as we may infer from the subjoined details :*

	Imported	Re-exported
According to a 5 years average ending with 1756, there were - - -	31,561,536 yds.	7,524,346 yds.
Ditto ending with 1771, only - - - -	24,988,477	8,245,793
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* Reports of the Linen Committee, quoted by Mr. A. Young, in Pol. Arithmetic, p. 315-16.

And

And thus it appears, that the domestic manufacture increased, by the diminution of the quantity of linen, which was imported, and by the augmentation of the quantity, which was afterwards sent out. A good deal of British linen was sent to Ireland. But, the increase of the British linens, notwithstanding the Irish competition, will appear still plainer, from a fair comparison of the quantities of British and Irish linens, which have been exported from England.

	British Linens.	Irish Linens.
According to a seven years average, ending with 1755	- 576,373, yds.	772,245 yds.
Ditto Ending with 1762	- 1,355,266	1,985,825
Ditto Ending with 1769	- 2,423,664	2,033,444
in 1770	- 3,210,506	2,707,482
in 1771	- 4,411,040	3,450,224

The foregoing detail shews clearly enough that the British linens have greatly prospered, though they had the Irish for unrestrained competitors, and even entered into competition with the Irish in the Irish markets. And this decisive truth will still more plainly appear, from a more minute

nute statement of the Scots linen, because Scotland is much more analagous to Ireland, in her skill, industry, and capital, than England. An Act of Parliament was passed, in 1727, for encouraging the linen manufacture in Scotland. From that epoch the progress of this valuable manufacture has been prodigious, as appears from the subjoined detail,*

				Yards.
Linen stamped for sale in Scotland according				
to a 5 years average, ending with	-	1733	-	3,488,232
Ditto	-	1742	-	4,673,373
Four years	ending	-	1751	- 7,543,075
			in 1754	- 8,914,369
			in 1774	- 11,422,115

Yet the Irish linens, amounting to fifteen million of yards, entered freely into competition with the Scots, in the domestic market, and were entitled to the same bounties on the exportation. And this seems to be a fair answer of the question, by actual experiment, the best of all trials.

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* And. Chron. Com. 2 vol. p. 400-9.

It having in this satisfactory manner appeared, that the British manufacturers have nothing to fear from the competition of the Irish fabricks, it is proper to enquire, what are the proper manufactures of Ireland, which may be imported into Britain, even as the law now stands: We shall immediately find, that linen, and linen yarn, bay yarn, cotton yarn, beef, pork, bacon, butter, hydes, calf-skins, and live cattle, may be imported from Ireland duty free: That woollen cloths, stuffs of silks and cotton rugs, and fringe may be brought in, on paying a duty: And that cheese, and salt, unless for ships use, are alone prohibited.

Of the first class, namely, such articles as may even now be legally imported, whatever may be their value (and their value amounts to nineteen twentieths of the whole imported goods) there is at present no dispute, since experience hath decided in their favour.

As to the second class, consisting of woollen cloths; of stuffs of silk and cotton; and
of

of rugs and frizes; all these may be now imported into Britain, on paying a duty which amounts to a prohibition; the same articles are admitted into Ireland from Britain on paying a duty of 5 per cent. of the value; and foreign goods of the same kind are excluded from Ireland by prohibitory duties. It is apparent, that Ireland now may equally prohibit British woollens and admit the foreign, when she can get them cheaper; which answers the objection, *that we give every thing and receive nothing in return*. True indeed Britain may equally give a preference to foreign linens over the Irish. But, would such a contest be for the interest or happiness of Britain, or of Ireland? The true question then is, whether the woollens, cottons, or silks of Ireland, could rival the British in the markets of Britain, were they freely admitted, burdened only with freight and insurance, Custom-house fees and factorage, to the amount of 8 or 10 per cent. The general argument, whether the poor country can enter into successful rivalry with an opulent one, has been already

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discussed

discussed and plainly decided in favour of the rich Manufacturing Country. But, to leave no doubt on any one's mind, it is now necessary to examine the point more minutely as to the woollens, silks, and cottons of England and Ireland.

The general aspect of the manufactures of both countries appears to be this—The woollens predominate in Britain — The linens predominate in Ireland. From the plenty of the raw material and the encouragements of the legislature the woollens of England, at an early epoch, took possession of the country and so fully occupied the industrious classes that it always proved a too powerful competitor to the feebler fabrick of linen, of cotton, and of silk. On the other hand, the linen manufacture of Ireland, from the convenience of the country and the encouragement of the legislature has grown up to great magnitude, has fully employed the industrious classes there, however few they may be when compared with the whole people, and continues from its particular advantages to oppress the silk,
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the cotton, and woollen. The Irish woollens moreover labour under a considerable disadvantage peculiar to themselves. The whole island does not produce a sufficient quantity of wool to supply the demand of the home market. Owing to the public encouragements to agriculture the great sheep walks of Carlow, Tipperaray, and Roscommon have been converted into tillage. And thus the quantity of wool, which was originally too little has by this means become less. Of consequence the price of wool in Ireland is from 45 to 50 per cent. higher than it is in England, the price being as about ten to six. In this country the value of the raw material is supposed to be about one third of the whole cost of the cloth: In that country the amount of the raw material is two thirds * of the whole charges of

* Mr. A. Young states the price of an Irish ball of Wool, during 1778, in this manner :

Combing and spinning	—	0	1	$0\frac{3}{4}$
The Wool	—	0	2	$5\frac{1}{4}$
		<hr/>		
Whole cost		0	3	6

See much good information on this subject in his Irish Tour, the Appendix throughout.

the manufacture. Here then is a natural and permanent disadvantage attending the woollen manufacture of Ireland, which can never be counter-balanced by the low price of labour, affected as it more and more must be by the competitions of linen, silk, and cotton fabrics, that are pressed forward in the same country. Under such disadvantages is it likely that the woollens of Ireland can enter into successful competition with the woollens of England? If the linens of Ireland did not (as we have seen) depress the linens of Scotland, is it reasonable to conclude, that the woollens of Ireland can rival the woollens of England, which, notwithstanding the competition of Europe, have risen up to a vast magnitude, since the commencement of the present century; as we may learn more minutely from the subjoined detail: The whole value of exported woollens, according to a five years

Average, ending with 1705	£2,579,478
Ditto with 1775	4,344,942

It is however said—to be astonishing how Ireland has increased her woollen trade within these

these few years. It is doubtless true, that since Lord North allowed the export of Irish woollens to our Colonies, and Mr. Fox laid open the foreign trade of Ireland, she has exported those woollens openly, which she formerly did secretly: And she manufactures now what she always manufactured, poplins and tabinets, which cannot rival England, while England shall continue not to make them. But, it is an acknowledged fact, that while Ireland has been thus sending her peculiar woollens to foreigners, she has imported a greater quantity of English woollens for her own wear. This decisive fact might be sufficiently proved (were any proof wanting) by the subjoined detail:—

Of British woollens there were imported into Ireland, according to a seven years average, ending with 1770	—	New Drapery. yds.	Old Drapery, yds.
		381,548	205,662
Ditto according to a five years average ending the 25 March 1784,		376,719	316,625
		—————	—————

This authentick account ought to outweigh a thousand arguments and ought therefore to calm

calm every apprehension on the subject of woollens.

But, of Irish filks and cottons little has yet been said, far less proved. The Irish have certainly tried to introduce and support these manufactures, during the last twenty years; though without much success. Had public boards in Ireland done less and private men been able to do more, the national efforts had been more successful. It is unnecessary to repeat arguments, which are equally applicable to cotton and silk, as they were before to wollen and linen. And every reasonable person will be sooner satisfied by a fair appeal to facts. With this purpose the following details are submitted to every ones judgement:—

There were imported from		Manufac-	Raw silk.	Ribband,
England into Ireland, accord-		tured silk.		
ing to a thirteen years average		lb.	lb.	lb.
ending with	— 1764—	15,760 —	48,132 —	275
Ditto with	— 1777—	18,200 —	45,990 —	1,068
Five years aver. with Mar.	1784—	19,164 —	41,606 —	1,588
		—————	—————	—————

There

There were imported into Ireland of British ma-	Value of
anufactured linen, cotton, and silk, according to a	
seven years average, ending with —	1770—£ 16,784
Ditto ending with —	1777— 25,208
Ditto 5 years ending with March —	1784— 88,948

The foregoing details by no means exhibit the Irish manufactures of cotton and silk in an increasing state; though some, if not all of the five last years were a good deal lessened in value by the non-importation agreements of the Irish populace. It is the laudable object of the late proposals to prevent in future all such irregular modes of redress or fluctuations of Trade, by removing present grievances and preventing future ones. We may judge what expectations are formed from the adoption of these proposals, by a fact, which is very well understood on Change, that there are considerable orders for British goods now in the city from Ireland to be executed on the supposition, that the equity of these proposals will ensure their acceptance.

Having thus minutely examined the great branches of the trade with Ireland, without

out touching the smaller ones, it may be now proper to take a slight but satisfactory view of our general commerce, with Ireland, both before the Irish were allowed to traffick with all the world, and since.

			Value of Exports.	Value of Imports.
There were exported and imported to and from England and Ireland, goods valued, according to a ten year average, ending with				
	1775	£.1,818,595	£1,032,436	
Ditto	with 1780	1,897,001	1,412,130	
<hr/>				
Ditto	in 1781	1,782,364	1,433,788	
	in 1782	1,665,531	1,348,559	
	in 1783	2,161,815	1,499,229	
<hr/>				

Now, what is there in this view of a great subject, from the custom-house books, that can discourage any one? And the foregoing reasonings and authentic facts, have been thus submitted to the reader's judgement, to enable him to determine how far the manufactures of Ireland can enter into effectual competition with the similar manufactures of Britain, loaded

as

as the Irish must come to market, with additional charges, to no small amount.

2. It is proposed in the next place to consider, how far the foreign trade of both kingdoms is likely to be affected by the late proposals, were they adopted, as the means of promoting the permanent interest of both countries.

We shall both shorten the enquiry, and more easily comprehend the reasoning, if we throw out of the question every thing which does not belong to it.

The Irish may now trade with the British Plantations in Africa and America, from Lord North's commercial concessions. This point is not disputed. From Mr. Fox's political concessions, the Irish may regulate and pursue their commerce with foreign powers, as they may think it convenient to themselves. Of this there can be no doubt. Having in pursuance of this right imported any of the products of Europe, the Irish may afterwards export such products to Britain ; under a decided construction of the act of navigation, and the

F established

established practice, subsequent to such decision. Of this then there can be no dispute. Under Lord North's concessions too, the Irish may import part of a cargo from the British West Indies, and send forward the other part of it in the same ship to Britain. Neither is there any hesitation about this practice. What is it then that the Irish cannot do under the present laws? They cannot it seems import directly the produce of Africa and America into Ireland, and send it, after being there put on shore, to any British port: This therefore is all that they cannot at present lawfully do: And from this restriction they would doubtless be freed, were the proposed regulations adopted.

Among the thousand evils, wherewith the removing of this vexatious restraint from a free trade, is said to be pregnant, the principal one is, *That it would overthrow the act of navigation.* Were the Irish proposals to be attended with any such consequence, it would indeed be a serious objection to them. But, in order to determine properly, whether this is a valid objection,

jection, or a mere pretence, let us take two distinct views of the navigation act; 1st, As its principle and provisions have a tendency to promote the foreign trade and domestic opulence of the people; and 2dly, As its principle and provisions tend to create many ships and sailors, as a nursery, from which future navies may be manned.

As to the first view of this important subject; it need scarcely be remarked, that Sir Matthew Decker considered the act of navigation as a mere monopoly, which ought to be removed, to make way for a freer trade. For, he insisted, that by confining the freights to one set of men, namely, British shipping and sailors, imported goods were necessarily sold dearer, and the products of the country, which were to be sent out, were in the same manner likely to be purchased, by the exporter, so much cheaper. Doctor Adam Smith, has argued the point nearly in the same manner, without speaking so bluntly. If foreigners are hindered from coming to sell, they cannot always, says he, afford to come to buy; because

because, if they come without a cargo, they must lose the freight from their own country. By thus diminishing the number of sellers, we thereby lessen the number of buyers, and may in this manner be obliged not only to buy foreign goods dearer, but to sell our own cheaper, than if there was a more perfect freedom of trade. Yet, as defence, continues this judicious writer, is of more importance than riches, the act of navigation is perhaps the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England; though *it is not favourable to foreign commerce, or to the growth of that opulence which may arise from it*

The reasonings and authority of these able writers were placed in this broad light, in order to abate if possible, the confidence of those, who expect that the monopoly of the freight and factorage created by the act of navigation, is to make Britain superlatively rich; and to expose the rashness of any man, who can be so ill advised as vehemently to maintain*: That *The depreciation of landed*

* See Lord Sheffield on the Irish trade.

landed estates, and the ruin of stock holders, and of public credit, would be among the certain consequences of what?—of allowing British subjects to send in British ships, from Ireland to Britain, any little surplus of American products, that may remain after the domestic consumption of Ireland may be satisfied. For this can be the sole effect of the proposed regulations. The truth then is, that the vast augmentation of the riches of Britain, during the effluxion of the last hundred years, did not arise from the act of navigation, but, in spite of this law; which was enacted for a quite different and more valuable purpose, namely, the naval defence of the country.

But, let us inquire a little more minutely how the proposed regulation would probably affect the planters, or producers of West India goods, in the first place, and the people at large, or the consumers in the second place.

The monopoly, by which all the products of the Colonies were restrained for sale to British markets, has been always complained

complained of by the planters, because it plainly lessened the price of their sugars, and other products, by narrowing the market; and by excluding consequently a number of buyers. And the planters, as it was natural, constantly endeavoured to procure a relaxation of the monopoly, and thereby to augment the number of their customers. The consumers were equally injured by the monopoly, whereby they were confined to one set of suppliers, by the exclusion of foreign sugars, which necessarily raised the price. The West India planters had the address to procure, in 1738, a law* for allowing them to send their sugars to every market in Europe, first in British *built* ships, and afterwards in British *owned* ships, for a limited time, which will expire in September 1785. Out of this law Ireland was still excepted. By thus enlarging the markets, and gaining a new set of customers, it was expected, that the value of the commodity would be raised. Under this

* 12 Geo. 2. ch. 30. 15 G. 2. ch. 33. 18 G. 3. ch. 45.

this law, the sugars, which had been sent first to Hamburgh (for example) might be afterwards sent to Petersburg. This too was beneficial to the planter, because he was thereby enabled to try another market.

Now, it would have been still more beneficial to have sent the sugars also to London, when this great market happened to be the highest of all, had the law allowed him to do so.

It is worth while to consider, what would be the effect were we to enlarge the before-mentioned law, so as to enable the British planter to bring his sugars, which he may have sent to foreign ports, from thence to London in British ships. If we could provide, by whatever means, that foreign sugars should not mingle with our own, the interest of the planter would by such a measure be promoted by having another chance of sale. The interest of British consumers would be something promoted, by having a greater quantity of goods brought to the domestic market. And the interest of the public would be also promoted by the employment

ployment of a greater number of British shipping and sailors. Add to which, that if even *foreign* sugars were by this means mingled with British sugars; the interest of the consumers would be still more promoted, by lowering a little the price of the commodity; and the public by the still greater number of British ships, which would probably in this case be employed.

If it was advantageous to the planter to be permitted to send his sugar to every port in Europe, except to those of Ireland; he was surely allowed an additional advantage, when the ports of Ireland were also opened. If it would be advantageous to the planter, the consumer and the public, to admit British sugars, which had been sent in British ships to Hamburgh or Petersburgh to be re-shipped in British ships to Britain; it would be equally advantageous to the planter, to consumers, and the public to allow British sugars to be sent in British ships from Ireland to Britain; which is the point that was to be proved.

Yet,

Yet, some of the West India planters, though not all of them, have resolved, that allowing their own sugars to be re-shipped in British vessels to Britain, after being first landed in Ireland, would enable the Irish to smuggle French sugars into Ireland first and into Britain afterwards. Were this objection founded in probability it would doubtless justify the resolve as to the planters, though the consumers may still wish to get any sugars at the cheapest rate. It ought however to be remembered, that the French government does not wink at the sending clandestinely of sugars from the West Indies as they allow brandies to be sent from Dunkirk. We know, that in order to enforce rigorously the monopoly of their own sugars the French have lately seized some of the vessels of the American states, which they equally exclude, for attempting a practice that cannot easily be concealed. Let us however suppose, that the French governors were to shut their eyes and the French guard-ships to retire from their charge, it may be asked, what the Irish smuggler can

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carry to tempt the French planters to sell
 their sugars clandestinely? Irish linens can-
 not be sold so cheap in the French islands as
 the French linens can, because they are not
 so good. Salted provisions may be always
 bought in open market. And consequently
 the Irish smuggler can carry nothing to the
 French West Indies that would purchase
 half a lading of sugars, considering how
 much they have lately risen in their price,
 and how much delay, risque, and expence
 there must be in putting them on board.
 Let us suppose the smuggled cargo safely
 arrived on the Irish coast, would the smug-
 gler meet with no Custom-house cutters at
 sea and no Custom-house officers on shore.
 Here they would meet with Custom-house
 officers as vigilant and faithful, as they are
 any where to be found, as we might suppose
 from the late seizure of an East India ship,
 if the fact were not acknowledged by the
 whole mercantile world. Whether after
 all this risque and trouble the smuggler
 could undersel the fair trader in England, or
 in

in Ireland, is a point that ought to be considered by both parties.

It ought to be moreover remembered. that all this scene of smuggling may be acted as the law now stands, perhaps more easily than if all doubts and obstructions were removed from legal intercourse. The act of the 12 George III, which is supposed to prohibit the sending of sugars from Ireland, was virtually repealed by Mr. Fox's law of 1783, as far as it was to operate in Ireland, tho' it continued in force as far as it was to operate in Britain. For any thing therefore, there is in that act (12 George III.) sugars may be cleared from the Custom-house in Ireland; though they cannot be entered in the Custom-house in Britain; The ship may sail for Britain; but she cannot come into port: she may hover in the channel, having a legal clearance on board: and she cannot consequently be seized by the cutters. If a law were to be made on purpose to furnish occasions to the smugglers, could any more favourable be given than those already given, by the present state of doubt and distraction. To remove these doubts and distractions is one
of

of the proposed regulations. If sugars are sometimes smuggled from the French West Indies to the British by the planters, and afterwards shipped as their own, the planters themselves ought to look to such avaricious practices.

Let us assume then, since it has been well nigh proved, that to smuggle so unwieldy and wasteful an article as sugar, would be impossible, we may inquire, if in this case, it would be contrary to the interest of the grower to allow such sugar to be imported in British ships from Ireland to Britain, after it had been landed in Ireland: If he is a resident planter he can only dispose of his crop by sale or consignment, since barter is not practised. The Irish trader, who knows, that he cannot, after the home market is supplied, send the surplus to the best market, cannot afford so much for the goods, as if he knew that the vent was altogether free. Every detriment consequently, which is thrown in the way of him who buys to sell to the consumer, is a disadvantage to the producer. And it must ever be for the benefit of the grower to have many markets and various buyers,
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in order to have the convenience of competition. The planter who does not feel this to be his true interest does not know his interest.

On the other hand, if the grower inclines to consign his sugars, what ought to be his wish? to have his inclinations checked by a monopoly, or left free to range in quest of buyers; to have all the world before him, or to be confined to a single port. The West Indians were once confined to this island alone for the sale of their sugars. We have read of *the moans of the plantations*, on this account. The West Indians *moaned* till they were allowed to send their sugars almost to every market in Europe. They *moan* now, because they are offered another chance, for another market. We have read too of a people, who were offered freedom, yet refused it.

Leaving the planters to find out their true interest in this business we may be allowed to attend a little to the interests of that respectable body of men, the West India merchants. Their interest in these proposals is
surely

surely very plain: If the sugars are sent (as by law they now may be) to Ireland, and are there sold to the consumer, the commission must be lost to the British merchants: If such sugars should be thence sent to the better markets of Britain, the British merchants must necessarily get the commissions with the other advantages of the consignment. But it is insisted on behalf of these very merchants by Lord Sheffield, that this method of getting the consignment, (for the noble author is not arguing against sending the sugars directly from the place of their growth to Ireland) would *greatly weaken the security*, which they have on West India estates for money advanced: That is; in other words, the giving of the traders another chance to get the produce of the estates into their own possession is to weaken their security. But, pray what is this same security? The paper and wax; or the judgement of law upon breach of contract; or last, though not least, the *interest* of the planter himself to continue his correspondence, in order by his punctuality

lity to engage the merchant to accept his future bills, and to send him supplies, during every season: the *interest*, which the planter has to transmit his produce to the greatest market, rather than to the smallest one.

On behalf of the whole nation the noble author objects, that admitting the before-mentioned surplusses of sugar from Ireland would deliver up the West India trade to the Irish. If we sift this objection, we shall find, that though it means well it means little. The interest of the British people, or consumers of sugars, consists in getting them at the cheapest rate from any place. The advantage of the planters, or producers, consists, in having the world for their market. And the benefit of the merchant, or middleman between the producers and consumers, arises out of his commission from both parties. The argument, as far as it goes to shew, that the British merchant would probably lose his commission, had been a good argument against Lord North's measure, whereby he delivered the sugars to the Irish: But, the Irish having actually
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got possession of the sugars, the noble author's argument comes four years too late: For, it has been plainly shewn to be the joint interest of planter, merchant, and consumer, to draw as many Sugars from the Irish as they possibly can.

Never the less the proposed measure (not Lord North's measure, or Mr. Fox's measure) is to transfer (according to the noble author) not only the whole West India trade, but the American trade, and the tobacco trade too. But, by what means? The noble author conveys the whole mercantile capital of Europe to Ireland. In her Western ports the European traders, it seems, are to assemble; to build ships, where there are no wood or iron; to instruct the ignorant; to invigorate the indolent: and by a single movement to change the antient manners of a whole people.

But, to be serious (if it be possible when such arguments are brought forward on such an occasion;) it may be proper once more to remark, that though the mercantile capital both of Britain and Ireland are fast
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accumulating; the greatest capital, skill, and diligence must cause that capital to accumulate by the widest steps:—That Britain is in actual possession of the West India trade, the American trade, and the tobacco trade; of which she can not be deprived, unless she sits down, in security and idleness. But, he knows little of the world who thinks, that the affairs of the world can ever stand still: mercantile capital must either be employed, or it must be realized. The British farmer must continue to follow the plow, the weaver must drive the skuttle, the sailor must set the sail, and the trader must actuate all.

In the West India trade England (exclusive of Scotland) has eight hundred vessels constantly employed, whose registered tonnage may be stated at a hundred thousand tons, but whose real burthen amounts to about one hundred and thirty thousand tons. When will Ireland possess such a West India fleet? She cannot buy the ships of America, Holland, or Hamburgh, because the act of navigation, being one of her fundamental laws, no more

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allows her, than it permits Britain, to own ships of foreign built. If she builds in Britain she will thereby promote a very valuable manufacture. And if she should build them at home she would by this means withdraw capital from some other branch of business, perhaps more beneficial to her and disadvantageous to this country. Till Ireland then shall have procured such a fleet, by whatever means, Britain must enjoy the freights both out and home. It is therefore in vain to say, that Ireland can victual and navigate cheaper than Britain, till she has vessels to victual. It is to as little purpose to argue against the most authentic facts, That her ports lying on the Atlantic Ocean must be nearer than those of England to the American coast; and that by this means and the lowness of sailors wages she can perform the West India voyage at lower insurance and at cheaper freight: It is a well known fact, that the West India freights both out and home are constantly regulated by the mutual agreement of the traders and planters at satisfactory terms to both parties:

It

It is a fact, that the insurers regarding the West India risks as desirable ones ask no higher premium either out or home, whether the ships call at Cork, or not: It is a fact too, that the freight and insurance from Cork are the same with those from London, whatever may be the greater speculative risk. The Irish shipping cannot therefore enter into competition with the eight hundred ships beforementioned, which must necessarily go out for the sake of the homeward freights; and must therefore often go one half empty; since the whole cargoes outwards are not so bulky as one half of the cargoes homewards. Who then can seriously dread the rivalry of the Irish in respect to freights for ages to come? A little experience will teach the Irish, as it has already taught British ship-owners, that capital cannot be employed in a less productive business, than it would be in owning West India ships.

In soliciting consignments, the Irish will find great discouragements from being thus excluded from freights, which depend so

much on interest and favour. But, there is in fact, such a chain of connexion, between the planter, merchant, and ship-master, wherein all their interests are bound, that it cannot be broken even by much greater advantages. The planter who has long consigned his sugars to his correspondent in London, or Bristol, will therefore continue to consign them still. The planter who resides in London, will not probably send his produce to Dublin for sale. Nor, will any planter, who knows, that in Ireland the West India products are sold in small quantities, on six months credit, while in Britain they are sold by the whole cargo, payable in two months, ever prefer that market, where there are the longest credits, and the greatest risques. It is said, though perhaps with some degree of exaggeration, that seven-eighths of the British West Indies belong, either mediately or immediately, to persons who reside in Britain. Were this fact true to a much smaller extent than is here represented, little sugar would ever be consigned to Ireland, because few men choose to send their

their property out of their sight, when they may have it to a greater advantage under their daily contemplation. A few cargoes have indeed been consigned from the West Indies to Ireland, during the last four years, by speculative men: But the account of sales were such, both as to price and payment, as not to countenance many repetitions of similar adventures.

If the proposed relaxation were granted to the desires of the Irish, it is apparent from the foregoing reasonings and facts, that Ireland must carry on the West India trade, however free, under every disadvantage. They would have as constant competitors the British traders, who have greater capitals and correspondence, who have established connexions and a wider market, and who are already in possession of the field of business. The Irish would have a competition both in the West Indies and Europe, of a more dangerous kind: If the Irish, like the merchants of Glasgow, should be obliged for want of consignments and orders, to carry on this trade chiefly on their own account, they would
have

have the English merchants for competitors in every market, as *factors*. And it requires no great knowledge to foretel, whether the *mere merchant*, or the *mere factor* would probably rise or fall, in carrying on such a traffick. With all these discouraging prospects before them, the Irish have made a beginning. In their small two decked vessels, they have sent to the West Indies provisions, and other products of pasturage, linen, and some lesser manufactures, to be sold at the best price on their own account. Every one must see, that this is a very hazardous trade: For, almost every article, which the Irish can bring, is imported by the planters for the supply of their own estates; who will only buy of them when it happens that their own stores have failed: The provisions, and other products of pasturage, are liable to a thousand accidents in a sultry climate. And the provision trade is therefore a most precarious trade, as we might infer from reason, if we had not experience to guide us.

But

But, when the Irish cargoes are all thus disposed off another difficulty will immediately occur. The product of their sales will not be sufficient to buy more West India goods, considering their greater value, than will load the one half of the Irish vessels. They must draw bills for the balance that shall be wanting; for which they must find an indorser, at the expence of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and which must be drawn on London, where all West India payments are made, or they will be charged $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. more as the difference of exchange. Having brought the West India goods, loaded with all these disadvantages, to Ireland, the Irish trader will there meet the British merchants as competitors, who may have brought similar cargoes directly from the West Indies, or indirectly from Britain.

Owing to the difficulties before-mentioned the Irish have yet made no great progress during the five years freedom of their West India trade; as we may observe from the following statement * :

* Irish Cust. House accounts.

A comparative account of the sugar and rum, which were imported into Ireland, during the subjoined years, ending the 25th of March,

Sugars Muscavado.

	1781	1782	1783	1784
	cwt.	cwt.	cwt.	cwt.
From the West Indies	7,384	18,681	33,870	27,492
From Britain	<u>130,056</u>	<u>132,754</u>	<u>99,240</u>	<u>160,083</u>

Rum.

	1781	1782	1783	1784
	gal.	gal.	gal.	gal.
From the West Indies	69,473	175,053	297,047	153,592
From Britain	<u>197,832</u>	<u>99,219</u>	<u>129,951</u>	<u>944,479</u>

Sugar and rum may be regarded as the representatives of the West India products for the purpose of this comparison. The importations from Britain were probably somewhat affected by the Irish distractions. It is surely reasonable to infer, from the foregoing facts and arguments, that the importations to Ireland will continue nearly in this state for half a century to come. It is obvious however, that Ireland must supply her own consumption,

consumption, before she can smuggle or send any sugars to Britain. And when in the long progress of her trade she shall have any surplus to spare such sugars must be sent to Britain loaded with an additional expence of 3s 6d to 4s per cwt. including Custom-house fees, insurance, freight and factorage.

How far the allowing of the importation of these surplus sugars in British ships would give the American commerce to Ireland, is a question which may now be easily answered. We may all remember the prophecies that were uttered, as to the loss of that trade from the revolt of the colonies first, and from the independence of the United States afterwards. We have all seen the race which was run soon after that event, by the commercial nations of Europe for the golden prize of the American trade. While the contest was yet undecided, it was insisted on behalf of the ultimate success of Britain: That the skill and capital of the British manufacturers were such as to enable them to give the American traders better penny-worths

worths and longer credits than any other tradesmen in Europe: And that the Americans, being at once regardful of their interest and in want of capital, would necessarily come to the warehouse where they could get the best and cheapest goods, with the longest time to pay for them. No one urged these and similar reasonings with more efficacy than Lord Sheffield, in a pamphlet, which gained him some praise, by entailing on Britain the American trade: It is only to be lamented, that the noble author should have so soon found cause to dock the entail, and to settle the American commerce on Ireland. The event of the before-mentioned race is now universally known. Britain has engrossed the American trade to a degree which is almost beyond belief. The Spanish merchants, who engaged in the American trade, have failed. The French American merchants have failed. A few British merchants have failed. And have the Irish had no failures among the traders who engaged in the American commerce?

Experience

Experience hath now determined several doubtful points, in our commercial concerns, that no argument could have done. It was foretold, that the French would, from the revolt, engross the whole tobacco of Virginia and Maryland. Yet, though the farmers general sent a proper agent to Virginia, who has also failed, and though they are supported by the public money; they are now buying tobacco in London. And is it likely that the Irish can engross the whole tobacco trade, greatly inferior as they are even to the French in opulence and skill, activity and address? The Irish have not yet supplied their own wants: Till they acquire all these qualities in a higher degree they cannot supply the wants of others with any foreign product. It is London, which, from the vastness of her market for every luxurious and every useful article of traffick, must for ages be the American mart, without some accident that no sagacity can foresee, or prudence prevent,

But, it is still pertinaciously urged, that by granting this boon to the Irish, we

should relinquish *the monopoly* of the plantation trade, which was confined to Britain by the act of navigation. This had doubtless been an objection, though not a weighty one, to Lord North's concessions of the colony trade to Ireland: But, this can be no objection to allowing British subjects to import in British ships from Ireland to Britain such surplusses of American products as had not been consumed by her. It was doubted formerly by some, whether this monopoly ought to be considered as an evil, or a good: That it is an evil rather than a good has been shewn very clearly by Dr. Adam Smith. Every monopoly is said to be more favourable to the few, than to the many: By yielding a greater profit to those who are favored by it than they otherwise would gain, the monopoly, it is argued, forces a greater portion of mercantile capital within its operation, than otherwise would go there: That by this means capital is often withdrawn from domestic manufactures or from a neighbouring trade of Europe into a more distant commerce, which is less under our eye;

eye: That of consequence the monopoly of the plantation trade oppressed every other commercial business which was unconnected with it: And that by these Operations the American trade became a disease in our commercial policy, like those unnatural tumours in the human body, which often occasion lameness and death. The American trade formerly and the plantation trade now are certainly very advantageous to this kingdom: It is only doubted, whether the *monopoly* of that trade, which is a distinct thing, be a desirable object.

But, let us suppose, in opposition to these reasonings and to that authority, that the monopoly is a good rather than an evil, it may be worth while to inquire, whether Ireland was originally excluded from it by the act of navigation. The great object of this famous law was to exclude, alien men and foreign ships from trading with our colonies. This regulation was plainly intended for the benefit of every part of the dominions of the crown: The colonies were allowed to trade with each other: Ire-
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land was in the same manner admitted by the act of navigation * itself to the most unlimited freedom of trade, with all the plantations, till afterwards excluded, more by private resentment † than by public policy. The continental colonies from that epoch to the period of the revolt were allowed to carry sugar from the British West Indies into their own ports and to send them from thence to England. From the Act of the 23d Charles II. Ireland could not import Sugars from the plantations, and consequently was not permitted to send sugars from her own ports to Britain. The colonies which were thus allowed this right maintained no military establishment: Ireland who was denied this right did maintain a military establishment, which was applied

* See 12 Cha. II. ch. 18.

† The revenge of St. John for an affront in Holland is said to have given rise to the act of navigation, during the Commonwealth: It was in the same manner, the individual resentment of the profligate Shaftsbury against the virtuous Ormond, who then governed Ireland, that gave rise to almost all the restrictions of the Irish trade, during Charles II's reign, some of which appear at present perfectly ridiculous. [See Hume's History of that period.]

applied to the general defence. The colonies, which were thus indulged, have always required an enormous expence to defend them: Ireland, who was thus excluded, has occasioned no particular expence; at least peaceable Ireland has not, whatever distracted Ireland may have done. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, may even now re-export British sugars to Britain, yet Britain pays their civil lists. But, Ireland, who pays her own civil list and supports moreover a great army, is denied this convenience. If this conduct was unequal and unjust formerly, can the continuance of a similar conduct be wise and equitable now? Thus Ireland was entitled originally to all the benefits of the monopoly; and is even now entitled to all the benefits of the monopoly, except the convenience of re-shipping British Sugars in British ships to Britain; the denial of which is not of any great consequence to this country, whatever it may be to her.

2. From the foregoing considerations we are led secondly to inquire, whether the proposed

posed indulgence has any tendency to impugn or weaken that principle of the navigation act, which has certainly created so many shipping and seamen, the more valuable, as they belong to ourselves. If the proposal were to allow *foreign* ships to bring the surplus sugars of Ireland to Britain; the circumstance of their being foreign ships and seamen would be a decisive objection. Were it proposed to confine the bringing over such sugars to ships, merely Irish; which had not been often declared by law, and admitted in fact to be British vessels; this circumstance had created a considerable objection. But the shipping and sailors intended by the proposal, being British shipping and sailors, without exception, the proposal can surely be liable to no great objection.

If therefore the proposal should be adopted, and in consequence thereof many surpluses should be sent, more native sailors would thereby be employed; and the principle of the act of navigation would therefore be strengthened: If, on the other hand,
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it is probable, that few or no sugars will be sent from Ireland in half a century, then the object is not worth a contest.

The trade between the sister kingdoms has grown up in less than a century, from the lowest state of depression, owing to the restrictions of the reign of Charles II. to a very high point of magnitude, owing to our having gradually removed those restrictions. We shall see this important truth in a very clear light from the following statement:

		Value of Exports.	Value of Imports.
The amount of the trade between England and Ireland, according to a three years average ending with			
	1695 was	£. 166,025	81,165
Ditto ending with	1783 was	1,873,236	1,427,191
		<hr/>	<hr/>

It plainly required no great number of ships to carry on the trade between the sister kingdoms, during King William's reign: And this trade certainly furnished very few seamen for the royal navy, during King William's wars, when they were so much wanted. It is equally apparent, that it must

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have employed many ships to transport the vast cargoes of the years 1781-2-3: And it is equally plain, that the navigation, which was thus created, must have furnished many seamen for the public service, during our late unhappy contests. Both the trade and the nursery seem to be a new creation, since the beginning of the present century. If this creation was so much gain to the nation, with a view to its defence, to extend this creation still further, with the same most important end, must be a good to be desired; and to depress that creation, or narrow that nursery, must be an evil to be avoided.

If we have the wisdom, and the equity to open the ports of Ireland still wider, by granting the little that is now desired, we shall certainly strengthen the principle of the navigation act, by increasing the number of ships, and consequently, the number of *native* seamen; which the Irish have been declared by law, and are acknowledged in fact to be. In proportion then as we shut the Irish ports, we enfeeble the salutary principle

principle of the navigation act, by doing that which must necessarily lessen the number of seamen, who may be most easily engaged when they are very much wanted.

By thus promoting the public service, Bristol, Liverpool, and Whitehaven have surely nothing to fear on the subject of freights: For, their great numbers of return ships, stand a much better chance for employment than any Irish ships, which may be chartered on purpose: The vessels which must necessarily return home, can afford to carry at a lower freight, than a vessel which must fit out only for a single voyage: And consequently the British ship owners must overpower the Irish in every competition for freights; which must necessarily augment the number of British ships, without diminishing the actual number of Irish.

On the other hand, were the re-shipping of sugars, as hath been proposed, to augment the number of seamen in the ports of Ireland, without diminishing the number of vessels in the ports of England, because the present trade would probably continue as to them,

while the advantage in the competition shall continue, nothing would surely tend so much to promote the public service, during our wars, as having a great body of sailors, who are bound to serve, in the ports of Limerick and Cork, Waterford and Dublin : For, these ports being nearer to Plymouth and Portsmouth, than Liverpool or Lancaster, Whitehaven, or Greenock, the supernumerary sailors of the Irish ports before mentioned could be more conveniently commanded than from the more distant British ports. The same observation equally applies to the whole navigation between the sister kingdoms, as compared with longer voyages. In short voyages the sailors often return into port, and may therefore often be had : In more distant voyages the seamen seldom return, and consequently can seldom be engaged in the public service, when this service may very much require their aid.

It was with a view to the usefulness of these repeated voyages, between neighbouring harbours, that the navigation act excluded

cluded by an express clause, alien ships and sailors from carrying any merchandize from one port to another, in England and Ireland, or from these kingdoms to the circumjacent British islands. The navigation act then considered the home trade of Ireland as part of the coast trade of England, which has been so carefully preserved as the most valuable nursery for seamen. And indeed what can the whole navigation between the sister kingdoms be deemed, but a coast trade, which ought to be extended by every rational measure that can be proposed or thought of. Foreigners were excluded too from the trade of the Colonies upon the principle *of keeping up a firmer connexion, between the parent country and them.* Let us hope, that by granting the enlargement of navigation, which is now desired by the Irish, it may be the efficacious means of strengthening the union between the sister kingdoms, which is so much for the interest and happiness of both.

3. From considerations with regard to the naval strength of the empire, it is proper

per to inquire briefly, in the third place, as to the question, how far the public burdens of this country would be lightened at present, or lessened in future, were the Irish propofals adopted.

The revenue of every country is divided in modern times, into two kinds; 1st the income of every individual separately, from whatever means: 2dly, the income of all the individuals collectively, which is called the public revenue, on the income of the state. The private revenue of no country on earth ever accumulated faster than the private revenue of this kingdom, during the last hundred years, which continues to accumulate abundantly at this moment. But, the public revenue, however great and productive it may be under late management, is depressed by many debts, funded and unfunded. It is apparent therefore, that the wisdom of our counsels ought to be chiefly occupied in strengthening the public revenue, which is thus feeble; leaving private incomes which are thus productive to the care of individuals, who are entitled to general

neral protection, without the particular interference of the state.

It is to be lamented, how often the spirit of the people is directed to improper objects. They have been well nigh ruined, in their public revenue, by being induced to clamour for commercial advantages. We were so absurd as to settle colonies for the sake of getting a nation of customers. We have spent hundreds of millions to enlarge and defend distant dominions to enjoy those commercial advantages, which experience hath shewn are best enjoyed without any public expence. Yet, the same man, who, by his misconduct and mistakes, has almost beggered his country, in pursuit of the phantom of commercial advantages, continues to insist, that we ought to risque our all, in pursuit of commercial advantages.

While this nation constantly grasped at a shadow, almost every foreign power has been acquiring provinces which have yielded *public* revenue. But, what has Britain gained even from her most successful wars? she acquired distant deserts which were disadvantageous

tageous to this as an industrious and mercantile country, in two respects; 1st. Instead of yielding *public* revenue they required *public* support at no small expence for civil and military establishments; 2dly, Commercial capital was constantly withdrawn from domestic industry, wherein it was employed to the greatest advantage, to cultivate deserts beyond the ocean, without adequate returns. With our sad experience and present knowledge we may easily determine the question, whether we ought to accept of any distant island, or country, however large, were it offered without an equivalent? For, we have seen, that it would require a civil list or government to be paid from the public revenue, which cannot be spared; and that it would drain the people of the mercantile capital which now gives employment to every industrious individual.

On the other hand, Ireland is directly the reverse of such an island, inhabited as Ireland already is, by a numerous people, brave, active and generous; who, at the annual expence of a million, support a great civil and
military

military establishment; and who, without any apparent diminution of our capitals, are our yearly customers to the amount of nearly two millions. In superaddition to these great advantages, which ought to be regarded as no small equivalents for commercial benefits Ireland proposes to appropriate the surpluses of the hereditary revenue, as a fund for the more general purpose of protecting the Empire.

We ought to inquire into the nature and extent of this revenue before we determine, whether it is worth our acceptance. It consists then of a Custom-house duty, outwards and inwards, of an inland and inward excise: and of a tax, called hearth-money. It is obvious, that these taxes are of such a nature as to have increased and to continue to increase with the populousness, the industry, the trade, and opulence of the country. We have already seen how vastly the trade of Ireland has grown since the revolution in 1688. And from the following statement we may have a very distinct view of the in-

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crease of the hereditary revenue from that æra to the present time :

This revenue produced then, according			
to a five years average, ending with	1687	£.231,780	
Ditto ending with - - -	1734	300,332	
Ditto ending with - - -	1753	417,000	
A seven years average ending with	1770	545,422	
Ditto ending with	1777	543,818	
The year ending with Lady Day	1784	659,000	
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A real statesman would desire no better document than this to judge of the progress in population, diligence, traffick, and wealth of any people. A real statesman when he considered from what funds this increasing revenue arose and how fast it had augmented during a century of oppression, would easily determine with regard to the rapidity wherewith the same revenue must hereafter increase from the epoch of the freedom of Ireland, both commercial and political.

It is a curious fact in the history of our parties and debts, that when Walpole *established the sinking fund*, it became immediately the subject of ridicule to the fashionable orators and wits of the times. Yet,
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every one knows, that the sinking fund, which when created in 1717 did not yield so great a sum as the hereditary revenue of half Ireland, produced in 1781 rather more than three million, till it was almost dissipated by the unproductive taxes of a great financier, for which it was security. Ridicule therefore is not always the test of truth.

He must indeed have little wit and less wisdom, who can suppose, that the hereditary revenue, whatever may be its produce, is the only public income, which Ireland contributes for defraying the expence of defending the empire, of which Ireland forms so great a part. Ireland maintains as great a land army as Britain does. The military establishments of the sister kingdoms form the military defence of each other. One Generalissimo commands both, who may direct the operations of both for the protection of each. If Ireland maintained fewer troops, Britain must maintain more: If Ireland supported none, Britain must double hers. The reduction of military

establiments of every kind is in the present state of the revenue of Britain perhaps the best œconomy. If Ireland, by maintaining her millitary establishment to the full extent, facilitates this reduction and œconomy in favour of Britain she thereby contributes positive income. In this manner do foreign powers calculate the conjoint forces of the sister kingdoms. It can never be prudent in either to convince the world, by [unreasonable desires on either side, that we are a divided people, whose armies are separate, and whose interests are distinct.

We all remember how much it has been regretted, that the Congress petition, which was delivered by Mr. Penn, was not received and considered as the beginning of reconciliation. But, the authority of the Congress was disputed by some, and their terms were regarded by many as designedly general and studiously subtle. On the other hand, the Irish proposals come from the only power which could legally send them;
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and these proposals are detailed into such distinct resolutions, that their meaning is obvious and their purpose is plainly avowed. Let us not have it to lament hereafter, that we opposed such proposals captiously, much less that we rejected them hastily.

Whoever recollects what distraction prevailed in Ireland only a twelve month ago, and compares them with the present repose, must be of opinion, that much has been skilfully done. To obtain such proposals, from such an authority, with the declared intention of finally settling the commercial affairs of the sister kingdoms, on liberal principles of mutual advantage, was doubtless to advance many steps towards a desirable object. Let us be cautious how we undo that which has already been done ; far less how we by any means drive Ireland into fresh distractions, in quest of old remedies, and new pretensions. It cannot surely be the interest of any class of men among us, to see agreements of non importation again entered into by the Irish populace, or protecting duties once more imposed by the
Irish

Irish parliament. The manufactures ought to recollect, how much they were baffled by such agreements before : The merchants would do well to remember, a recent example of commercial connexions of great extent, being wholly cut off by such associations alone. Every wise man must be of opinion, that peaceful and industrious Ireland is a mine of riches, and a tower of strength to Britain : That distracted Ireland would be her weakness in war, and her bane in peace. To prevent such apprehensions in future, these proposals have been submitted to parliament, only as part of a plan of systematic government, which can alone tie the sister kingdoms more closely together. The adoption of this plan bids fair to insure mutual confidence, and lasting good will. The rejection of these proposals would lead to ills that cannot all be foreseen, but would be all deplored hereafter.

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