
NECESSITY
OF AN
INCORPORATE UNION,
&c. &c.

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Houses of the Oireachtas

NECESSITY

OF AN

INCORPORATE UNION

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

PROVED

FROM THE SITUATION OF BOTH KINGDOMS.

WITH

A SKETCH OF THE PRINCIPLES

UPON WHICH

IT OUGHT TO BE FORMED.

“ Between us two let there be peace, both joining,
“ As joined in injuries, one enmity
“ Against a Foe by doom express alligned us.

MILTON.

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Houses of the Oireachtas

THE
NECESSITY,

&c. &c. &c.

THE idea that an union is to take place between Great Britain and Ireland, seems generally prevalent in both kingdoms. Government has hitherto remained silent upon the subject, and no steps are taken either to check or encourage the supposition. It originates with the public, and can be attributed to no other cause, than a general conviction, that some arrangement must be formed between the countries to ensure their joint prosperity and mutual good understanding.

If the plan of an incorporate union should be brought forward by his Majesty's Ministers from

a similar conviction, it is to be hoped that the two nations and their legislatures will debate and weigh it in the spirit of cordial affection, and of calm and sober discussion. It is not to be canvassed in any other mood with advantage, or even with safety to the empire.

A measure which endeavours to unite and reconcile the interests of considerable and growing nations has much to fear from the passions of the people, as it will be the interest of many to inflame and mislead them. From their judgment it has nothing to apprehend, if they will only resolve to employ it. The danger is, that where the system is so complicated and vast, they may feel more inclined to pronounce upon its merits than to examine them. Most undoubtedly the scheme of an union, which lays its foundations in the happiness of the existing race, and labours to extend its regulations and its benefits to an infinite posterity, demands the gravest consideration from the inhabitants of both kingdoms. The influence of their opinion, whether just or erroneous, decides upon its fate; and they should watch with anxiety, lest they form it on frivolous or party grounds.

Neither the frame and temper of mind, nor the degree of knowledge requisite to ascertain the defects or advantages of such a measure, are to be acquired from a professional cabal, or caught up from a county meeting. Such assemblies may possibly serve to communicate the prevailing sentiments; but a town-house, or a tavern, are no fit places to form an opinion by which a wise and honest man could venture to abide.

The country should proceed in a far different spirit of enquiry. It should enter upon a sober and patient investigation of the plan in its principles and its parts,—examine and meditate upon the various sentiments which fluctuate in the minds of men concerning it,—weigh the several arguments by which they are supported, and contrast them with each other. It is by such means, and by such means alone, that the people can form a judgment fit to direct their conduct, and conclude their posterity.

In forming an opinion upon the propriety of an union between the kingdoms, the first point to be ascertained is, whether any alteration be necessary in that system under which the coun-

tries are at present governed. No man should stand up as the advocate of unnecessary changes, or wantonly tempt the dangers of untried speculation.

If the subsisting constitution of the empire is of sufficient strength and compass to keep its parts compact and firm, under all the shocks to which it may be liable from foreign or domestic enemies; if it provides the means to ensure the happiness and tranquillity of the respective kingdoms, to increase their power, and to augment their glory; if it contains within its ample stores and magazines of public goods, medicines to mitigate the consequences of party animosity, and remedies to remove the causes of commercial jealousy, we ought not to tamper with an arrangement which answers the whole purposes of imperial government. But if, on the other hand, it is proved by experience, most conclusive and fatal, that the existing system is utterly insufficient to effect any one of these essential objects, a question no longer remains upon its continuance; and a second point arises, namely, by what new arrangements these blessings may be obtained for the sister kingdom.

It will be the object of the following sheets to prove, upon the first point, that the present system is insufficient to promote the prosperity and ensure the tranquillity of the empire. Upon the second, that an Incorporating Union, forming the two nations into one kingdom, subject to the same laws, and governed by the same legislature, is the only means to accomplish these salutary effects.

Ireland was governed as a dependant kingdom for a considerable time after his Majesty's accession to the throne. The duration of her Parliament depended upon the pleasure of the Sovereign, or the demise of the crown. Her commerce was regulated rather by the wishes and interests of this country, than by those of her proper inhabitants. Her obedience to the will of England was enforced by a triple security. A British Privy Council claimed the right to prevent her legislature from passing new laws. A British Court of Law possessed that of interpreting the old; and a British Parliament asserted a paramount jurisdiction to bind her by statutes of its own enactment.

While Ireland was reduced by these means to the degraded state of a province, her people were divided into two parties, more hostile to each other than to the state which oppressed them. The measures of the English Parliament were supported by the Protestants, and opposed by the Catholics, both in the Rebellion of 1641, and at the Revolution in 1688.

It cost this country much blood and anxiety to put an end to these civil dissensions. Cromwell, who suppressed the former, expelled many of the Catholics from their habitations, in revenge, and divided their lands among his followers. But with a view to secure future unanimity to the two countries, he united them under the same legislature. The Whigs, who triumphed at the Revolution, laid pains and penalties upon the unhappy sect, not less afflicting than the cruelties of Cromwell; but they adopted the less prudent and vigorous measure of governing the country as a province, instead of connecting it to England for ever. All power and property in the island were vested in the Protestants, who had either joined the standard, or, at least, acknowledged the authority of King William. Inferior to the Catholics in number, they stood in

absolute need of English assistance to restrain and prevent the members of that persuasion from re-acquiring their natural ascendancy in the country. To insure their own superiority, they patiently submitted to have their legislature shorn of its supremacy, as necessary to secure the connection of the kingdoms, and therewith their possessions, their religion, and their political consequence.

The state of Ireland, weak and uncivilized, at least comparatively, with that of Great Britain, contributed to secure her acquiescence under this arrangement for a considerable period.— From the first authentic document of her history, down to the capitulation of Limerick, that country had been the victim of civil dissensions. The unceasing flow and waste of blood for upwards of seven hundred years, had depopulated the island, so much that the number of its inhabitants bore no proportion to the extent and fruitfulness of the soil.

Not even the crowd of indigent settlers, who hurried from England and from Scotland to fasten upon the fruits of expulsion and confiscation, could fill up that frightful gap which had

been made by the hand of war, and by the visitation of its more dreadful attendants, disease and famine. Owing to the same cause, the lower orders of the people remained in savage ignorance, and hopeless barbarity. The mind of the peasant, which in the adjacent countries made some progress in arts and manners, continued stupidly fixed and immovable in Ireland.

But the rigid policy of the Revolution, as it secured the tranquillity of the country, increased the number of its inhabitants, and gradually removed the jealous fears of the Protestant interest. The locks of Sampson reassumed their length and beauty, as he slept in his prison and beneath his chains. His strength returned, and the desire of freedom revived with the means to recover it.

During the unhappy struggle with America, the claim of a British Parliament to legislate for the remaining members of the empire, was canvassed with all the ardour and acuteness of political and party disputation. The public mind was illumined by the discussion, and the sister kingdom, apprized of her rights, caught from the example of the Colonies an emulous wish to

assert her independence. Instantly that flame burst forth with volcanic fury, which had hitherto betrayed its existence by hollow groans and murmurs beneath the ground. Ireland armed in defence of the empire, and wisely demanded her freedom as a recompense.

It was granted by Great Britain.

It would not be very easy, and if it were easy, it would be ungrateful, to examine the impression under which this concession was originally made. But it is impossible to deny that her subsequent conduct in respect to Irish independence, has been worthy of a great and high-minded country. She has neither sought to reclaim, nor looked back upon her lost power with regret. Conscious of the value of her own freedom, she venerates the jealous feelings with which their liberties are watched by the gallant nation to whom she restored them. If Irishmen entertain other notions of the general opinion on this side of the water, they are grossly misled. Any attempt to encroach upon their freedom, would be resisted as resolutely by the people of this country, as if the attack were directly made upon their own.

By the final recognition of her legislative independence, which happened in 1782, Ireland took a new station, in respect to this country, from that in which she had previously stood. Two consequences necessarily followed, from her Parliament having gained the exclusive right to regulate her national interests; both materially affecting her connection with Great Britain. First, it left no common bond of union between the kingdoms, except what arose from their acknowledgment of a common Sovereign. Secondly, it reduced their commercial intercourse to a mere matter of convention. It left each at liberty, unless where bound by positive compact, to consider the other as a foreign nation; to disregard its maritime regulations; to exclude its commodities from the home market, or even to give a decided preference to those of a rival staple.

It is impossible not to see how deadly such powers must be to the happiness of the sister kingdoms, when considered as portions of the same empire. There is no truth more indisputable in the science of government, than that nations, thus united, must admit of some common supremacy to

regulate their mutual intercourse, and to improve and apply their physical strength to their joint advantage.

But the principle, both imperial and commercial, of the existing system, instead of submitting to the maxim, is set in hostile array against it. It has no authority to exact a reciprocal sacrifice of partial interests for the general good ;—no means to allay the spirit of jealous emulation ;—no powers to point the exertions of the several countries to common objects, not less beneficial to them, because unprejudicial to their friends ;—no plan to divert their industry into channels which cannot, by crossing and intersecting each other, drain the supply and reservoirs of the one, to feed and increase the flow of the other. It has no fixed rule to ascertain the proportion of their contribution for mutual defence. It appoints no common umpire to arbitrate their differences. There is neither stay, nor cramp, nor binder, to keep the fabric together, or prevent it from tumbling to pieces. Every thing is abandoned to the fortuitous discretion of the moment ; working blindly, and sometimes wilfully, to the ruin of the countries.

If there be a mistake in these positions, it must be, that a principle of empire, sufficient to regulate the conduct of these islands to their mutual advantage, is created by the unity of the Executive Government, or that it exists somewhere else.

Among the prerogatives of the crown, where are we to meet with one adequate to such a purpose? Our ancestors could have no such case in contemplation, and consequently could make no provision against it. The powers of the Executive Government are amply sufficient to sustain the common functions of Administration in each kingdom. But it is wisely ordained, that, in extraordinary measures, the Monarch must have recourse to his Parliament. This principle, so essential to freedom, is doubly secured to the remaining branches of the Legislature, by the right of supply, and the right of impeachment. In all measures of empire, therefore, as well as in all other extraordinary measures of government, the Crown possesses no other power than a right to recommend them to the wisdom of Parliament. So far is it from enjoying any special extraordinary prerogative, on this point of its duty, that it is here peculiarly weak and incapable.

Where else, then, can this imperial principle be said to exist? Surely not in two legislatures, by their constitution wholly distinct and independent; possessing neither means nor forms, nor even a painted chamber to communicate or hold a conference with each other.

It has been urged, by some, that obedience to the same king, joined to a general and friendly intercourse between the countries, will operate in the nature of settled powers in the government, and secure the necessary unanimity and concord. But would a statesman leave the connection of the kingdoms to the agency of a fluctuating and precarious sentiment? Most assuredly he would not do so, if he might rest it upon a more stable foundation. This argument has been anxiously put forward in most of the Irish resolutions, which different meetings have recently passed in condemnation of an union. Otherwise those who know that nations are incapable of affection, might think it unworthy of much consideration. The same causes could not produce this effect upon America and Great Britain: and whence are we to infer, with such an example before our eyes, its necessary influence upon Ireland?

Separate parliaments, actuated with the warmest wishes to promote the united interests of the kingdoms, may differ as to the means by which they can be accomplished. The sentiments of the wisest and best of us, are formed to local views and attachments, and gradually warped by the insensible weight of public opinion, pressing and bearing down upon our mind. There is no man, much less no set of men, formed out of such stiff and new-found earth, or endued with such callosity of mental nerve, as will enable them to resist, for any time, the general wishes of their countrymen. Ireland and Great Britain are opposed, in many points, of general government and domestic economy; and the man who crosses the channel, and mingles with various classes of society, will often find himself in a region of settled opinions, which are in the antipodes to his own. If causes of difference may arise, even from the natural constitution of the two legislatures, and the necessary influence of the people upon their decisions, who can venture to foretel the consequences, or prescribe the limits at which they are to stop?

There are many circumstances, peculiar to our situation, which may encrease and enflame them, till the people shall forget the connection of the kingdoms; there are none by which they can be removed altogether. The manner in which our government is conducted, as well as the political habits and fashions of the times, have a direct tendency to render these national disagreements both violent and frequent.

From the residence of the Sovereign in Great Britain, and her superior importance as the head of the empire, the confidential servants of the Crown are chosen from her people, and fix the seat of administration in her capital. The chief rule and Government of the empire must, of consequence, rest in them; and the Irish legislature has, on this head, little more to do, than enact such measures as are proposed for its acquiescence. Ireland, increasing rapidly in wealth and population, may not always endure this preponderating influence with patience. She may aspire to alternate effulgence, and consider the counsel of a British Cabinet as better calculated for the prosperity of their own country than for her's. If this unhappy crisis should ever arrive, the individuality of the Executive Power,

instead of acting as a bond of union, becomes a fresh source of disagreement; and the empire may be afflicted with different and conflicting cabinets, as well as distinct and jarring legislatures.

Did such evils exist among the suppositions of theory alone, a prudent statesman would endeavour to guard against their eventual occurrence. But the insects have already burst their nidus, and we may calculate, from their infant nibblings, the wide extent of their ravages if suffered to arrive at maturity.

The first fruits of Irish independence, was an intimate union between the opposition of both countries. Without supposing a degree of corruption in one of them, too gross and rank for the endurance of human sense, it is at least possible that different parties may preponderate in the British and in the Irish Parliament. When the avowed ground of parliamentary conduct is personal predilection or dislike, the wisdom of a measure can have no effect in producing unanimity. If the parliamentary majorities, on each side of the channel, should differ in their principles, or their choice of a leader, the operations of either legislature might be at a stand, from the passing

of a road-bill to the grant of a supply. The spirit which appeared at the regency, may start up and haunt us in ten thousand shapes. That example will proclaim, to a reflecting mind, the danger of separate Legislatures, as strongly as ten thousand instances.

Another may be put more likely to occur, and not less likely to agitate the passions of party, than the choice of a Regent, namely, the choice of a Minister. When Mr. Pitt was placed at the head of Administration, the House of Commons addressed the Crown to remove the Ministry, as not possessing the confidence of Parliament. The Monarch appealed from this judgment to that of his people. The people sanctioned his choice, and returned representatives, who have favoured that Cabinet with their confidence to the fullest extent. An independent Parliament in Ireland had the same right to address this language to their Sovereign, as a British House of Commons had to their's: "No man should preside in the councils of an Irish Sovereign, unless he possessed the confidence of the Irish Parliament." Had this taken place, and, after a similar appeal, the Parliament of Ireland had continued to re-

fuse their confidence to Mr. Pitt, the Crown and the Empire must have been confused and distracted between two Cabinets, or the kingdoms have been committed in the choice of a Minister. Need we be referred to the contest, comparatively trifling, between the English Lords and Commons, in the time of Charles II. to estimate the consequences? To render such mischiefs even possible, is to place a new and heavy fetter upon the will of a Sovereign, in the choice of his Ministers.

It would be the highest injustice to the Irish Parliament, to deny that it has hitherto considered the concord and union of the kingdoms as the chiefest object of its care. In describing the mischiefs which may arise from the system, I allude to moments when it may be thrown off its guard by passion, when accidents may render the strength of the countries more equal, and habits of independence diminish its attention to the British Cabinet.

But the people of Ireland, not swayed by the same wise considerations as their Parliament, have already shewn many symptoms of discon-

tent and disunion. The superior strength of Great Britain, her unbounded opulence, and her exquisite skill in the industrious arts, form subjects of unpleasant and even envious contemplation to many in the sister kingdom. It is not a distinction made by the hand of Nature; for she has been equally lavish in her bounties to both. It arises from the different use which has been made of the precious gifts of climate and of soil. It is not unnatural for the Irish people, in the usual eagerness, to repel self-reproach, to attribute their present inferiority to the oppressive and monopolizing influence of England, rather than to their own misconduct. Other sources of dissatisfaction arise from her trade, her colonies, and her immense importance in Europe, and in the empire. The vulgar understanding looks jealously askant at the possession of this pre-eminence; but is unmindful of the immense hazards at which it was purchased, of the heavy cost at which it is maintained, and of the generosity and spirit in which it is shared with Ireland.

These tumultuous swellings in the public mind have been unhappily fomented and cherished by various circumstances. The moment, and the

means, by which Ireland recovered her independence, have made a deep and fatal impression upon the nation. The speeches and writings of gentlemen, who have aspired to the confidence of their country, by opposing the measures of its Government, have tended to keep alive that fire, which, after it had served its great original purpose, should have been extinguished for ever. The declaration that "an American war was the Irish harvest," may have been well meant, but it was fatally made.

Not less fatal have been many assertions assumed in the Irish House of Commons, as the ground of argument, and not always refuted, in debate. It cannot be favourable to the union of the countries, to declare, that the Irishman is an unconcerned spectator in the affairs of Europe; that he has no interest in the glory, as he has no portion in the prosperity, of the empire; that its wars are the private contests of Great Britain; that contributions to support them in money, and in men, are gratuitous largesses, drained from Ireland, to feed the power and augment the consequence of another people. These positions, gratifying to the weak and blind wishes of our nature, and dressed up in eloquence well suited to the taste

of an ingenious, lively people, were but too apt to receive that credit which is due alone to truth.

Dislike to a particular measure, in this country, wreaks itself upon Administration, and the people's vengeance is spent and appeased by their dismissal. But declamatory notions, like these, identify the unpopularity of the Ministry with that of the British nation. They suffer nothing to become fugitive or temporary in that resentment which springs from fugitive causes and temporary mistakes. They collect, and store, and preserve them all, and point the animosity of Ireland, not only against the Ministry of the day, but against the country for ever.

Such a doubting, jealous, misapprehending temper renders it impossible to accomplish a liberal system of commercial arrangement between the kingdoms, and yet, with a melancholy contradiction, makes it the indispensable duty of Government to effect it. It was well observed by a gentleman* particularly skilled in the com-

* The present Speaker of the Irish House of Commons.

mercial interests of Ireland, so long back as the debate upon the Irish propositions, that the countries could not go on as they then were. Their trade to the Colonies, and with each other, is wholly unfettled, and depend upon revocable agreements, ill defined, and worse understood.

So much is this the case, even upon the Irish trade to the British Colonies, that different opinions have been entertained in the Parliament of Ireland, as to the very conditions upon which it has been thrown open by Great Britain. Many points respecting it depend upon the discretion of individuals, instead of the ascertained limits of national right. The agitation of any one of them might unseam the new-closed wounds of the countries. If every other cause of discontent were allayed, the appearance of a single Irish ship between the Cape of Good Hope, and the Straights of Magellan, might light up the flames of discontent with encreased fury.

Neither is their trade with each other placed upon a more stable foundation. Scarce ten years have elapsed, since Ireland, inflamed by the

cries of her manufacturers, demanded a war of bounties and protecting duties between the countries. The measure, thus clamorously called for, has been disapproved of by the best writers upon political œconomy, as unwise for a state to adopt in any situation. To united kingdoms such restrictions are particularly pernicious, as they raise a spirit of hostility between their respective mercantile and manufacturing interests, and drive them to a commercial intercourse with foreign nations, rather than with each other. But that Ireland should demand a regulation, by which she must lose every thing, and gain nothing, seems almost to surpass the bounds of credibility. She challenged a contest of bounties upon exportation with a country infinitely more able to give them than she was. She provoked a law for prohibiting duties, which must have closed the ports of the two countries against each other, when the amount of her exports to Britain, at least, doubled that of her imports from thence.

As the measure was peculiarly unwise on the part of Ireland, it is, on that account, the stronger instance of the very slender ligament by which

the commercial intercourse of the countries is kept together. It is at least fair to conclude, that if her people could scarcely be restrained from disturbing the implied conditions and terms of the export trade, when it was her evident benefit to avoid it, they may prove more willing and more successful in breaking through them, if the period should ever occur when such conduct might be attended with real advantage.

These giddy wishes of the people have been hitherto rejected by Parliament with true patriotism. They have wisely avoided all subjects of contest with this country, and prudently submitted to such regulations as her laws prescribe for the empire. But a new malady, dangerous to the connection of the countries, has arisen out of this very practice, by which it has been hitherto preserved. Artful, innovating men, have ascribed this acquiescence to servile and shameless corruption. They have painted the Parliament of Ireland as more attentive to the nod of a British Minister, than to the interests or the will of that people by whom they are chosen. Hence dissatisfaction and disgust, at the very form of the House of Commons, have spread more widely, and national jealousy has increased against England.

It is to these circumstances that a wish for a Reform in Parliament owed its easy entrance into the minds of the unthinking and the ignorant. It is from hence, that wicked and turbulent men have been enabled, under its shelter, and by its means, to plan and excite a rebellion, of which the avowed object was a separation from Great Britain, and the establishment of a new Republic. That a separation of the countries was the first and great object in the plan, I have good means of knowing. Whether it was to be effected by a Republic, or a Reform, was a matter of trivial importance. They knew that it must have followed from the last, as certainly as from the first.

Unless the Rebellion is to be attributed to these causes working upon the supposed grievances of the Catholics*, to what rational sources are we to trace it? The people of England and Scotland are not infected with this passion for France, and this admiration of a Republic. With the same senses, and the same affections,

* I shall hereafter shew, that the restrictions still existing upon the Catholics are also the consequences of the present system, and could not be removed with safety while it exists.

with the same warnings, and the same prudent care on the part of Government, what else can have turned the brain of Ireland, while that of her sisters has remained undisturbed?

Those who conceive it to arise from oppressive hardships imposed upon the Irish peasantry, are ignorant of the real situation of that country. Until the formation of the present conspiracy, personal liberty was not less respected there than here. They are, indeed, relatively poor, if contrasted with the lower orders among us. But any misery springing from hence, arises rather in our minds than in theirs, who are without opportunity to make the comparison. Their happiness depends not upon our notions of comfort, but upon their own. The equability of human lot ordains, that no state shall be very grievous which is general, and which proceeds from neither partial nor direct exaction. Taking a view of the whole inhabited world, the wealth and civilization of Ireland exceeds that of much the largest number of mankind, in a proportion infinitely greater than that in which it is exceeded by Great Britain. Who can venture to pronounce, that the aggregate of human hap-

piners is, on that account, so much short in other countries, of what befalls our own?

And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
 And estimate the blessings which they share,
 Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
 An equal portion dealt to all mankind ;
 As different goods by art or nature given,
 To different nations makes those blessings even.

Far be it from me to contend, that we should leave the lower orders in Ireland to wallow in their present ignorance and poverty. One of the grand advantages of the plan which I recommend is, that it must of necessity ameliorate their condition. All that I mean by the remark is, that whatever may be their condition, it arises from no pressure of the Government, or its laws ; that it springs partly from the manners of the rich, but much more from the temper and habits of the poor ; that from its nature it is not much felt by the persons upon whom it falls ; and that, if it were, the remedy is in their own power.

From this view of their situation, what are we to conclude? Scarce eighteen years have passed over

our heads, since the present system has superseded that under which the empire was formerly governed. The fatal experiment of eighteen years is surely sufficient to convince us, that if the old arrangement sacrificed the freedom of Ireland to the union of the kingdoms, the new has sacrificed that union to the existence of her separate Legislature. Instead of bringing concord to that country, it has renewed, with increased animosity, the dissensions between Catholics and Protestants, in the midst of concessions to the former; and has armed fellow subjects against each other with the deadly rage of civil contention. Instead of favouring the connection between Ireland and Great Britain, it has given birth to a Rebellion, of which the avowed object is, the eternal separation of both. Instead of adding to the strength and power of the empire, it has detracted from the individual force of this country, in the midst of the most bloody war that has signalized the annals of mankind, by requiring a portion of her troops to quell the unnatural and ungenerous attack.

Can we calmly examine into these consequences, and their cause, and not admit that

some alteration should take place in the system which now regulates the two kingdoms? From the very nature of the objects, to attain which such numbers have risen in rebellion, it becomes impossible to appease the ferment by direct concession. Do any means to subdue these prejudices of the people exist other than by taking away, through some new arrangement, the apparent object of their discontent? Those who understand the finer movements of the human mind, will find it absolutely necessary thus to divert the popular attention from demands, which it is utterly impossible to grant, and wholly unsafe to refuse.

Unless some such wholesome change is made; unless some new salubrious medicine is administered to calm and compose the sick spirits of the kingdom, what has England or the Irish Protestants to expect, but a renewal of the late dreadful conflict, at some season less favourable to their exertions? What has Ireland to expect, but a wide and extended scene of horrors, to which she can see no termination; or, if any; a termination more frightful than those dread-

ful acts which have covered her fields with desolation, and with blood?

Of such a contest, too rending to every feeling of the heart to be contemplated without emotion, there could be no other end than a separation of the two countries, or an union between them; an union, if Britain should generously convert the fruits of her victory into a remedy for the wounds of her antagonist.

I know that it is a favourite opinion with many well-affected Irishmen, that such a separation would produce no ill consequences to Ireland. Among Republicans and Rebels, it is held forth as the only medicine for all her calamities. I shall examine the notion, since if it be proved, that, so far from being an advantage to that country, it is the very worst calamity which could befall her, little doubt can remain, that her connection with England ought to be secured by an union of some kind; and that it had much better follow from negotiation, than from force.

Calculating not less upon the consequences of separation itself, than upon the hazard she must run, and the sacrifices she must make to obtain it, Ireland could take no step so fatal to her happiness. She must purchase it by a long and bloody war with Great Britain, rendered more dubious from the defection of a strong domestic party, and more cruel by the relentless animosity of men, whose existence in the country depended upon their success. She must purchase it by an alliance with the French Republic, not less dreadful in its consequences than the hostilities of England. She must buy it, much more dearly, by erecting a Republican Constitution, and decorating the Tree of Liberty with fatal garlands.

Is Ireland such a victim to a stale and obsolete delusion, that she will receive into her capital, with songs and with dances, and with choral processions, this pretended offering to the Goddess of Wisdom, but real instrument of plunder and ruin; this fatal machine of fraud, the fabric of some second Epeus? Is she so much behind the whole world in knowledge, as to continue ignorant of the use which the Republic of

France makes of that dear offspring of her love for liberty and independence, the newly-begotten Republics? Is she so little versed in her new political mythology, as not to know that, like Chronos old, her tender infant progeny constitute her most favourite diet? Does she wish to receive new Brunes, and Schawenbourgs, and Buonapartes into her bosom? Will she give credit to the destroyer of Italy, if he should return as the plague of Europe, in his new character of Prophet, and swear by the beard of Mahomet to protect the religion, the property, and the constitutional rights of Ireland? No—no—Much as the eager credulity of man, to his own ruin, mocks at all calculation, a country, once connected with England, cannot admit this convert to the holy rights of ablution and circumcision; this new observer of the solemn festival of the Ramaddan, to be her apostle in the rights of men. If fate should render him back safe from that pilgrimage which he meditates to the tomb of the Meccan Prophet, in the true spirit of Islamism, and the anxious wish to deck out his robberies, with the appearance of sacrilege, for the triumphant approbation of his own rulers, robberies rendered so much more comely to the eyes of France, as they are horrible to

those upon whom she promises to bestow the blessings of liberty. Surely Ireland would not receive the plighted faith of an impious renegado, whom the untaught people of Arabia have spurned and despised.

Without these means Ireland could not effect her separation. With these means she puts her all to the risk.

But suppose, (and it is no gentle supposition) that, unlike all other countries who have sought the protection of a powerful and unprincipled ally, she might escape the bitter fruits of subjugation. Still, before she proceeds on this new adventure, she should soberly calculate the losses which she must suffer from the dissolution of her ancient partnership, and the stock it would require to set her up as an independent state.

The most sanguine speculator in Irish prosperity, could not assume, after such an event, that she would retain the friendship of Great Britain, or any one of the beneficial consequences of her present connection. She must lose the market for her linens, her yarn, and her provisions; the

export and import trade to the British colonies; the advantage of British treaties, and the participation of her powerful hereditary, long established alliances in every part of the world.

Stript of the respect due to the British name; deprived of the irresistible protection of the British navy; without friends, and scarcely known to the Continent, she must learn to walk alone. Under the cold and suspicious looks of the acknowledged powers of Europe, she would have to establish alliances to support her against probable enemies, and to open markets to receive the surplus produce of her industry, and return a supply for her necessary demands. The formation of new political connections, between different countries, is at all times opposed by strong obstacles, and those of a mercantile nature by some which are much more stubborn. They arise by slow degrees, and by the operation of reciprocal advantage, working with incessant effect against national antipathies. But Ireland, in addition to the common difficulties incident to all such negotiations, would have to struggle against those prejudices which attach upon an upstart state, whose continuance is precarious, and who sets an example, in the method of her ori-

gin, which it is the interest of all legitimate governments to discountenance.

Struggling against these difficulties abroad, she would have to encounter many not less formidable at home. She must establish and promote manufactures upon her own poor capital; she must carry on commerce without a single sloop or frigate to protect it; without growing timber or stores to build or rig them out; and without possessing wealth or means to procure them.

Neither would the radical obstacles to prosperity, arising from that uncleared situation in which she chose to fix her new settlement, terminate here. The calculation of her difficulties would not be more than half worked off by the friends to a separation, although they should suppose that a country like Ireland might possibly remove such weighty hindrances to national comfort and prosperity, and many others not less weighty than these. They must further assume, in their argument, a mean not less dubious than those which they are thus allowed to pass over. They must assert, that these impediments will be removed and over-

come by Ireland, when exhausted from the calamities of civil war. Can any people, in their senses, conceive that some political Prospero shall, by the sudden stroke of his magic wand, create scenes of universal felicity with fairy expedition in any country; much more can they hope that he is to perform the prodigy in one, from whose people all habits of industry; all patience under general calamity; all orderly submission to the laws, are utterly rooted out by a contest in which every inhabitant would be a soldier, and every soldier would acknowledge no other law than his sword, and no other restraint than a force superior to his own.

If a high-sounding oration, flowing from a warm imagination, could remove these impediments, doubtless the matter is already accomplished. But fine figures, rhapsodic rants and expressions, which violate the laws of language, not less than the ideas they convey do those of the land, can only serve to remove, during the little season of delusion, any real calamities from the people's contemplation. After the final and dreadful consummation of their ruin, they will afford neither relief nor consolation to the starving families of the manufacturer and the peasant.

Even where the physical strength of a country is sufficiently great to bear the ponderous and massy weight of imperial pre-eminence, it is, at least, doubtful whether such a fabric could be created during the present order of human affairs. This is not a period for any new-formed nation to become powerful. The frequency and speed of commercial and literary intercourse do not permit such an empire to gain its full growth and strength in silence and in quiet. Those luxurious manners, and debauched opinions, which are the excrescence of national prosperity, and destroy the body by which they are nourished, used formerly to arise from the corruptions of decaying nature alone. But owing to the present chain of communication which surrounds Europe, they now spread most rapidly by the soft contagion of example. It suffers no means to exist which shall give to a rising people that severe Sabine code of domestic virtues, and impress upon their mind those thousand salutary prejudices, which constitute the deep and unperceived foundations of solid national grandeur. The manners and the vices of more polished states overflow, by a violent irruption, the country and the people, in despite of those barriers which nature has raised

against them, in the differences of language, and the general dissociability of various regions to each other. The principles of encrease are stunted and withered, by this immature admission to a state, which renders the Government luxurious and prodigal, and the inhabitants effeminate and inconstant.

But if the moral habitudes of Europe were as well calculated to raise Ireland into a great power, as they seem to be the reverse, her very limited strength must keep her in a state of relative insignificance, when compared with those empires which predominate in Europe. Neither the extent of her territory, nor the number of her inhabitants, could place her above the degree of a third rate power, in the scale of nations, such as they now exist. No higher could she rise, although her people should prove as industrious as the Dutch, and her independence be established at a crisis most favourable to her prosperity. Diminutive states, like these, have neither means nor power to command the tranquillity, or ensure the prosperity of their people. They exist rather by the sufferance and jealousy of more powerful neighbours, than by their own inherent vigour.

Many such have been created, and all those which have existed since the time of the Emperor Charles V. have been favoured and protected by the balance of power in Europe. Their destruction was the first consequence of its fall. Those rough republican forms, which shook little more than leafy and deciduous honours from the great monarchies of Europe, have torn the lesser states from their foundations, and laid them prostrate to wither and to rot. The United Provinces, Sardinia, Modena, Geneva, Venice, Switzerland, and the Ecclesiastical States, have been utterly destroyed.

Tuscany submitted early and willingly to her own ruin, in the unfeeling, insatiable embrace of a French connection. Her second Empedocles leaped voluntarily into the crater of revolution, which has, in derision, regorged his philosophic flippers as monuments of his folly. Portugal exists only by the protection of Great Britain, and Naples has found a chance for deliverance in the victory of the Nile, and her alliance with Austria.

The least calamity which has befallen those states which have been thus destroyed, (and to any country it is of incalculable mischief,) is the annihilation of their governments, and the massacre of their rulers. It is the great body of the people, as always must be the case, who have become victims to the national weakness of their country. It is they who have been plundered, slaughtered, and enslaved. It is the unoffending proprietors of lands, the peaceful inhabitants of towns and villages, who have endured all the contumelies, the insults, and the havoc, from which victorious and licentious barbarity seeks a recompence for its dangers and its toils.

What circumstances have the republican visionaries of Ireland discovered to exempt her from the common lot of inferior states? Had they looked forward to any thing but their private interests, they would have seen many attendant on her particular station, which must tend to accelerate her absorption in some greater power; none to keep it back.

Enabled, from her situation, to annoy this country in time of war, Great Britain must watch over her encreasing strength, with unceasing an-

xiety. The arm which is now held forth to support and protect her, must, from the common law of self-defence, be raised from thenceforth to oppress her. An object of desire to both France and Great Britain, she could protect herself from one only, through the dangerous intervention of the other, not less inimical to her independence. The internal harmony of her people, and her Government would be disturbed by the intrigues and cabals of these rival powers. The true interests of the country would be sacrificed to foreign bribes or party rancour. The foundation of two parties is already deeply laid in the Protestant and Catholic interests. Upon these rooted animosities, the French and English would build a connection, which must render the whole country a scene of perpetual contention. The lively, unsuspecting, irascible, and warlike temper of the inhabitants, is well calculated to encourage this species of feud; and, if the form of Government were more democratic, it would lay her more open to such machinations. France and England would act the same scenes as they did in Scotland, prior to the accession of James I. to the English throne; or as they did in Brittany, in Flanders, and in Burgundy, during the time of our Plantagenets. Every nerve must be strained by

England, to extract such a dangerous thorn from her side. Every exertion must be made by France, to gain such an important accession to her power.

A state, thus organized and agitated, would not easily attract that glut of commerce which is to give birth to Fuggers, to Hopes, to Peeles, or to Arkwrights. It would furnish few incentives for national glory, and, what is of ten thousand times more importance, few means for national happiness. It might possibly linger for a few years among the states of Europe. But, unable to support itself, it could testify its existence only by the screams of imbecility and want.

From these reflections, what is the conclusion? Not merely that the scheme of separation teems with no self-evident blessing, for which Ireland ought to hazard the chance, if not the certainty, of subjugation; the slaughter of her people; the devastation of her lands, and the probable extirpation of her most industrious, enlightened, and civilized inhabitants, in order to obtain it. This further truth results, to which Ireland ought to reconcile herself,—that it is radically impossible for her to exist as a separate and independent nation.

Let not the pride of Ireland be hurt at hearing the remark—It is not the fault of her people, but the immutable law of her configuration. Against this inconvenience, if it be one, it is idle to repine; because she has no means to struggle. The decree of nature, which circumscribed her territory by the ocean, forbade her to become both great and independent, although her children should prove ever so industrious, so virtuous, and so wise. Instead of a vain attempt to counteract what is thus ordained by providence, let her wisely endeavour to become great by the means which are allowed her; let her unite with this island, which, though much more powerful than she is, could not, if deprived of her assistance, prove long able to preserve that pre-eminence among the extensive empires of the world which she now enjoys.

To avoid the mischiefs of the present system, and avert the ruin of separation, some scheme of union must be devised, which shall concentrate the strength, and blend the affections and common interests of the two countries.

The practice of other nations affords examples of two methods only by which this can be ef-

fectcd——a FEDERAL, or an INCORPORATE UNION.

The instances of federal unions, supplied by history, are of two kinds. The one preserves the respective Governments of the combined states, totally distinct and independent of each other. Little more is stipulated by the conditions of the union, than the principle, and sometimes the quota, of mutual assistance. If new difficulties or unexpected exigencies arise, they must be referred to the discretion of the different Legislatures.

The other form of a federal union endeavours equally to preserve the independence of the coalesced Governments, so far as respects their internal concerns. Its distinguishing characteristic lies in the creation of some permanent power, with functions to consult and provide for the good of the union, and some degree of authority to enforce its measures throughout every part of the empire. The connection of the Swiss Republics was formed on the principle of the first species of federal union; that of the Germanic body, the Dutch United Provinces, and the American States, upon the second.

This second sort is subject to all those inconveniencies, which the writers upon Government have rightly attributed to the existence of two supreme authorities in the same state. It is impossible to discriminate the boundaries of political and civil jurisdiction by that certain line of demarcation which shall prevent them from encroaching upon each other. The evident consequence of their clashing must be, that, if the internal Government should prevail, the union is reduced to the other federal form. If the imperial should overcome, it is rendered incorporate.

It is unnecessary for me to discuss the inconveniencies of this species of union at greater length, because it is suited only to countries which are under a Republican Government, or to a cluster of small principalities. But if it were otherwise, the creation of an entire new council or assembly to regulate the interests of Great Britain and Ireland, independent of their Parliaments, would necessarily prove a more violent alteration of the present frame and system of our Government, and be attended with greater inconveniencies than the adoption of an incorporate union could possibly be.

The other kind of federal union is little more than an alliance, offensive and defensive, between conterminous countries. Its radical defect is, the want of some assimilating and cohesive power to endue the whole mass with the qualities of durability and resistance. No ever-living principle circulates from the heart to the extremities of the empire, impressing that consciousness of identity which rouses every member to an instantaneous and instinctive defence of what is endangered. The general interest is too indistinctly seen, too languidly felt, to excite that vigorous and decisive unanimity so necessary to repel any formidable attack. As they commonly originate in jealousy, and fear, they are usually destroyed by the same "wind changing" passions. It is a different charge of the same electric fluid, which communicates the attractive and repulsive energy to the very same body. Envy, or dread of one member of the union, may dissolve what envy or dread of some other country had formed.

History abounds with examples in which this kind of union has sunk and yielded to rivalry, to intrigue, to artifice, to petty animosity, or to a cold

sense of partial interest. But the unhappy fertility of our own times does not leave us to extract the lesson from the records of ancient calamities alone. If the habit of a long and inviolate alliance; if a recollection of those noble principles in which it commenced, and of that heroic ancestry by whose wise prodigality of their blood it was secured; if gratitude for a glorious peace, purchased by no ignoble concession, (a peace long preserved by a sense of their valour, and no less by a sense of their moderation); if the imminent approach of the most dreadful danger that ever threatened the least imperfect state of social happiness with destruction, could have preserved such a league from falling under the self-consuming principle of its nature, Switzerland would not have added the last and greatest instance to the long and bloody catalogue of French cruelty and crimes.

But for this defect in their Government, those smiling scenes would still have remained, in which the hand of industry maintained a successful, but not unforbidden, struggle with that of Heaven. But for the vices of its Constitution, much more than the vices of its people, the

traveller might yet admire the plants of happier soils, placed not less wonderfully upon her rugged rocks, than those fishy bones and shells which he found intermingled with the strata of her mountains. But for this unhappy principle of union, the most simple and virtuous of mankind would not have now to lament those monuments of laborious ages, torn down and blasted by a commotion in the civil world, not less violent than the convulsive throes of inanimate nature, which cast the indurated spoils of the deep upon the lofty tops of Cenis and of Jura.

The prophetic Mr. Burke predicted the dangers which impended over Berne, so far back as the commencement of the French Revolution. But the alarm which aroused a stranger in sympathetic fears for this Patriarchal Government, could not awake that Senate nor its confederates, who touched, and felt, and slept beneath its blessings. Though the infant hands and lips of the French Republic were first fleshed in the mangled corse of her soldiers; though the first libations made to faithless democratic cruelty was with the sprinklings of her blood, the Helvetic confederacy felt unable to coil its feeble spires into a cautious posture of defence. Jea-

lousy of the wise and good, irresolution, distracted councils, and the worst of all vices, neutrality in the calamities of others, found means to set up their rest, even in these eternal fortresses built by Heaven itself, as the safe retreat for innocence, simplicity, and freedom. Not even when roused by the bayonets of France could the creeping movements of such a milliped Government form any means of resistance against an enemy, who crouched to opportunity with the cunning, and sprang to the attack with the quickness of a tiger. The melancholy result has been, that, as the horrid interludes of French cruelty commenced upon the people of Switzerland, the last and deepest tragedy of the Republic has been acted there.

The expediency of a federal union was debated, at the commencement of this century, by the commissioners appointed to settle that which took place between England and Scotland, and they lost but little time in condemning it. This great authority is not merely against such an union between Great Britain and Ireland; there is the actual trial and failure of an experiment to establish it.

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This experiment was made in the measure usually known by the title of the Irish Propositions. Its object was to arrange the commercial intercourse of the countries for ever, and to obtain from Ireland a settled fund of contribution towards the expences of the empire. It was in principle a federal union, and upon terms the most beneficial to Ireland. Great Britain offered to place both kingdoms upon the footing of exact equality in trade, if Ireland would consent to stand so. To give up any privileges which she had, or might reserve to her subjects, upon the condition, that the sister kingdom would lay such restriction upon her merchants, as the British Parliament might find it necessary to impose upon her own.

The proposed contribution was to arise out of a fund, the produce of which had been long since placed at the disposal of the Crown for ever. It was not a solid tangible accruing income, but existed in possibility alone. If it ever should arise, it must arise principally from the very advantages of that commercial system, for which it was proposed as the equivalent. Its amount was to be applied to the most popular defence of the British empire; one,—of

which the commerce of Ireland stood not less in need than that of England,—the Navy. If the independence of the Irish Legislature was unrespected, so far as to require it to enact laws previously passed by the head of the empire, an impartial exercise of this power was secured in the condition, that these provisions should equally affect her own more important interests.

This system was wisely and ably framed, so far as it went. Its great defect was, that it contained nothing to prevent the harmony of the countries from being disturbed, and the measures of the Executive Government thwarted by the contradictory resolutions and remonstrances of independent, and possibly hostile, Parliaments.

It was, however, violently opposed in this country, and finally rejected in Ireland. The principle upon which it was opposed, was the same in either nation. The ground taken here was, that Great Britain, by agreeing to a permanent system, left herself no check or controul upon the caprice of the Irish Legislature. In Ireland, that it attacked the national independence, and vested in the British Parliament the

means of giving an indirect preference to their native manufactures.

These arguments set out in opposite roads, but, like the extremities of east and west, they meet at the same point,—the impossibility of trusting the execution of a commercial arrangement to two separate Legislatures.

It will have little effect upon the conclusions arising from this remark, whether the objections were well or ill founded. If ill, they shew the strong prejudices arising from the existing system of Government, which in Ireland more especially oppose any reasonable arrangement. If rightly urged, they shew the danger of success in executing what is, therefore, most fortunately impracticable. They unite in proving the impossibility of any equal settlement between the countries, that supposes the continuance of independent Parliaments.

Deserting, therefore, the scheme of a federal union, defective in theory, and unreducible to practice; we come to the only remaining mode of settlement, namely, an Incorporate Union between the kingdoms.

I am well aware, that such a measure, let it be ever so wise and necessary, must meet with considerable resistance. A set of men will always exist, who, from personal pique, or private interest, are anxious to identify themselves with the body of the people, and convert, by clamorous declamation, the country into a faction against its own happiness.

Very sorry am I to observe such a grave and learned body as the Irish Bar place themselves at the head of an opposition like this. Not less surprized am I to observe the names of men of unquestionable integrity, great talents, and wisdom (talents and wisdom never worse employed, nor less displayed, than in that debate), taking an active part in this rash prejudication of the cause of both countries. Let them look at the wild resolutions voted at the County of Dublin meeting, to see how very unsafe and unconstitutional it is to call in assemblies of the people to decide upon measures of general policy, before they have been proposed to Parliament; how unwise it is to hurry the public opinion, instead of permitting it to grow out of private and individual discussion*.

* One of these resolutions denies the competency of the Legislature to assent to an union. Could any one of the persons at

The members who crowd that respectable society are taught, in their professional cradle, to doubt, to discuss, and patiently to sift and examine the most trivial subject of litigation. They did not learn from the practice of any office or court, that they ought to put in and swear to their answer before the bill had been filed, or they were acquainted with its charges. They should, at least, have heard the sentiments of Parliament, before they raised the people to over-awe it. But they have confounded the several manuals of those military and lay duties, which they sustain so much to their own honour, and their country's advantage. It is doubtless a good *Ruse de Guerre* to preoccupy the important post of public opinion; but the gentlemen of the long-robe should not have forgotten the not less wise precept of their other calling, that no man can be a judge, or a witness, who has a direct interest in the event of the cause. That *ομοιως Αρ.Φοιν ακροασθαι* is not less a part of the duty and of the oath of an Irish or English, than it was of an Athenian judge.

that meeting have duly considered a question which has been settled by our Constitution the other way, for at least a century? If these Resolvers are right, the act of settlement, and the Scotch union, are acts of usurpation; and the authority of their own octennial bill, the foundation of all their liberties, is considerably shaken.

It is far from my wish to give offence to any man in the present publication, much less to a body of gentlemen, of whose conduct, on every other occasion, it is not easy to speak too well. But, as they have chosen to lead the van of this host of meetings, it is impossible not to point at the secret motives which give rise to such an unusual warmth of opposition. If Irish Barristers had been less accustomed to sit in the Irish House of Commons, their judgment, being more disinterested, might appear less questionable.

The principle and scheme of any union should be judged in a temper widely different from what has been shewn at this meeting, and at others which have followed close upon it. Those who consider an object which extends infinitely beyond our petty space of time upon the earth, should cautiously purge the mind of such little anxieties for aggrandisement as center in ourselves, and must terminate with us. We must disencumber and lighten the understanding of these selfish passions, which cannot flutter above the narrow spot on which they are used to grovel, if we would rise to that degree of elevation from whence, as from the true point of perspec-

tive, the mind's eye may wander over the entire plan; survey its proportions; examine its ends; compare its beauty with its use; and contrast its durability with both. It is from such a comprehensive view that we can alone form an estimate of its cost, and its fitness to effect what it purposes to accomplish.

If, upon this view, the edifice is found well suited, by its spacious, solid, and stately grandeur, to the comfort and dignity of its master, shall he refuse to lay the first stone, because a fordid stye, in which some of his dependents have loved to nuzzle, must come down to make way for it? If it is well calculated to hold the great body of the people, if it contains ample accommodation for the noble, the merchant, the manufacturer, and the peasant, are they to live in wretchedness, and in fear, beneath a tottering roof, because a few factious grooms and menials find themselves lodged, by the proposed arrangement, more suitable to their real worth, than to the swelling notions of their self-importance?

I am not so uncharitable as to suppose that all opposition must arise from motives of interest or of faction. Many persons both may and have opposed every step which can be taken from ho-

nest conviction. It has been observed by a poet, speaking of his own art, that the most beautiful effusion of the human fancy does not contain a charm for every mind. If the attempt of a master to stir the spontaneous feelings of our nature; to rouse those common sympathies which instinctively swell within the heart, by which the little and the great approximate to each other, and confess the relation of their kind, cannot succeed in every breast; much more is it to be expected] that measures of dry policy, and complicated detail, never will obtain unanimous approbation.

To frame or judge of the plans of a statesman, with the wisdom of a statesman, requires a statistical knowledge of the country upon which they are to operate; profound views of human nature; a laborious and patient comparison of all that the wise and the disinterested have accomplished, and all in which they have failed, to assuage the evils and augment the happiness of human life. To these is better added a commanding station in the political field, which few have capacity, and fewer have opportunity to fill. A measure that requires the utmost range of a mind thus framed and fitted up to grasp it, cannot be estimated by the mere instinctive temporary glance of the multitude.

These remarks are not meant, nor can they tend, to disparage any opposition which is supported by solid reason. But they may caution the people to doubt, in forming a judgment upon the propriety of an union. They may teach them to confide, not in their own strength, but, as they securely may, in the wisdom of their Parliament. They should teach that Parliament, that popular clamour is very far from an irrefragable reason for rejecting such measures as they shall, in their honest judgment, approve.

Already has that clamour become audible in Ireland, the country which this measure must serve more essentially than Great Britain. But it happens, in national as well as private disputation, that those who are in the wrong, endeavour to supply their deficiency in argument by noisy heat and eager vociferation.

The same vulgar roar of disapprobation burst forth in Scotland against the union with England. Armed soldiers were necessary to preserve from the fury of the populace, that noble Parliament, who sacrificed its political existence for the lasting good of its country. The experience of near a century has taught us to estimate the real pa-

triotism of those enlightened men, who had the courage to face the temporary resentments of their countrymen, that they might flourish during the existence of their country; who calmly endured the reviling and buffeting of a partial delusion, in expectation of the lasting recompence of applause, when the fruits of their labour should appear in the general prosperity.

Of the numberless predictions of ruin to England and Scotland, uttered at that time by the discontented on both sides of the Tweed, not one has been verified. The national pride of Scotland, not less great than that of Ireland, was roused to resist the measure; and every artifice was employed successfully to enflame the common opinion even to madness. If clamour had then prevailed, time and the flourishing state of the country could not have proved the ill-judging weakness of those who vociferated their opposition both within and without the Parliament House.

Now there is no man, who considers the universal and consequent improvement of that country; her internal tranquillity; her encreasing population; her numerous manufactures; her agri-

cultural pre-eminence ; the enormous price of her lands ; and, above all, the utter extinction of that national spirit of antipathy which had kept the kingdoms at variance from immemorial time, but must allow the junction of the two kingdoms to have been the ablest and wisest measure of that illustrious period in which it took place*.

* Circumstances, for a time, prevented the full operation of the benefits of the union in Scotland, which cannot exist in Ireland. It was an hindrance of no small moment, that justice was then (and is still) administered in Scotland in a manner, and under a code of laws, totally different from what takes place in England. Inconveniencies have arisen to Scotland from this circumstance ; but the advantages of the union have preponderated in a proportion which makes these inconveniencies be forgotten. They yet, however, continue to operate. Independent of their effect upon her jurisprudence, they tend to withhold much of that assistance which the capital of England might otherwise afford. Individuals in England, to this day, are not fond of trusting their property in a country, to the laws of which they are strangers ; as the recovery of it appears, on that account, more uncertain.

Scotland, too, at the time of the union, carried on a trade with France, which her adoption of the English commercial regulations necessarily obliged her to relinquish. Two Rebellions afterwards raged in her bosom, which destroyed her growing advancement, and protracted the period of her profiting in all their extent from the consequences of the union.

No such causes exist, or may be expected to arise and obstruct the advantages which an union presents to Ireland. The benefits which Scotland has derived from that with England, notwithstanding these circumstances, point out to the Irish, with irresistible force, the propriety of their acquiescence

We have not only this example in favour of an incorporate union, but we have the opinion of the Irish Privy Council, given in 1676, and the declarations of the Irish House of Peers, twice solemnly delivered. In 1703, as the resolution of a committee appointed to consider the state of the nation. In 1709, in an address to the Lord Lieutenant, requesting his good offices with the Queen to effect it. Declarations wrung from them by the situation of their country, not made at the suggestion, or to gratify the inclination, of any Minister. If undue influence could exist in that House, it was not employed to call forth these sentiments. The grave and wise proposal was scandalously overlooked by Ministry, in a wicked wish to keep Ireland in the degrading state of a Provincial Government.

The necessity of such a measure, for the commercial aggrandisement of both countries, has been urged by every writer on national economy, from Sir Matthew Decker, down to Dr. Adam Smith. It has been openly recommended by many able

in the measure. Her wealth, compared with that of England, at the time of the union, was as 1 to 30. It has been recently estimated by Mr. Pitt, in his speech upon the Income Bill, as 1 to 8.

writers and statesmen, at different periods, and of various political attachments. By Dr. Campbell; by the Dean of Gloucester; by Lord Egmont; Lord Hillsborough; Lord Sackville; and Lord North.

The sterling weight of these several opinions, whether written or spoken, received no alloy from the suspicious motives of private interest. They were not called for to gratify the zeal, or to fulfil the schemes of a party. They stand exempt even from that possible prejudice which springs from inclinations and passions unavoidably roused by the actual agitation of the measure.

Supported by such a number of opinions, calmly formed upon deliberate and impartial considerations, by men well qualified to discuss the interests of the two countries, we may, at least, venture to question the wisdom of the resolutions of the Irish bar, and of the Dublin corporation. Even though a set of merchants and bankers, who dread a change in their residence from Dublin to Cork, should declare against the union, we may dare to call the attention of both nations to its specific advantages.—We may endeavour, without much presumption, to obviate such

objections as are most generally and rationally urged against it.

It is unnecessary to argue, that an incorporate union is free from all those evils which arise out of the present arrangement, or which might possibly occur, if it were by its constitution federal. Reducing the two countries into one civil state, it necessarily destroys those mischiefs which originate from the existence of independent Legislatures in the same empire. Its instantaneous effect is to remove the present vices of the imperial government, and the only question which can remain, is, to enquire whether it be practicable, or whether it would produce, to either kingdom, evils not less serious in their consequences than those it is designed to correct.

It is favoured by a fortunate coincidence of events, which no statesman can make, but which when made, it would be highly criminal not to turn to advantage. Identity of constitution, convenience of extent, proximity of situation, conspire to facilitate the conjunction. Those lesser distinctions which divide mankind into tribes and classes, by prejudices too strong for the social principle to overcome immediately, have no

existence here. The language of the people is the same,—their manners are the same,—their laws are the same. Most of the Protestant families are of English origin. The ancient connection with the stock has been renewed by innumerable alliances. At no period have intermarriages taken place so frequently as at present. Thus domestic habits of life tend to form us into one people. The prejudices which separate us, arise altogether from the disunion of our Legislatures.

From the same fortunate coincidence does it happen, that this union will be followed with innumerable advantages to Ireland, while it calls for no sacrifices from Great Britain. The latter is superior in wealth, in arts, in the administration of her laws, in the exclusive possession of colonies, in general trade, and in her political connections in Europe. It is revolting to common sense, not to suppose, that Ireland must gain by a more intimate connection with, and a participation of, all the advantages enjoyed by a country so much her superior.

What is there, in these respects, that Great Britain could gain from her? All that Ireland now draws from these sources of wealth and

happinefs, ſhe owes to the indulgence of this, her parent kingdom. What recompence can ſhe make for them, but a faithful adherence to her intereſts? But the ſtep is not demanded of her upon the equitable ground that it is a fair price for that protection which ſhe now enjoys. It is demonſtrable, that ſhe muſt gain incalculably by it, both in manufactures and in commerce.

In the examination which took place before the Houſe of Peers, when the Irish Propoſitions were agitated, ſeveral of the moſt eminent manufacturers in our moſt lucrative branches of manufacture, gave it as their opinion, upon oath, that much of the capital and trade of this country would emigrate to Ireland, if all commercial diſtinction ſhould be aboliſhed. I am far from flattering that country with the hope, that this would follow to ſuch an extent as was predicted by the jealous fears of a monopolizing ſpirit. But the opinions of perſons highly ſkilled in the habits and manners, and ſpeculations of their particular trades, muſt reſt upon ſome foundation. They know that it is for the intereſt of all manufacturers, to chooſe

that state in which the raw material can be worked up with the greatest advantage; they know, also, that depots of goods are formed in situations best adopted for general trade. And as far as Ireland enjoys peculiar advantages in these respects, their opinion was well founded.

If it were to take place in a very small degree, that would set the salient principle of industry upon the encrease. The establishment of a few manufactures would constitute a sufficient leaven to set the rude mass of Irish labour upon the ferment. The jealousy of rival interests being removed, they would prove sufficient to communicate their skill, and implant a generous spirit of emulation in the Irish artizans. By such means, Ireland would be gradually instructed in that which is of much more difficult acquirement than adroitness in any mechanic art. She would learn, from example, the frugal habits, and the regular, orderly, and sober demeanour of a manufacturing people.

She would advance towards commercial pre-eminence by much more rapid strides than in manufactures. Her noble, safe, and capacious

ports and harbours ; the facility of internal communication, by means of her spacious lakes and navigable rivers ; her admirable position, holding, as it were, a middle station, and connecting the ancient and newly discovered worlds, point her out as designed by Nature to become a commercial country.

But to what extraordinary beneficial use has she hitherto turned this her extraordinary local capability? Has she derived the most that could be derived from it, even since the boasted period of 1782? It is the fashionable language in Ireland to refer all her encreasing prosperity to that epoch in her annals. Unless that prosperity is founded in the increase of commerce, where can it be said to exist? Not in the bitter consequences of Rebellion. If she compare any encrease which may have taken place in her country, since that time, with that which has occurred in this, notwithstanding the enormous pressure of taxes, and that we are shut out from one half of the world, by the rude hands of war, of what is it that she has to boast? Let her farther examine into its sources, from the entries of exports and imports, and she will find, that while her calamities have indisputably arisen from her constitu-

tion, her encreasing prosperity is the result of the augmented commerce of this country, communicating some of its advantages to her through the medium of their connection.

The real source of wonder is, not that the relative prosperity of Ireland has encreased, but that it has encreased so very little during that period on which she prides herself so much. The real cause is, that the commercial intercourse of the kingdoms is wholly confined. The British merchant cannot choose that country as the depot of his trade, however well situated for the purpose, in other respects, because it would, in many instances, deprive him of the chance of the home market. Owing to this circumstance England has lent a more sparing hand to her assistance than she otherwise would have done. The redundancy of English capital found a readier way to Ostend, to Hamburgh, and to other parts of the world, than to the sister kingdom, because it could be more easily turned there, and returned from thence.

But when that jealous spirit, which is founded upon a remote chance of mercantile competition, is once removed ; when the countries are accus-

tomed to think and feel themselves one ; to find no distinction between the ports of Liverpool and Hull, and those of Cork and Belfast ; it is then, and not till then, that Ireland will enjoy the full benefits of her situation, and feel the unbounded influence of the capital, the commerce, and the naval victories of Great Britain. It is by these means that she will taste the entire advantages of a trade, which bankrupt France, consuming her own capital, and destroying that of her neighbours, never can create, and never would communicate if she could.

The advantages of this encrease of wealth neither would nor could be confined to those who directly received it. Every rank and order of the state would share, in their due portion, that addition of vital vigour at first infused into one. The peasant, the mechanic, the land-holder, and the upper classes of the community, would feel its properties course through their veins from that insensible process of economical circulation incident to all well organized Governments. The labourer would be better paid ; the price of lands would rise ; the produce of industry would be laid out in the purchase of small estates. The

commercial interest would gain a stronger hold of the country, and become more united with the landed.

These beneficial consequences would remove a capital defect in the civil state of Ireland. A middle and an independent class of people would be raised, scarcely known to the country at present; such a middle race as constitute the great strength of England, rising superior to the lowest orders of the community, without absurdly aspiring to emulate those who are above them.

An union will not merely produce these effects upon the general prosperity of Ireland. It is the only means to put her people upon a level with each other, and remove the sources of their present discontent. As things are now constituted, the whole powers of Government are vested in the Protestants. The Roman Catholics are excluded from a seat in Parliament, and from the most high and important offices of state. Whether the inconveniencies which practically result to that sect, from these restrictions, can be very grievous in their present situation, is a question which we have no right to resolve. It is for them

to say whether they feel impatient under a state of incapacity, which may be injurious to some, and is certainly disgraceful to all:

The only question for the Legislature is, whether these restraints, being complained of, can be taken off with safety to the state? Evident danger to the community will justify restrictions of national or civil liberty, much greater than those under which the Catholics now labour. But if the impending calamity can be avoided by less violent means, it is wanton tyranny to strip men of rights to which they are not less born than we are.

The entry of the Roman Catholics into the entire franchises of a British subject might follow as a direct consequence of the union. As the aggregate number of Protestants in the two countries, greatly exceed that of the Catholics, no danger could ensue from their admission into the Legislature. The necessary preponderance of the Protestant interest, in both Houses of Parliament, would secure the united churches from attack, and the undisturbed possession of property in Ireland.

It is the apprehension of danger to these two objects which alone affords any good reason for not removing the few disqualifications that remain. Considering the kingdom as an independent state, the Protestants, who are the minority of the country, have no right to impose them upon the Catholics. Considering it as a portion of the empire, England has no right to found her security upon restraints, when she might provide for it more effectually by the mild means of an union.

The Protestants dare not voluntarily remove these disabilities from the Catholics, lest the preponderance of their numbers, and their gradually encreasing wealth, should destroy their present ascendancy. Without the assistance of Great Britain, they would be unable to keep back the most insignificant privilege even at this moment. They originally owed their superiority to her powerful interference, and it is that alone which enables them to retain it. With what shew or colour of justice can they call upon her to maintain a system hostile to the happiness of the majority of the country, if it is the jealousy of the Protestants

which prevents a removal of the sources of danger; and the causes of discontent?

If the Protestants wish to form a true estimate of their situation, they must look well at the consequences of what they have already done. They have already granted to the Catholics the means of gradually destroying their predominance, both in the state and the church. They only keep back possession for a short space, which can answer no other end than to fill the country with political struggles and partial rebellions. They laid the foundation of these struggles when they restored the Catholics to their rank in society, and rendered them capable of acquiring real property. Let them not conceive it possible to stop where they now attempt to make a stand. The mere restraint of a law, when the opinion of society is against it, is as that of a flaxen withe; easy to be burst by strength, or consumed by fire.

There is no physical rule of nature more unerring, than that the power of a state must rest in those who have the superiority in numbers and in wealth. Their influence may be destroyed, for a time, by some violent and temporary convulsion; but the genuine strength of Government gradually subsides and fixes there again. As the bulk of property in Ireland must pass to the ma-

jority by degrees, now that they are capable of taking it, the only internal and peaceable support of the Protestant interest is already destroyed.

Unless they shall voluntarily resign what their weakness will ultimately prevent them from keeping, what result can follow, but a second civil war? That the Catholics will not decline the struggle, is manifest from the present rebellion, which is almost entirely Catholic.*

Upon such an event, it is not easy to ascertain what ought to be the conduct of Great Britain, either in policy or justice. If the Protestants should decline to consolidate the empire by means which would preserve the existing church establishment, and restore all political franchises to the Catholics, would she not stand excused in taking part with the latter? To do otherwise would be to throw that party, which is becoming strongest, into the arms of France, where it has already attempted to take refuge.

* I would not be understood to mean that the Catholics were of themselves the instigators of the late rebellion. It was a set of flagitious men, who made common cause with the crimes of France, and fastened upon the distempers of the country to its own undoing—But this very circumstance makes the argument infinitely stronger.

If she should interfere on behalf of the Protestants, and prove triumphant, the same question recurs as upon a supposition that she had to contend with the whole kingdom. What could follow, but the adoption of that union, which may be accomplished now, without hazard, and in peace? But if the Catholics and France should prevail, it is not merely their influence in the Government, or the establishment of their church, that would be destroyed. Much of their private property was torn from the Catholics in their unsuccessful struggles. It is notorious that many families still retain their hereditary claims, and estates would be restored by the same means with which they were taken away.

Modern reformers feel none of those doubts which Aratus of Sicyon felt between the rights of the legal purchaser and those of the last lawful possessor. All that they consider is, the point of interest, and sometimes, perhaps, that of enemy or friend. Let not the Protestants flatter themselves that this could not take place because reason and justice are on their side. Property more extensive than the utmost limits of the whole island, has been taken from its owners in France, upon grounds less plausible than this.

All the evils to be apprehended from the present discontents, under the existing establishment, are

removed by an union. It is desirable to the Catholic, as it would restore him to his full political capacity. It might appease the ministers of his religion, who have done infinite mischief during the rebellion, by converting their precarious chance of advantage from the downfall of the Irish church, into some present ascertained and moderate provision. England would no longer continue the instrument of injustice, or irritate the majority of the Irish nation. But if these things had been unworthy of our care, the measure is indispensable as a protection to the Irish Protestants. They have reduced it to a matter of absolute necessity. It is their only guard against the inevitable consequences of their past concessions. It is the only means of preserving those reasonable rights, of which they have incautiously sapped the foundation by former grants. It is the sole resource left them. Neither law nor force, which is the sanction of law, can preserve them long in their present situation. They must destroy that argument in favour of any alteration in the establishment, which arises from the majority of Irishmen being of a different religious persuasion. They must crush the hopes which spring up thickly from the same source. By an union, the majority of the empire will be Protestants, and they have the right and the power to fix the national religion.

Although the benefits to be derived from this measure are so evident, and the evils to be prevented so manifold, yet I will not deny that it might give birth to such enormous mischiefs as would render it wise and manly in Ireland to resist its adoption.

Let us examine those objections which have been, or are most likely to be, urged against it, and see whether they are of such a nature.

These are, 1. That it would destroy the very name of Ireland as a nation. 2. It would annihilate her Government and her independence. 3. It would greatly encrease the preponderance of English influence: every place, worth having, would be conferred on Englishmen; the retainers of ministers, peers, or persons otherwise of great English interest. 4. The number of absentees would be greatly augmented. 5. Dublin, the capital and present seat of the Legislature, would be reduced to the state of an inconsiderable village. 6. It would bring that country into partnership as to the debts, as well as the prosperity of England, and her taxes would be encreased to an enormous extent.

These objections are to be discussed only so far as they apply to the general principle of an

incorporate union. Some consequences which might arise under the heads of taxation and Government, would certainly impose heavy grievances upon Ireland. But so far as it is possible to remove them, by modifications in the plan itself, I am entitled to assume, that they will be removed. Until that plan shall appear, it would be idle to combat possible mischiefs, or to reply to any objections, but such as must be applicable to the most fair and equitable scheme which can be devised.

Upon this principle I come to consider, first, That to take away the name of Ireland, as a kingdom, is to injure every feeling dear to the patriot breast; to dissipate that train of ideas and associated images, which console, animate, and inspire a country under noble sufferings, and to virtuous deeds.

If this warm prejudice does really exist, it is too laudable and sacred to be attacked with ridicule. It would be in vain to exclaim with the Poet

What's in a name? that which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet.

Not less unavailing might any argument prove to those who are really "ravished with the whist-

“ling of a name,” to shew how much the loss would be counterpoised in the accession of substantial advantage. It is to be hoped, however, that they do not fear above a plain statement of the fact.

It is not as yet known, whether the united empire will be distinguished by a name different from that of either kingdom, or whether it will take that of Great Britain. The former happened at the union with Scotland, and if it should take place now, the attendant misfortune, or disgrace, if it be one, would be at least common to both countries. Neither the courage, nor the national pride of England, or of Scotland, have suffered any diminution from being thus comprized under one appellation. Though the united empire should assume the name of Great Britain, it could not effect those honest prejudices which the Irishman must cherish, in common with mankind, for the glory and distinction of his country.

In all acts of empire; in all transactions with foreign sovereignties, no other name is used at present, although they bind the interests of Ireland. All embassies sent; all negociations entered upon; all treaties concluded, are in the name

of the King of Great Britain; and no mention is made of Ireland, but in the prefatory enumeration of the royal titles. She is scarcely known to the continent during the progress of our arms, and the influence of our victories.

In these respects Ireland must receive benefit, as she would gain some right and interest in that name under which she is either virtually included at present, or else she is bound as a part of the empire, without being named at all. In every thing which concerned the individual feeling, or internal interests of the country, she would still retain, and might still boast of her name, as Scotland has done. The victory of Lord Duncan does not throw less lustre upon his countrymen, because they participate in those of an Howe, a St. Vincent, and a Nelson. Thus, in fact, it would not curtail, it would restore the Irishman to his full share of the honours and triumphs of the empire. He would be no longer, like the Dwarf in the Fable, a companion in the dangers, but not in the glory of his gigantic companion.

To turn from this objection to one of more importance.

2. That it would annihilate the Government, and the independence of Ireland.

Any feasible plan of an union must allow such a number of Representatives in both Houses, as should fully express the voice and sentiments of her people, in proportion to their interest in the measures of the empire. That interest can only be ascertained by a comparative estimate of her extent of territory, her population, and perhaps her wealth, with respect to those of Great Britain.

If this basis be not offered, it would be wrong in Ireland to accede to the union. I would not sacrifice a single atom of the civil or political liberties of her people. But it is for these alone that it is her interest to struggle. Let her not confound her inalienable rights with any vague idea of national independence.

If an union should be proposed upon unequal terms, her objection would then be to the particular plan, and not to the principle.

If the projected system be founded upon a fair principle of equal reciprocity, how can the freedom or independence of Ireland be injured?

When she comes to debate the measure, the real point for her consideration will not be whether

the is to have a few members, more or less, in her Legislature, but whether it is so harmoniously constituted as to guard her liberties, and provide for her genuine interests. If this be effected, the whole end and object of all Government is attained. Neither the Legislature, nor the independence of Ireland is lost. The former is only transferred to a wider sphere, by which the latter must be more effectually secured.

It would be indecent to compare the Constitutions of the British and Irish Parliaments, or to contrast their conduct at any particular season. But this may be safely advanced; that the only ground upon which Ireland can hesitate to commit herself to the guardianship of an united Legislature is, that, as the Members representing Great Britain must exceed those representing Ireland in number, the majority would sacrifice her interests to those of their own constituents. The objection is built upon the supposition, that a narrow principle of rivalry and vulgar jealousy must continue to exist between the countries, after an union shall have taken place. But the very foundation of this argument fails, as it assumes a principle which is wholly untrue.

The concurrent experience of all unions, though formed under circumstances much less auspicious to unanimity than the present, has

shewn that this spirit arises from the independence of distinct Governments, and subsides with it. From the existence of that which took place between Rome and her Italian allies, after the Marfic war, down to the period of our own with Scotland, if the conditions of union have been nearly equal, the feelings of national antipathy have uniformly sunk before the sense of a common interest. They have subsided between the provinces of Leon, of Murcia, of Arragon, of Castile, and of the other independent states which constitute the kingdom of Spain. They have subsided in Dauphiny, in Brittany, in Guienne, in Normandy, in Burgundy, and the more recent acquisitions of French Flanders, which were attached to the monarchy of France. It would be superfluous to point at the examples of our own heptarchy, and that of Wales.

In all these instances of incorporate unions, and in many more; whether formed by accident, by necessity, by circumvention, or by force, the consequence has been the same. That social principle which subdues the fears of man, by means of his very fears, thus uniting families into one nation; operates with not less forcible power in combining nations into one empire; it infuses into their minds such congenial sympathies as arise from a common interest, and turns their antipathies against the remainder of mankind.

The mischiefs of this principle would thus cease altogether in a period, which must appear but a moment of time, when contrasted with the duration of the empire. Neither could its influence, during the short space in which it might be supposed to exist among those who have already received impressions from seeing the kingdoms disunited affect the measures of the united Parliaments. The higher orders of this country, who would compose that body, are above the prejudice. It is the duty and the interest of the Crown, and of its servants, to consult the prosperity of the whole empire. Even supposing them to forget every consideration which ought to weigh with upright statesmen, they would not venture to attempt any act of partial injustice, lest they should irritate Ireland, while, from the recency of the union, her jealousy of British preponderance in their common Legislature would be more eager upon the watch. They would not dare to propose, or to carry any measure which should materially affect her interests, in opposition to the opinion of her Representatives.

The interests of Ireland would be guarded against the possible encroachment of an unjust majority, even more effectually by the situation of the countries. It is morally impossible that regulations which extend to both, should not produce on both the like results. Their interests, their

habits, their pursuits, are so similar, that no measure could injure the people of Ireland without affecting those of Great Britain in a much greater degree.

If a fair scheme of union may contain every provision for the freedom, the prosperity, and equal government of Ireland, to a more liberal extent than she can enjoy them under the present system, where is the real sense and meaning of this objection? Are her people tickled with the empty consequence annexed to the situation of living in a separate kingdom, and under a distinct Government? If they really conceive this vain notion to be of more importance to their happiness than the solid substance of greatness, they ought in justice to assume the burthens along with the dignity of a sovereign power. Those merchants and bankers who resolve for the Legislative independence of Ireland, should have supplied her Government with the sums which her necessary wants compelled her to borrow in the last year, and should advance those which they will likewise compel her to borrow in the ensuing session. A people, thus proud of the independence of their Government, should not condescend to have supplies furnished from the opulence of British merchants, and their payment secured by the faith of a British Parliament. Those lawyers and aldermen, and freeholders who resolve so strongly in

favor of this independence, should be able to protect their Government from annihilation by the attacks of its rebellious subjects. A people, so proud of the independence of their Government, should not be indebted for its existence to 40,000 British troops, armed and paid by Great Britain.

Do I mention these things to insult and discredit Ireland? Far—very far from it. The conduct of those most respectable bodies of merchants and lawyers, in the late unhappy contest, has exceeded any panegyric. If feeble praise could add to that pleasure which arises from the gratitude of their country, and from the noble consciousness that their exertions have contributed to its deliverance, mine should be lavishly bestowed. I would pay it to their loyalty; to their fortitude; to their valour; to their alacrity; to their unshaken constancy; to their indefatigable endurance of fatigues, little congenial to the soft habits of their former life.

Neither is this reference to the inferiority of Ireland made from any little wish to exult in the contrasted superiority of Great Britain. It is introduced to shew the Protestants their inability to maintain that situation to which they aspire at the very moment when they claim it. They wish for a distinct Government, without either wealth, or strength, or credit, to support one.

To retain their state, so crutched up by England as it has been, is to preserve a disgraceful monument of the country's weakness, not a rational foundation for its pride. If a love of their country, if unexampled gallantry of conduct, could keep the kingdom at peace with itself, the exertions of the nobility, of the gentry, and of the yeomanry of Ireland must have succeeded—

Si Pergama dextrâ

Defendi possent etiam hâc defensa fuissent.

But the greater these exertions have been, the more strongly do they prove the vanity of this objection, since they must have failed without the assistance of Great Britain.

Is it reasonable to expect that this country is to defray the whole expence, and sustain the whole burthen of empire; to communicate the advantages of her trade; to lend her whole force and means to quell the disturbances in Ireland; and thus to nurse a Government until it may prove so strong, that it shall fancy itself too great for the connection? Both countries ought to tremble at a principle of Legislative independence, which is too stubborn to yield a point to time; to circumstance; to calamity; or to the conjoined interests of the empire. It may be turned to the very worst of purposes. It differs little in its essence from a wish for a total separation.

The *third* objection is directed against the exercise of English influence, and the consequent disposition of employments in Ireland. It is founded upon the same opinion, that national predilection must continue after the union, which has been recently refuted.

The argument is not a very popular one which connects the patronage of the Crown with the continuance of Parliament. I shall not, however, hesitate to admit, that every man has a right to aspire to the service of his country, and to hope an honourable remuneration for his labours. But if the objection were to subsist, it could only apply to the higher orders of life. It could not touch the great mass of the people, who proceed to eminence and wealth by commercial pursuits, or with the slow and patient step of frugality.— So far is the objection from being founded, except possibly as to some of the present race, who have struck their roots too deep in Ireland to bear transplanting, that the prospects which open by throwing the two kingdoms into one, ought, in common reason, to operate with the ambitious as incitements to an union ; not as dissuasives against it.

It would display a new and more extensive, and therefore a more noble field for the march of Irish talents in the Cabinet, the Senate, and every other department of life. Approaching

nearer to the common centre of action, they would be more likely to feel its centripetal influence. Can such an objection be made, with the example of Scotland before our eyes? So much was a contrary sentiment thought to prevail, during the first years of the present King's reign, that many Englishmen conceived they had reason to complain of the predilection manifested in favor of North Britons. There is no department in the State; no feat of literature; no service, or profession in England, which Scotsmen have not filled with honor to themselves, and advantage to the country. In natural talents Irishmen are, at least, their equals. They will ensure the same success, by knowledge, by prudence, and by good conduct equal to their's.

This objection is somewhat at variance with the principle of the *fourth*, that it would encrease the number of absentees.

That this will be true to a certain extent, it would not be very easy to deny. But there is a great difference between persons passing from one part of the same kingdom to another, and spending their time and their fortunes in one that is entirely distinct. The distinction is of the same kind as when the taxes raised in a country are laid out within it, or are sent to make purchases in some other nation. The kingdom is

benefited by the expenditure, and every inhabitant has his portion in the general prosperity.

In the necessary plenum of a populous country, the removal of some individuals into one particular spot, will generally protrude others into their former space. If one current rushes to the warm atmosphere of the metropolis, another, surcharged with heat, sets not less violently the other way. Discontent, disgust, satiety, or the love of ease, draw those who are more matured in life from the fields of ambition and pleasure; as the young and vigorous crowd forward to fill them, in the fond gaieties of hope, and the delusive fancies of inexperience.

Even if an accurate proportion should not be preserved, still, while the inhabitants of the same empire continue within it, their influence is felt through every link of the social chain. In whatever part of the lake the stone is cast, it dimples the smooth surface to its remote extremity.

Those who resort to the capital for pleasure, will, at least, contribute to defray the expences and burthens of the Government, maintained by the joint revenue of both nations. Those who resort thither to improve their fortune in trade, will be enabled, by encrease of capital, and enlarged mercantile connections, to set a

greater quantity of labour in motion among their countrymen, than if they had remained at home.

The poor will be less likely to emigrate, when, from the encreasing wealth and industry of the country, their wages grow higher, and their condition becomes better.

Members of the Legislature will be obliged to reside, for part of the year, in Ireland, to keep up their connection and interest with their constituents. The influence of such an example may grow up into a fashion, and invite absentees of large estates to a similar practice, who have hitherto never thought of that country, except to draw their rents*.

Even without these reasons, there is a tender recollection of our native soil, which we cannot easily shake off. The aged mind wishes to retreat back to that spot where it first tasted the pleasure of existence; to put off its exhausted frame near the place where it took it up. Most men, who accumulate wealth, are found to purchase estates in the country where they were born; and take

* This last is more probable, that may at first sight appear. In no great empire, either ancient or modern, have the gentry been accustomed to spend a great part of the year upon their estates, except in England. The reason is, that, from the united influence of its parts, every corner of the country is found to be of importance. As the consequence of Ireland comes to be felt

an honest pride in rendering it a witness to their prosperity.

It is not probable, therefore, that any inconvenience would be felt from the encreased number of absentees. It may be doubtful whether their number would encrease.

There seems to be even less foundation for the *fifth* objection, which predicts the ruin of the capital.

There is little likelihood that Dublin would suffer much, though the Legislature were to be withdrawn. It is not thought that the vice-regal court would follow; and even if it were, many officers of state, and all courts of justice, would still remain, together with their respective retinues. Persons accustomed to the gaities and societies of a large town, would not be easily induced to forego them. The distance of London, a passage across the sea, the cost of the journey, and the prodigal fashions of that metropolis, would prevent many from resorting to a city,

as an integral part of the empire, the same causes will lead to the same effects there, which already exist in Great Britain.

Another consequence will follow,—As the interests of the two countries become interwoven, the number of individuals from Great Britain, who will occasionally resort to Ireland on business, or to indulge the curiosity of travellers, will exceed the number of absentees.

which forms the residence of the great and fashionable but for a few months in the year. People advanced in life, who are indebted to society for the comforts which they enjoy, would not abandon Dublin. The chain of interest, or affection, which suspends to them a long train of relations and dependents, is stronger and more extended than we usually conceive.

Neither would the city suffer, though the entire order of noblesse were banished from her walls. She has long vainly endeavoured to retain the benefits of a capital, and to render herself a place of commerce and manufactures. These things never have been united, except in London, which has been favoured by many local advantages and peculiar circumstances*.

Luxurious manners, and expensive modes of life, are pernicious to industry. They insensibly destroy the scrupulous morals and frugal habits, which ought to prevail in the mercantile and manufacturing classes. Till within these few years, the noble and the mercantile orders in London kept to different ends of that metropolis. Their hours, their domestic habits, their phrase-

* I am aware of the instance of Lisbon, but those who examine the situation of that capital, will find it a strong proof of the assertion.

ology, their amusements, were as distinct as their avocations. Even now few merchants venture to the west and fashionable end of the town, before they have amassed a fortune, and can entrust their business to a partner.

But in Dublin, where the great disease of Ireland *gentlemanity** rages with overwhelming violence, it is wholly impossible to preserve this distinction of orders, or to prevent the corrupt consequences of their being intermingled. The Irish merchant must be kept from the dangerous temptation of example, if he is to be made wealthy; and if this could be effected, Dublin would gain more from commercial opulence, than she would lose by the absence of the immoral, the prodigal, and the idle.

The only remaining objection refers to the increase of Taxes in Ireland, and her possible assumption of some part of Great Britain's debt.

* I must plead classic licence to the more severe reader for the coinage of this word.

Licuit, semperque licebit

Signatum præsentè nota procudere nomen.

There is no acknowledged term in the English language to express this passion peculiar to the Irish. All ranks, however deficient their education or their means, aspire to the character, the appearance, and the company of gentlemen. It is the greatest bar to the improvement of that country.

In the union with Scotland, England took upon herself the debt which she then owed, and there is no probability that the terms of any meditated arrangement would be less favourable to Ireland.

The only difficulty is, in what manner Great Britain can be enabled to take it exclusively upon herself, when the legislatures and finances of the country are consolidated. This, as well as the system of future taxation, relate to a specific plan, and not to the abstract question of union. I shall say somewhat to both, when I examine the principles upon which it ought to be formed.

Such are the consequences urged against the union, as affecting the separate interests of Ireland. Some of them without a probability of existence; others rather benefits than mischiefs; others a gain may produce partial inconvenience, but of a sort which is of little moment, when weighed against the advantages which the measure must insure to that country.

If the people of England were not influenced by more liberal motives than have appeared in the late Irish resolutions, alarms more serious and probable might be excited in their minds as to its possible effect upon their internal prosperity.

By the measure England gains no sudden accession in constitution, in commerce, or in domestic concord. The only question with her is, whether she may not suffer loss in some one, or in all, of these her present blessings. The advantages which she is to draw from it are common to the whole empire; her portion will be greater only in so far as her territory is more extensive, and her people more numerous.

In the general prosperity, Ireland will participate in a proportion not less than that of Great Britain, and she adds the certainty of a rapid internal improvement which this country cannot have. The stamina of this her internal growth must come from us, and perhaps the beauty thus formed from our side may prove ruin to our hopes of an immortal nature. The probable efflux of capital, and emigration of workmen; owing to the cheapness of rude labour and abundance of provisions in Ireland, have formerly excited apprehensions in the manufacturing interests of this country. The superior situation of Cork has been described as threatening ruin to her chief maritime towns. By throwing open the trade of the kingdoms to each other, England loses the monopoly of her home consumption, and prepares a compe-

titor for the foreign market. Thus the union raises up a rival to Great Britain with one hand, and beats down her defences against him with the other.

I do not point out these objections as having a weight at all equal to what has been given them. The author of the *Wealth of Nations* could see much advantage, but no danger, to industry, or to commerce, from an incorporate union. But if Ireland has her jealousies and fears, England is not devoid of some that are founded upon more plausible appearances. If one country has the magnanimity to overlook them for the common good, it is not less becoming in the other to put her's away likewise. It is the surest pledge and best sacrifice to the striking of an eternal league between them.

England ought not to entertain any apprehensions on the side of commerce, nor Ireland on that of constitution. The united labour of the united kingdoms will find sufficient employment in supplying their own market, and those of the entire world. It is of the essential nature of industry to create larger demands by the very measures which

it takes to satisfy our wants. Every moral gratification creates nicer distinctions of taste, and gives birth to innumerable desires. To limit the progress of the manufacturing arts, we must not only place bounds to the ingenuity, but to the restless appetites of man. Is there not a sufficiency of profit to satisfy our manufacturers in the markets of the North, in those of Germany, of Portugal, and of Spain? Can they hope, with their utmost exertions, to supply the demands of that which is newly opened to them in Asia and the Levant; of that which must ultimately call for a greater extent of supply from Italy and France?

Any frivolous jealousy of this sort could not stand the test of a single year's experience.

The increase of trade in any one part of the same empire, tends to make it flourish, and not to depress it in the rest. The wealth of other towns in England has not diminished, because that of London and Liverpool is increased. Commerce resembles the polar stone, which conducts it along the trackless path of the ocean. It communicates its magnetic powers as it touches, without

suffering intrinsic diminution in its virtues or its strength.

The danger to Great Britian is not, lest the two countries should impede each other by rival exertions. The more impending danger is, lest, from the encouragements given to manufactures, the numerical proportion and due balance between the various orders of industry, necessary to the censure of the state should be destroyed; lest her wealth prove too immense, and come too much through one channel, even for an empire so extensive as her's to digest*.

I do not think that this description of the little danger which Great Britain has to apprehend from

* The superior extent of our territory constitutes the great distinction between this country and those of Phœnicia, Carthage, and Holland. It is this alone which can preserve us from the evil which I have mentioned in the text, and which proved the source of their destruction. A nation of merchants and mechanics would not be able long to defend and preserve itself. It is necessary that a class of nobility should exist to animate the people with their spirit. It is more necessary that a hardy race of peasantry should be reared to cultivate the earth, and to rise in defence of their country. When a state is tempted from superior commercial advantages to rely upon other countries for articles of the first necessity, or for the means of defence, it is then undone. The sword of the victor merely reaps that harvest which the country has sowed and ripened for him to gather.

an union is at all over-wrought. But if it should, still this country, as the head of the empire, can afford, and may well pay for, the consolidation of her strength, by a casual and partial diminution of her trade for a little season.

The physical and moral force of Ireland will then become the strength of Great Britain. She will be enabled to undertake her proportion of the expences of empire, without burthen to herself, and in ease of this kingdom. Her character, in time of war, will not continue doubtful. It will be unnecessary to watch her as a suspicious friend, as was done in the dispute with America; or to guard against the consequences of her enmity, which have been felt in the present contest with France. No force will be required to keep the discontented in check; and the united powers of the empire may be applied to maintain its dignity, and add new glories to its arms.

When such advantages accrue from the measure to both countries, are we not bound to lay an immediate hold upon the blessing, which is placed within our reach? The present state of Ireland has been assigned as a reason for postpon-

ing the consideration of it. But so far is that situation from operating as a dissuasive, that it imperiously commands the Cabinet to attempt its speedy accomplishment. When the unhappy kingdom is actually labouring under the most dreadful malady, shall his Majesty's Ministers neglect to apply that remedy, from whence is to arise the only hope of its cure?

I admit that all questions of reform, are questions of expediency and circumstance; that innovation is not to be attempted, unless called for by strong necessity. I admit more; that the measure which might be wise in one season, would be highly pernicious at another. It would be wrong to undertake to innovate when the enthusiasm of the public is too violently worked up to a love of change, and the eagerness of the country would push the honest reformer beyond those sober bounds to which he ought to confine the execution of his plans.

As it is the statesman's duty thus to resist the influence of temporary delusion, it is not less his duty to forbear pressing forward a beneficial measure against the manifest, decided, and sturdy aver-

sion of the country. It is as impossible to rule mankind at all times, by an appeal to their reason, as it ought to be impracticable to do it by the application of brutal force. He who governs a free people, must know how to sway their inclinations, and take advantage of their soft and more accessible moments; when he should pull against their fretful precipitance, and when he may boldly fling the reins upon their neck, and urge their career with his animating voice.

At present, neither extreme love nor extreme hatred is kindled in the popular mind of either kingdom against the measure. The people of England seem to expect it with calmness, in the full conviction of its necessity. A great majority of the people of Ireland view it in the same light, and wait for its approach in the same temper.

It may be debated now, without a disposition to carry it by force on one side, or to reject it from prejudice on the other. To wait for the period when it is to meet with general applause, is to expect those Greek calends which never will distinguish a day in the register of time. It is not probable that the dissatisfaction manifested against

it in Dublin would ever prove less than it appears at present; it may be contagiously propagated by delay through parts of the kingdom which continue sound at this moment.

An arrangement between the two countries must take place at some period; and, judging from the ferment excited by the Irish Propositions, at what season is it likely to be agitated with so much coolness as in the present?

If national calamities are the teachers of wisdom to nations, can Ireland be more deeply read in the dreadful lesson of experience, than she now is by those terrible examples which she has recently witnessed? If the scenes of horror through which she has past, do not operate as a solemn warning to accomplish her salvation, at what hour is she to expect those "compunctious visitings of nature" which can produce it?

Can the loyal Protestant, who, for some time past, has held liberty and life, and the more dear possession of family, by the tenure of his sword, feel convinced that a change can be ever necessary, unless his obstinacy is softened by what

he has so recently felt? Can the disaffected and discomfited Catholic ever see an union in a more favourable light, than when the offer brings an amnesty for his crimes, and a remedy for his misfortunes? Can the numbers of that sect who have remained attached to their Constitution and their King, expect farther proofs to convince them that it is the only means by which they can hope the full restitution of their rights?

If that period ever can come, when faction and self-interest must give way to public necessity, has it not come upon Ireland now? If reason can ever insinuate its way into the minds of sectaries, agitated by furious passions, and prejudices doubly charged for mischief, with religious and political differences; can it seize a happier moment for entrance, than when their rage is spent, and their strength exhausted, by a long and desperate conflict; when the victor and the vanquished must perceive, that the result of their dissensions has been the ruin of their country?

Those who plead for an union's being deferred upon this ground, speak as if it were brought forward during the confusion and hurry of a

siege, or of a battle, and not in a pause from rebellion, when it is the statesman's duty to use all precautionary means to prevent its breaking forth again. There is nothing in the present situation of the country to prevent the free operation of the mental faculties, and the free declaration of the general opinion. Those who have been convened to condemn an union, have not found it otherwise. At least, they ought not to have proceeded to an unqualified reprobation of the measure, if any temporary cause had rendered their faculties unable to comprehend it.

If such a scheme is to be amended or rejected by reason and by argument, the arms of conviction may be employed not less effectually against it now, than at a season of the most profound tranquillity. If, indeed, it is to be resisted by other arms; if it is to be combatted by open force; or to be attacked by intrigue; by cabal; by pride; by prejudice; passions and feelings ever most ready to swell and burst forth when society is pampered with prosperity; the present moment is unpropitious to the employment of such means. But ought Ministers to forego, upon that account, the introduction of a measure indispen-

fible to the good of both kingdoms? Are they to give those, who oppose themselves to truth and their country, an opportunity to call in such an host of powerful allies to their assistance?

Demanded as an union is, by the internal situation of the countries, and favourable as the present crisis seems, on that very account, for carrying it into immediate execution, our position, as to other nations, is not less propitious to its accomplishment.

It was at a period, similar, in many respects, to the present, in which some of the greatest statesmen ever known to England brought forward the measure of an union with Scotland.

Those who compare the circumstances and situations of the countries, will find that the necessity for its adoption was less pressing, and the means of effecting it less encouraging, at that time, than they are now. The danger of an impending rupture between the kingdoms was then dreaded; at present, it has been actually felt. The temporary unpopularity of the measure was infinitely greater in Scotland than it is

now in Ireland. The opinion of England was not so fully made up in its favour, nor its confidence so great in that Administration, as in the present. Yet the Whig Ministry of that period, undismayed by the ill success of a former attempt, took the hour of victory to lay it before the country. These great men felt that it was their duty to draw out of the season of greatness the means of its increase. That the spirits and good humour of the country, when elevated by success, gave the people new confidence in their Ministers, and the Ministers courage to undertake a measure so bold and decisive. That victory which awed the discontented and factious at home, operated not less to prevent the machinations of the enemy abroad.

Similar fortune seems to court us to a similar attempt. France is driven back from her attacks upon Ireland. Nothing but an union, which renders her cause desperate in that country, will induce her to abandon the design altogether. In marshalling our national achievements, the victory of the Nile may rank even before those of Ramillies or Blenheim: superior in glory to this country, as it is exclusively

our own; superior in its beneficial consequences to ourselves and Europe, as it affords to mankind a chance (a certainty if they will profit by it) of deliverance from the most ambitious and ferocious tyrant that has ever threatened human happiness.

The glorious use that we have made of our power, should inspire us to augment it, by consolidating the empire. No period can be more fit to court Ireland to our arms than when the shouts of our victorious sailors have raised and reanimated desponding, trembling, Europe; when this country, great from the valour and discipline of her fleets, but much greater from her own wisdom and invincible constancy, has shewn herself equal to the protection of Ireland, and the succour of the world.

At whatever period the union is agitated, the precedent of that which took place with Scotland will doubtless be followed to a considerable extent. Should the principle of union be approved by both Parliaments, his Majesty will be empowered by statute to select Commissioners out of each kingdom, to agree upon

the outline, and fill up the articles, previous to their being submitted to the wisdom of the respective Legislatures.

Until that has taken place it would be mere presumption to point out a plan for drawing up this great national settlement. No individual could hope that his scheme would be sufficiently perfect to deserve adoption. He may point out defects, and suggest partial improvements; but the outline should be the work of collective wisdom, well versed in the perfections and defects of the present system, and not less acquainted with the temper and private opinions of the people.

It may not, however, be wholly useless to remark some of the difficulties which are to be encountered in the arrangement, and upon what principles they may be overcome.

The chief points of arrangement are, 1. Such as respect the formation of the united Legislature. 2. The Debt of both kingdoms; and, 3. The imposition of Taxes.

The real danger to Great Britain upon the first head is, lest the admirable poise of her Constitution should be disturbed by this sudden and large encrease of her Legislators; lest the Houses of Parliament, who have been long accustomed to unite a wise and temperate confidence in the Executive Power, with a jealous guard over the liberties of the people, should be changed in their frame and temper by the admission of fresh Members, of new interests, and perhaps new sources of influence.

Ireland is entitled, on the other hand, to a voice in the united Parliaments, proportioned to her rank and interest in the empire. In forming a system of representation for the Commons of that country, obstacles will arise from the interests of borough proprietors, and from the desire of several well-meaning men to introduce a more popular mode of electing her Representatives.

It is most wise and safe not to depart from the established usage of the Constitution, more than the nature of the arrangement absolutely requires. The method followed in the legislative unions with

Wales and Scotland, has been, that their counties should each return a single representative, where, in this part of the Island, they return two. It should seem that this precedent may not only be safely followed in the counties, but may be extended to the most populous towns.

As it may be necessary to make up the full complement of members for Ireland, from her boroughs, the same rule might be adopted there likewise. But if every place, having the privilege of electing members at present, should retain a right to choose one, the number of Commoners returned for Ireland, would, in all probability, exceed that proportion which she will be entitled to have.

One of two methods may be suggested to obviate this difficulty. Either a certain number of contiguous boroughs may unite in choosing a single member, as takes place in Scotland at present; or the franchise may be entirely taken from some which are most vicious in their constitution*. If this last method should be thought

* A third method might be adopted, viz. that distinct boroughs should enjoy the sole power of return in alternate parlia-

the best, the interest of the several proprietors may be recompensed at the charge of the nation in the manner proposed in Mr. Pitt's plan for a reform in Parliament.

The electing Peers to the upper House may be settled with less difficulty, as the precedent already established in Scotland is more simple, and of more easy application to that part of the the Parliament.

Some difficulties may arise respecting the rights of English gentlemen, who are decorated with Irish titles. They may think it hard to be prevented from sitting in the House of Commons of the empire, and Ireland may think it not less hard that persons, who have no property in the country, should interfere with her representation.

To many noblemen of this description, an union will operate as a benefit, so far as it may expedite their elevation to that House, where

liaments; and this form takes place, if I mistake not, in the case of the counties Caithness and Bute, of Cromarty, and Clackmanan. But this mode is extremely objectionable, on many accounts.

they are entitled, from birth and fortune, ultimately to expect a seat. Those who cannot aspire to be so raised, will receive an ample compensation, in being admitted to the full privileges of a Peer of the realm, with the single exception of a vote in Parliament.

As all grounds of jealousy and national dispute will be removed, it would be unreasonable in Ireland to suppose that the privilege of voting for her representatives in the Upper House would not be discreetly and conscientiously exercised by those who possess it. Yet should she retain any suspicion, it might be satisfied by rendering a certain landed qualification, in Ireland, necessary both for those who vote in the election, and for those who are returned under it. As this provision, however, might serve to keep alive that distinction between the countries, which it is the first object of the incorporation to destroy, it ought only to subsist for a limited period, which should be fixed and ascertained in the articles of union.

The debt of that kingdom which is the least, may be easily consolidated with a portion of that which is the greater ; calculated in a proportionate

ratio to the number of Representatives which each returns to the Legislature. But as the excess of debt will still remain considerable on the side of Great Britain, she has two ways of providing for it, without injury to Ireland. By the first, it may be imposed upon the two countries indifferently; this kingdom, paying an equivalent in money to Ireland, proportioned to the burthen which would thus fall upon her to sustain; the equivalent to be laid out exclusively for her advantage and improvement. By the second, she may take it entirely upon herself, and raise the means upon her own people to defray the interest, and discharge the principal.

The first mode was adopted in the union with Scotland, that country not having any debt at the time, and that of England being pretty nearly equal in amount to what is owing at present by Ireland. The reason assigned for choosing it was, that there might be an equality of excises, customs, and taxes, throughout all parts of the united kingdoms. It might also have had its weight, that a sum of money was necessary to make good the losses of individuals, incurred by reducing the coin of the two countries to the same standard, and to

purchase the interests of the Scotch African and Indian company.

The use of this mode is liable to great objections, when the present situation of Great Britain and Ireland is considered. This country could not raise, without great inconvenience, a sufficiency of money to remunerate Ireland. If it were raised, the application must be so gradual, and of such slow operation, that her people would feel more sensibly the burthen of increased taxes, than the benefits of national improvement.

But the situation of the kingdoms renders it unnecessary to recur to a plan, in the way of which our increased debt has thrown difficulties almost insurmountable. There is no India Company in Ireland, whose capital must be made good, and the coin of both realms is of the same standard*. England and Scotland were connected to a considerable extent by land, that was every way easy of access, and also by a narrow arm of

* There is a difference in the nominal value of money; but if it should be thought necessary to reduce them in both countries to the same, it might be done at little expence. An alteration in the copper money of Ireland is all that would be necessary.

the sea, which might be passed, in a little time, without risque or danger. In such a situation, the establishment of the same excises, taxes, and customs, was indispensably necessary to a fair consolidation of the kingdoms. Otherwise Scotland, which must have been less burthened with taxes, would have carried on a smuggling trade with England, in all those articles upon which she was favoured by inequality of imposition. Such an arrangement would have been equally destructive to the interests of the fair trader, and to the revenues of the states. The inconvenience could not have been prevented in any degree, without a system of tax-laws, too grievous for a free people to endure. The expence of collecting the revenue must have encreased to an enormous amount, and even such precautions could afford no complete remedy to the grievance.

But, separated as Great Britain and Ireland are by sea, an inequality of tax may exist, without burthen to the people, or inconvenience to the state. The same officers that are necessary to watch the foreign merchant, and to guard against the attempts of the smuggler, will be sufficient to protect each country from such mischiefs as this arrangement might otherwise produce.

Another great instrument for accommodating the debts of the two kingdoms, may be found in a proper modification of the fund established for reducing the national debt, and of the produce arising from the redemption of the land tax, which is made applicable to the same purpose.

So far as Great Britain takes her debt exclusively to herself, she must levy the taxes, to discharge it, upon her own inhabitants. As the interests of the two countries would be the same, from the moment of union, their contribution to all other expences of the empire should be in the fair ratio of their respective abilities. The faith of both islands would be pledged in security of all future debts, and the provision for payment of interest and principal should be levied from the revenues of both. In a few instances it might be equitable to pay regard to the comparative poverty of Ireland, and to make some difference in the quantum of tax imposed upon the same commodity, with reference to her and to her more wealthy neighbour. In articles of necessity, and in those articles of luxury, which, to some classes of society, are become articles of necessity, a tax which could be easily borne by Great Britain,

would amount to a prohibition of their use in Ireland. The comforts of life, in distinct civilized nations, depend more upon the habits of that class of society to which the individual belongs, and its relative importance among those several orders into which the whole nation is divided, than upon the possession of positive wealth*.

From the application of this principle, it will be evident, that a tax, in appearance equal, may be highly unequal in its effects. Oppressive to the individual, as tending to deprive him of the means to satisfy his necessary wants; impolitic in the Government, as tending to discourage that consumption from whence the revenue is to be raised. Thus to instance the article of wine, of which the use is far more general in Ireland than in this kingdom. A man who possesses an income of 400l. a year would, if considered with reference to Ireland alone, be entitled to rank with, and enjoy all the comforts, which a man in the receipt of 600l. a year

* It is upon this ground, that Ireland is a distinct nation, and would be brought suddenly into a new situation, to which her inhabitants could not be reconciled at once, and against the inconveniencies of which they could not be reasonably expected to have made provision, that I think a difference in some few articles of taxation, and that for a short period, ought to be made.

could have, if he resided in England. He sees fewer people of wealth and fortune superior to his own than the Englishman, and full as many gradations from competence to poverty below him. His money is, indeed, less in quantity, but so far as it is a mere medium of exchange, it is of equal value; for it will procure him an equal portion of the comforts and conveniencies of life. An equal tax upon wine would operate very differently upon those two men. The Englishman, who was less used to drink it, would be enabled to pay the tax. The Irishman, who, from habit, must feel the deprivation more severely, would be rendered unable to purchase.

The framers of the British union felt the operation of this principle, and endeavoured to guard, by several provisions in the articles, against any inconveniencies which might arise from its effect upon commodities of general consumption. Thus, the 7th article, establishes a proportionate excise upon Scotch beer. The 8th exempts Scotch salt from all duty for seven years, and from a particular duty levied in England for ever. So, likewise, the 12th exempts coals, culm, and cinders, from duty for a limited pe-

riod; and the 13th contains a like provision with regard to malt.

It is the same principle which induces the Parliament of Great Britain, even at this period, to preserve an exception in favour of distilleries in the Highlands of Scotland, although it is attended with many inconveniencies, and is highly detrimental to the revenue*.

* I have adduced the present instance merely to shew, that the principle stated in the text is recognized by the British Parliament in its present system of taxation; and by no means as an approbation of the application of the principle to the case to which it has been extended.

I have been favored with the following observations upon that subject by an ingenious friend. I insert them not only for their intrinsic value, but as they will serve to illustrate the caution with which the principle ought to be applied to the several matters of commerce between the countries.

“ The very reasons upon which an exemption has been granted to distilleries in the Highland districts, fails in point of fact. It is that, from the keenness of his atmosphere, the use of whiskey is absolutely necessary to the Highlander, while he cannot afford to pay the price which may be borne by his neighbour in the low country, to whom, besides, it is not an article of necessity, but of luxury. There is no part of the Highlands, however, which raises a sufficient quantity of corn for the consumption of the inhabitants. The grain which is necessary for subsistence must be brought from other countries. Coals, too, have not

As these partial exemptions, however, ought to be created only in favour of a country's comparative poverty, and sudden change in situation, they should not be too generally extended; and they ought to cease at some period in which it may be reasonably supposed that the causes which gave rise to them are removed. The time at which this distinction in duties ought to expire should be limited by the articles of union, as was done in some of the instances already cited from that with Scotland.

The insular situation of the countries is not less favourable to a partial exemption of Ireland

yet been discovered in the Highlands; and to prepare moss for fuel, is a laborious and tedious operation. But grain and fuel are not less articles of the first necessity than whiskey. Yet, by this exemption, the Highlander is tempted to consume all the grain which is raised, and all the fuel which can be collected within his district, in the distillation of whiskey. To supply the additional deficiency thus occasioned, he must bring grain and coals from a distance. But these last are bulky commodities; and, perhaps, if the calculation were made, it would be found, that spirits brought from a distance would cost the Highlander less than they now cost him (even with the benefit of the exemption), when thus manufactured at home. And this, independent of the circumstance, that, in spite of all checks to the contrary, spirits are distilled in the Highland districts for the consumption of the low country, which raises the price to the Highlander, and destroys the very purpose for which the exemption was granted."

from particular impositions, than it is to the exclusive levy in Great Britain, of such as will be necessary for the discharge of the present debt.

All subjects of Tax may be divided into three classes. 1. Taxes upon things in their nature local, and constituting, as it were, a part of the country itself. Such are taxes upon land, and taxes upon resident individuals in respect of their income. 2. Taxes upon things to be consumed in the country, and laid with a view to such consumption. Such are those which are levied upon wine, spirits, stamps, malt, and, to speak generally, all articles which are under the management of the excise. 3. Taxes upon the export and import of various manufactures, and articles of commerce, considered as such; and this, whether the tax is imposed as a source of revenue, or as a regulation in trade. Such are duties upon the primùm, or raw material of manufactures; as upon cotton. Such also are all prohibitory duties upon the manufactures or productions of other countries; as upon French sugars, gauzes, gloves, and, at some periods, upon foreign corn.

Taxes of the first kind might differ in quantum in different districts of the same country, without danger of being evaded*. Thus, a tax of 4s. in the pound might be laid upon lands in London and Middlesex, and one to the amount of a 10th of the productive income of persons residing there might be imposed; while the first should be only 2s. and the second no more than a 15th in the counties of York and Lincoln. Taxes of the second class could not differ in contiguous parts of the same country, as it would be impossible to prevent a smuggling intercourse. But, in countries situated as Ireland and Great Britain are, such a mode of imposing them is not liable to such objections as arise from the facility of evasion, or the odium of visible inequality.

Great Britain might lay those taxes which must be appropriated to the discharge of her present debt, upon either or both of these branches of revenue. But any diminution of duty in favor of Ireland, ought to take place in the second class, under the system of union, for two reasons. *First*, on account of the people, as such taxes, if heavy, will be more felt by the middling and lower orders of society. *Se-*

* This, of course, does not involve the question of, how far it would be impolitic to impose them.

condly, on account of the revenue, as the expence of collection will be greater, in proportion to the receipt of tax; and as the facility of evasion must be greater, from the internal situation of that country.

Taxes of the third class, which affect subjects of manufacture and commerce, as such ought to be the same in both islands. It is of the very essence of the union, that the two countries should have but one market; that the merchants of each should be enabled to meet each other, both at home and abroad, unclogged by any positive restriction arising from tax or duty.

It is not meant by this, that a minute and impossible balance should be struck between the advantages and disadvantages of situation, or the collateral effect of indirect impositions, which render a manufacture more expensive, and, therefore, less favourable to one place than to another. Such a calculation is happily impracticable; but, if it were possible, it would only tend to encourage rivalry between the nations, and divert the manufactures of one of them from some other branch of industry in which it might be more pro-

fitably employed. England and Ireland must be left to retain their separate advantages. The one, that of superior capital, and more skilful experience; the other, the cheapness of rude labour, and her abundance in the necessaries of life. The cheapness of carriage is thrown in the middle, as a prize to both; fluctuating sometimes in favour of the one, and sometimes in that of the other. Where other circumstances are equal, it must always give advantage to the native manufacturer, and enable him to undersell his competitor. This equalization of duties should extend, therefore, only to such as are imposed directly and specifically upon articles of commerce or manufacture, so as to prevent the income of the state from operating as a bounty in favor of one tradesman, and a prohibition against the other.

It happens often that a duty of a very different amount is laid upon the same commodity, when considered as an article of consumption, and as an article of commerce. If this should be the case, in the instance of any articles where Ireland may be favoured in point of duty, the inequality that would otherwise affect the merchant, must be remedied by a system of drawbacks and countervailing duties. That is, when

a commodity is imported from the island paying a less duty, into that which pays a greater, a duty must be laid upon the importation equal to the difference. When the exportation is made from that which pays the greater, a drawback* should be allowed to the merchant equal to the excess which he has paid.

The principles which I have thus ventured to lay down, will stand in need of many modifications in their application to the several articles of the union. It will require great sagacity, and

* Drawbacks are the source, at present, of scandalous deprecation in the revenue arising from the customs. If they must take place between the two islands, upon the event of an union, I know of no better method to prevent fraud, than to make the drawback payable in the country to which the goods are exported, upon their being landed there. I put in my protest against the use of that shallow conceit, that this would be to make Ireland pay a bounty for importation against her own manufacturers. The revenues of the countries will then be one; and an individual might as well consider it as a greater loss to him to pay money from his left hand pocket, than from his right. This scheme cannot extend to drawbacks upon exportation to foreign markets; but one great advantage from consolidating the revenues, and their mode of collection, in both countries will be, that it will turn the attention of the Minister (too much, and too well employed; to consider every possibility of reform) to the customs. It is shocking to think that a Custom-House oath is become proverbial, to signify a legal perjury, committed without fear of punishment, or imputation of moral guilt.

infinite labour, to render them invulnerable to rational objection. But the pains are well bestowed, where the object is the prosperity of the united empire*.

Countries like Ireland and Great Britain, cannot conduct this arrangement upon a narrow principle of chaffer, and a petty truckle of paltry equivalents. They must come to negotiate, not in the spirit of demand, but in that of self-denial; not asking what they may be allowed to retain, but how much they are to surrender for the common interest. Disarming suspicion, by a noble competition in liberality, and giving a sure pledge of sincerity in the unbounded exchange of reciprocal confidence.

Neither country can suffer, even temporary, inconvenience from an union discussed in this

* I have purposely avoided all matter of detail. It is to be hoped that any system now thought of will undergo the severe canvass of able commissioners. There is a radical and incurable fault in one which is talked of at present with considerable confidence. The mischiefs which it purposes to obviate will be more effectually remedied in a proper modification of the practice of electing standing committees, at the commencement of every session, and perhaps the old form of appointing *triers of petitions*.

manner, and arranged on these principles. But if it did require great sacrifices; great sacrifices must be made to effect it. It does not come forward as a measure of expediency, which, though more wise to adopt, might be postponed or laid aside with safety. It appears as one of stern necessity, admitting neither compromise nor alternative. Indispensable to the safety of both nations, all temporary feelings; all private losses; all partial inconveniencies, must give way to its adamant strength. No mischief can arise to Great Britain so serious as a war between the islands. No advantage can spring from her present situation, equal to what must proceed from knitting the limbs and members of the empire firm and compact together; giving it strength and vigour to resist an implacable enemy, whose hopes and dreams of happiness and peace are founded upon our destruction.

Not less necessary to Ireland on these accounts, it is more so from her peculiarly dreadful domestic calamities. It is indispensable to save her from the continued visitation of horror, in all those changeful shapes in which it can descend to afflict mankind. From robbery; from plunder;

from summary jurisdiction in matter of life ; from massacre ; from rebellion ; from military execution.

No measure can be too expeditious to attempt her rescue from a state, where the treachery, the obstinacy, and the cruelty of rebels, have called for the portentous means of military severity to repress them. A state, in which the rapid succession of enormity extracts the sting from crime, and the continued infliction of death strips punishment of its terrors.

Unhappy is the country suffering under such miseries. But tenfold unhappy must she be, if, suffering as she does, she is insensible to the extent of her woes. If long acquaintance with confusion has rendered her misfortunes less dreadful ; and familiarity with violence and blood has ground down the fine edge of her feelings to indifference for the life or death of man.

The murderous tyrant's curse has fallen upon the island.

“ I have supped full with horrors !
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.”

K

Does any man doubt the fidelity of the description,—Let him explore the scene of the late rebellion; let him survey square leagues of that country, once cultivated and populous—now reduced to an heap of smoking ruins. The habitations of the rich and of the poor; towns, mansions, cottages, involved in one universal and indiscriminate destruction, as blasted by the bolts of Heaven. Neither man, nor woman, nor child, nor animal dependent upon man, to be found as tenants to the frightful waste. Not a life spared in pity, in hurry, in confusion, in reverence of age, in contempt of insignificance, or in the softened rage of satisfied passion! No! not one inhabitant left to indicate the cause, or relate the history of this general devastation! All! all destroyed!—Nothing of man remaining, but the terrible monuments of his rebellion, his cruelty, and his vengeance!

THE END

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